

Final Report – Boulder Project

June 25, 2014

“None of the parties involved has all the solutions. All parties need to be willing to change to stem the growing tide of homelessness in Boulder County and all of the negative personal and community consequences that result.”

-Boulder Shelter Board Member



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people we want to thank for their assistance in the preparation of this report. First, we want to express our appreciation to everyone who gave so generously of his/her time to provide us with information. All of those individuals who filled out the surveys did so with a significant investment of their time, and their opinions helped us tremendously. The various people we interviewed were also most generous with their time, wisdom, and expertise, and their ideas and insights were instrumental in shaping our thinking. We want to give special thanks to those persons experiencing homelessness that we talked with at all three locations; their perspective on needed services provided critical input as we formulated ideas and recommendations.

We want to specifically acknowledge the efforts that the leadership of Bridge House, the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless, and the Boulder Outreach for Homeless Overflow (BOHO) made to provide us with information, to answer questions, to guide us in our understanding of the Boulder community, and to share insights with us. These leaders were also extremely helpful in reviewing survey instruments, the progress report, and a draft of the final report. They also spent multiple hours meeting with us to react to what we were doing and our proposed plans. Included in this leadership group are the following individuals: Isabel McDevitt and George Epp from Bridge House; Greg Harms, Ardie Schulster, and Ruth Becker from the Shelter; and Nancy Brinks and Bill Sweeney from BOHO. Our sincere gratitude goes out to all of you.

This project would not have been possible without the leadership and support of the Community Foundation of Boulder County and its very capable leadership under the direction of Josie Heath and Elvira Ramos. Josie provided many good suggestions during the course of our work, and Elvira was masterful in keeping us all on target and on track. Our thanks to both of you.

We also want to thank the Community Foundation, the three organizations, and a number of individuals for providing the financial support that allowed us to undertake this work. We very much appreciated the opportunity to undertake this project and to work with such impressive and dedicated people, and none of this would have been possible without the financing provided by the various funders. So, thank you to all of you.

Finally, our thanks go to Laura Appelbaum for doing her sharp-eyed editorial number on the report and making it truly a final product.

Don Burnes
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2014, the Burnes Institute was asked to analyze the services and operations of Bridge House, the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless, and the Boulder Outreach for Homeless Overflow (BOHO) and to determine the potential for increased collaboration among the three agencies.

Based on all the comments we have received, it is clear that these three organizations are performing well in addressing the needs of Boulder's most at-risk citizens. The leadership of all three agencies is excellent; good programs are in place; community support is strong and stable; and all three are held in high regard.

In considering possible recommendations, we examined a number of important issues. First, which organization is currently serving which function, and what does that indicate about programmatic expertise? Second, what is the current physical capacity of each organization to provide various types of services? Third, in the absence of a viable space for a day shelter that meets current needs, are there other options that do not require either purchasing a new facility or building a new structure? Fourth, what are neighborhood attitudes about various types of facilities in support of those experiencing homelessness? Finally, what are the expectations of the City with regard to facilities? We kept these questions very much in mind as we conducted our research.

Based on our research and in an effort to achieve a more seamless continuum of services, we recommend the following changes to current practices, broken out into six areas. Most of these changes directly involve the three organizations. In a few cases, the recommendations are aimed at the City and/or County, as they are of paramount importance to the system of services and lie outside the influence or authority of the three organizations. In addition to the recommendations, we have also included some suggestions regarding ways to approach several issues. We did not feel that these suggestions warranted formal recommendation status, but we do feel that they are ideas worth considering.

RECOMMENDATIONS

HOMELESS OUTREACH, INTAKE/ASSESSMENT, DATA SHARING and EVALUATION

- 1. Reposition the two Peer Navigators (currently at BOHO and Bridge House) to work in the community as Outreach Workers.**
- 2. Implement a Coordinated Entry system using a two-pronged approach: Adopt the VI-SPADT as the common intake tool and eLogic as a case management and evaluation tool.**
- 3. Create a shared Data System among the three organizations and other entities that provide intake/assessment and case management to single homeless adults.-**

BEDS

- 4. Reserve all 160 of the Shelter's beds for individuals who are in some sort of transition.**
- 5. Have BOHO become the provider for all emergency shelter "beds" through the Emergency Warming Centers (EWC) and extend committed nights of EWC operations from October 15 - April 15 (the Shelter's current emergency shelter season). Weather dependent EWC should be in effect from April 16 - October 14.**
- 6. House Ready to Work clients at the Shelter and if feasible, expand RTW to accommodate 60 individuals from the planned 48.**
- 7. Expand BOHO's Summer Sleep program to accommodate up to 50 individuals, if needed.**

DAYTIME SERVICES

- 8. Relocate and enhance Day Services provided by Bridge House.**
- 9. Consider that the building at 4747 Table Mesa Drive become the Day Services location. If this is not feasible, then the City needs to come up with a suitable location.**
- 10. Locate Bridge House's Resource Center at the Shelter.**
- 11. Keep the Shelter open 24/7, with Bridge House staffing the daytime hours and the Shelter covering evening and night hours.**

INTERNAL OPERATIONS

12. Place a much higher emphasis on staff training for all three organizations (along with some board training) that includes trauma-informed care and motivational interviewing techniques.
13. Wherever possible and appropriate, develop joint training for staff at all three organizations.
14. Agree on standard case management practices and utilize them wherever appropriate.
15. Supplement case management services with trained volunteers.
16. Have all three organizations consider ways in which they could work together on issues of education, outreach, messaging, and advocacy and hire one staff person to provide leadership on this collaboration.
17. Make the Boulder Shelter's comprehensive website listing of available resources for single homeless adults more useful by ensuring that organizations can easily print off needed sections. Remind partner agencies that this information is available. Additionally, each organization should print out the materials and post them prominently at their service site.

COORDINATION WITH OUTSIDE RESOURCES

18. Determine transportation needs together and negotiate with VIA, RTD and Boulder B-Cycle as a unified block, with the City as a key ally.
19. Capitalize on existing faith community partnerships to develop a more deliberate strategy for further engaging the faith community as valuable partners in addressing homelessness issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CITY OF BOULDER AND BOULDER COUNTY

20. Have the City provide the leadership for siting an expanded Day Services facility and championing a revised Boulder Shelter Management Plan to accommodate changes to their service delivery model.
21. Have the City take the lead in addressing transportation issues and in working closely with the three organizations to address needs.
22. Have the County put additional resources and support into the 10-year Plan to End Homelessness, specifically with the end goal of developing a system-wide approach that includes addressing the lack of affordable housing, re-entry programs (after discharge from jail/prison), and improved service coordination and delivery.
23. Have the County consider creating a staff leadership position to assist departmental officials in implementing the 10-Year Plan.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of March, 2014, the Community Foundation Serving Boulder County contracted with the Burnes Institute to do an analysis of the three organizations in the City of Boulder that provide services for single adults experiencing homelessness: Bridge House, the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless, and Boulder Outreach for Homeless Overflow (BOHO). The scope of work called for the Institute to analyze services and operations of the three organizations and to examine the potential for increased collaboration to foster efficiency and improve outcomes for single adults experiencing homelessness.

The Three Organizations

The Bridge House and the Boulder Shelter both have an extensive history of serving persons experiencing homelessness in Boulder. Bridge House provides daytime services, including showers, meals, access to addiction support groups, physical and mental health services, and case management. They also operate Community Table, providing a hot dinner Monday thru Friday that is served at different congregations. Newer services include the development of the Ready to Work (RTW) employment program, and a Resource Center that brings together multiple service providers under one roof to offer case management assistance, job services, support groups, physical and behavioral health services, and assistance accessing benefits, among other services. Recently, Bridge House bought a building at 4747 Table Mesa Drive to house its RTW clients.

The Boulder Shelter provides nighttime shelter through two distinct programs: (1) 100 emergency beds available through a daily lottery from October 15 - April 15; and (2) 60 reserved beds that are available year-round. 30 of the beds are considered First Step; these beds are for individuals on a waiting list to get into the 30 Transition Program beds. Transition beds are for those individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to improving their lives by participating in Case Management and agreeing to live at the Shelter clean from alcohol or drugs, while maintaining some form of employment. The Shelter operates a year-round Morning Services program, which allows individuals experiencing homelessness to access showers, breakfast, and laundry facilities. The Shelter also manages 12 disbursed Transitional Housing units, partnering with other service providers on filling those units and providing Case Management support for the residents. In 2007, the Shelter partnered with Boulder Housing Partners (BHP) on 22-scattered units of Housing First apartments. The Shelter provides Case Management for those units and will soon be filling and providing Case Management and on-site staffing for a 31-unit Housing First community being constructed by BHP adjacent to the Shelter at 1175 Lee Hill.

During the winter, the Shelter operates Boulder County Cares, a street outreach program that delivers food and supplies to individuals living outdoors.

BOHO was created in 2008 when it was clear that the Shelter could not accommodate all the persons needing a place to sleep. Through the generosity of sixteen faith communities, BOHO now offers emergency shelter space on floor mats for overnight accommodations and evening meals for its overnight guests at Emergency Warming Centers (EWC) nightly from November 15 - March 15 and on a weather dependent basis outside of those dates. BOHO's offerings have expanded to include separate EWCs for women who want that option. Additionally, BOHO operates a Summer Sleep program that provides supervised outdoor sleeping for 25 individuals on a congregation's lawn. Starting on June 1, 2014, they are piloting a Women's Summer Shelter program, providing 18 women overnight accommodations in the same fashion as their EWC program.

"We recognize that the services provided in Boulder are much more robust than in most other cities. We also recognize our own challenges in providing the necessary support and resources required by our shared patients. I think a big part of the puzzle is finding a way to change the culture from inadvertent enablement to empowerment - easier said than done." -Community Partner

The Local Picture

Throughout our research, we have been impressed by the favorable attitudes of survey respondents and interviewees towards the work of all three organizations. We heard countless words of praise for their leadership, the work of the staff, and the immeasurable contributions of all the volunteers. Respondents recognized that Boulder is truly fortunate to have three such outstanding agencies in its midst.

It is also clear that, in addition to these three organizations, the City of Boulder is committed to sheltering and feeding individuals who are on the streets due to mental illness, substance abuse issues, or other disabilities; those who are homeless due to a change in their economic circumstances, the lack of low-income housing, and the absence of appropriate employment opportunities; and those few who appear to have made a lifestyle choice to be on the streets.

There is evidence of a strong desire to provide effective support and incentives for the individuals who are actively committed to working on the underlying issues that have led to their being homeless, and acknowledgment that there is a delicate balance between services that enable vs. those that empower. We heard expressions of interest in holding individuals accountable, while at the same time having the flexibility to accommodate mistakes and individual circumstances.

Respondents frequently expressed frustration about the lack of demonstrable progress in ending homelessness. There was some finger pointing as to roadblocks in this effort and who is responsible for solving the problem. The four deaths of individuals experiencing homelessness over the past three months have only served to heighten the sense of concern and frustration.

Many residents, officials in Boulder County and the City, and many service providers have expressed concern that Boulder is too “homeless friendly”. There has been a backlash evidenced by City Council legislation aimed at banning camping, panhandling, and smoking on the Pearl Street Mall. At the same time, the recent deaths have also raised concerns that Boulder is not taking good enough care of its homeless population.

Several years ago, in response to the local outrage about growing numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness and the City’s lack of progress in solving the problem, the City and Boulder County created a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, a step similar to the one taken by over 300 cities, counties, and states across the US. This Plan, a concrete, goal-oriented document, represented the best thinking of many important and thoughtful stakeholders throughout the county, and has been endorsed by city and county leadership. Unfortunately, there has been a dearth of executive leadership in the implementation of the plan, leaving many frustrated about its lack of impact.

In addition to the relative absence of leadership around implementation of the 10-year Plan, there is strong evidence that, even at the level of the three organizations in question, there are issues that need to be addressed. For example, based on data collected separately from each organization, there is evidence that the majority of individuals receive services from all three organizations. There is not a big problem with duplication of services, but it does appear that the organizations lack a complete picture of an individual, the track he or she is on, what placement or service is most appropriate, or how the individual is being held accountable. There is a sense that those experiencing homelessness who are not working are moving between providers: getting an emergency bed either at the Shelter or BOHO; having breakfast and lunch at Bridge House; waiting the day out; going to dinner at Community Table or the Shelter if they pulled a low number in the lottery; and securing a place to sleep in the evening ... and repeating the same routine the next day. The Shelter reports that half of their guests stay with them for seven days or less. Unfortunately, data systems are not currently in place that would allow us to know whether those individuals subsequently move over to BOHO or show up at Bridge House for day services.

Some of our initial research focused on what we heard stakeholders saying about the local landscape. Several themes emerged from this research: the three organizations seem to serve the same population, yet there is no cohesion as to how they work or how they serve individuals experiencing homelessness; a vocal contingent in the community continues to focus

on what is perceived as a growing problem because of the visibility of homeless or transient people in Boulder; there is a lack of housing and furthermore, no housing plan that addresses low-income housing for formerly homeless individuals; and there is a 10-Year Plan in place, but the plan is not being implemented because there is no staff to carry it out and no one at the City or County level is serving as a champion for the effort.

These themes reinforce the need for increased coordination and collaboration among agencies across Boulder City and the County. Elected officials, department leadership at both the City and County level, and the heads of the entire panoply of non-profit agencies dealing with homelessness need to think collaboratively about how to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the entire system of services. This is no longer a question of how good are individual programs. We must examine, evaluate, and revise where necessary, the entire system of services. However, except for a few recommendations aimed at the City and County, the scope of this project focused on how BOHO, the Shelter, and Bridge House can operate as more of a system.

In response to this multi-faceted assessment of the local Boulder picture, the Institute's Research Associates have developed a series of recommendations that we feel will help propel the three organizations, the City, and Boulder County to create a stronger and more effective set of strategies for addressing homelessness in Boulder. As we formulated our recommendations, we tried to keep in mind the local landscape, the current set of services that each of the three agencies provides, and local neighborhood sensitivities.

The recommendations we put forth will take a lot of hard work to think through, implement, and in some cases, raise funds for in order to be implemented. The organizations can do a lot on their own to implement some of the recommendations specific to their organizations and to collaboration among themselves. However, some of the recommendations address larger issues that will need to be tackled by the bigger system (the City and Boulder County) for any real progress to be made.

In addition to these recommendations, we have included some suggestions about how to approach certain issues. We did not feel that these suggestions warranted formal recommendation status, but we think they could be potentially useful.

The National Picture

Although the frustration on the part of Boulder citizens is understandable, we must place the Boulder situation in a broader, national perspective. As a country, despite spending tens billions of public and private dollars, despite spending mountains of time and energy, despite exhortations from elected officials and other citizens across the country, we have accomplished

relatively little over the past 30 years in our battle to end homelessness. In its 2013 Annual report, the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) indicated that there is a country-wide shortfall of approximately 200,000 beds for persons experiencing homelessness. Furthermore, the bottom quintile of consumers of housing, both home owners and renters spends 87 percent of their \$10,300 median family income on housing, and that quintile doesn't even include most of those experiencing homelessness. (The conventional wisdom is that a person or family that spends over 30 percent of its income on housing is housing cost burdened, and having to spend over 50 percent of its income creates a severe housing cost burden.) In addition, NAEH's 2013 report found that there are over 7 million persons who are doubled up (not counted as experiencing homelessness according to HUD's definition), but whose long term housing is questionable at best, i.e. they are at risk of becoming homeless.

The National Coalition for Low-Income Housing recently reported that the bread winner of a family of four would have to earn an hourly wage of \$18.92, two and a half times the federal minimum wage, to afford an average two bedroom house in this country. Most of those experiencing homelessness have income, both earned and from benefits, that is substantially below the minimum wage, much less the hourly wage that the National Coalition recommends.

In the face of this rather abysmal national picture, Boulder's efforts, despite some real shortcomings, are laudable. Frankly, the City and the three organizations have much to be proud of. However, we feel that significant improvements can be made and must be made, if we are to maximize our efforts to end homelessness.

Our Research Processes

As a first step in our research, we examined demographic data to identify the characteristics of persons experiencing homelessness in Boulder. However, as we looked at Point in Time (PIT) Survey data from 2013 and 2014 and the data provided to us by the three organizations, we realized how inconsistent the data are. PIT data from 2013 reports 323 single homeless adults in Boulder and 265 in 2014. This is less than one quarter the number that Bridge House served over the course of the year (1,262 unduplicated visits to Bridge House), and that figure does not include the Shelter's approximately 1,000 unduplicated guests or the 1,465 unduplicated guests served by BOHO during the 2013-2014 year. While we could not reliably determine the overlap between those served at Bridge House, those served at the Shelter, and those served at BOHO, it seems clear that many more single adults experienced homelessness over the last year or so than the 2013 and 2014 PIT numbers would indicate.

Part of the significant difference in numbers between the PIT and the organizations' data can be explained by the difference between a single point-in-time count and a count of numbers over a full year. However, it is now generally accepted that, on average, there are 1.9 times as many

persons experiencing homelessness in any given locale as there are at a single, specific point in time. Using this multiplier, based on the 2013 PIT data, there would still be only about 614 single adults experiencing homelessness in Boulder. This is roughly half the number of clients Bridge House saw last year. The difference is even greater using the 2014 data, 504 single adults. Because of this discrepancy, we have included demographic data in Appendix A.

We collected information about services and areas for possible collaboration from a variety of stakeholders. In addition to substantial amounts of written material from each of the three main organizations and from other local public agencies and private non-profits, Burnes Institute Research Associates gathered information through a series of surveys and direct interviews. With input from the Boulder Leadership Team, the Associates developed surveys for Board members, staff, and volunteers at each of the three organizations, for partner agencies, and for various faith-based groups. In addition, Associates interviewed members of the Leadership Team, other high-ranking officials in each organization, clients of each organization, senior staff in several relevant Boulder City and Boulder County departments, the Mayor of Boulder, staff in several agencies to which all three organizations refer clients, other community stakeholders, and funders.

The numbers below reflect the numbers of completed surveys.

- 33 Board members
- 54 staff
- 64 volunteers
- 12 community partners
- 6 congregations

In addition, Associates conducted interviews with:

- the President and Program Director of the Foundation
- the Executive Directors of The Bridge House and the Boulder Shelter
- the Board presidents of all three organizations
- 26 additional persons

Finally, Associates compiled ideas about collaboration from several other sources. They met with several agency leaders in Denver to discuss their experiences in developing and maintaining collaborative relationships with each other. They also researched several other locations across the country to identify possible models for use by BH, BSH, and BOHO.

A Systems Approach

A variety of stakeholders suggested a merger between the three organizations. While we agree that a merger could be beneficial in terms of efficiency of operations, we don't think the time is ripe for that move, primarily because the Shelter is not interested in the idea. (Note: If at some point down the road, the organizations decide to pursue this course of action, we would recommend that BOHO not be a part of the merger. Ideally, their established on-going programs would be assumed by the new organization. However, we see a great advantage to maintaining the nimbleness and flexibility of their operations to be able to more quickly respond to emerging issues. Little boats move more easily than big ones. Losing that capability seems unnecessary and inadvisable.)

We also recognize that a merger of Bridge House and the Shelter does not, in and of itself, address some of the major issues that we have identified. Sorting out the best use of current and future facilities will still have to be done in such a way as to optimize the utility of each facility and, more importantly, create a smooth and seamless system of services that will improve the lives of those experiencing homelessness. It may be that a merger of the two organizations would facilitate this sorting out process. However, as we said above, a merger of this kind is not likely to happen in the near future. Therefore, we recommend that all three organizations, to the best of their ability, align and coordinate their services and facilities to more effectively serve the population. Our approach is designed to provide enhanced support to individuals that demonstrate readiness and commitment to moving off the streets, while at the same time providing safe sleeping options for those who want to sleep indoors, and the opportunity to develop trusting relationships that may eventually lead individuals to take steps to change their circumstances.

The following items were consistently identified as gaps in service: year-round shelter, day services, affordable housing, storage/lockers, respite and medical care, jobs and employment training, transportation, a women's shelter, transitional housing, weekend meals, and mental health and substance abuse services. Appendix B gives a breakdown of the gaps that were identified and by which stakeholders. We did not focus on the lack of permanent affordable housing specifically in this report, as it is not a service extensively provided by the three organizations involved in this project. However, ultimately, it is a crucial element in any effort to address homelessness.

Our contract with TCF called for an analysis of whether the three organizations can work together more effectively for the purpose of improving outcomes for those they are serving. For the purposes of analysis and recommendations, we considered the three agencies as a whole that together form a system of services for the special population of single adults experiencing homelessness. This systems formulation allows us to consider the panoply of needed services, possible gaps in services, particular expertise among the agencies that then lends itself to

possible assignment of responsibilities, and the overall community attitude and political environment in which the three organizations exist.

In fact, in all fairness, this small system of three agencies is but a subsystem of the larger system of services for those experiencing homelessness within the City of Boulder, which, in turn, is a subsystem of the system of services for the entire County. Taking this to its logical next steps, the County of Boulder system should eventually be coordinated with an entire metro-wide system of services, which could, eventually lead to a statewide system. How these various subsystems link together is well beyond the scope of the current project; however, all of these linkages could and should be explored in the future as a way of creating a more effective and efficient system of services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

HOMELESS OUTREACH, INTAKE/ASSESSMENT, DATA SHARING and EVALUATION

- 1. Reposition the two Peer Navigators currently at BOHO and Bridge House to work in the community as Outreach Workers.**
- 2. Implement a Coordinated Entry system using a two-pronged approach: Adopt the VI-SPADT as the common intake tool and eLogic as a case management and evaluation tool.**
- 3. Create a shared Data System among the three organizations and other entities that provide intake/assessment and case management to single homeless adults.-**

The survey results, the comments from interviewees, our consultation with service providers around the country, and our own experiences suggest a broad array of needed services in a systems approach. The first step is some kind of coordinated entry into the service system with a common intake procedure. Unless there is some type of coordinated entry system, it is very hard for any of the agencies to know who is being served by the other agencies and whether there is any duplication of services. To simplify this process, it becomes important to have a common set of demographic and service information that is shared among the agencies. (Individual agencies may want to add their own additional information, but there should be a common set of data across the agencies.) This latter requires complete agreement about data sharing, which data are to be shared, and for what purposes.

The Coordinated Entry and Intake approach we recommend is a two-pronged process to include *outreach* and *intake/assessment*. It is our belief that any coordinated entry system should utilize an outreach worker as a first point of contact. This person does not necessarily have to be someone who is formerly homeless but it would be advantageous if it could be.

Currently, there are two Peer Navigators in Boulder: a 30 hour/week position at Bridge House funded through the Metropolitan Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI), and a four hour/week position at BOHO, funded with County dollars. Obviously, there are some limitations with the current Peer Navigator positions, as the Bridge House position is not a permanently funded position beyond this year, and BOHO's is very part-time. If proven successful, the Peer Navigator position could be built into the MDHI budget to allow for hiring in future years, and if additional funding could be secured, the hours of the position at BOHO could be expanded.

While neither of these are full-time positions, we believe a better use of their time may be spent out in the community as *outreach* workers. Outreach Workers are familiar and trusted faces within the homeless community. They are able to frequent locations where individuals experiencing homelessness tend to congregate, and have an opportunity to connect with people who otherwise may not come inside to access services. In Boulder, Outreach Workers could spend time at the Library, the Municipal Campus, the West Senior Center, the bus stop, coffee shops, etc. Successful models of outreach are so because of the relationships that are formed with people on the streets. It may take several contacts before many individuals are ready to consider engaging in any services. As appropriate, the Outreach Worker will direct them to the place best suited for their circumstances. Given these possibilities, **we recommend that the two Peer Navigators be repositioned to work outside in the community as Outreach Workers.**

The next step in Coordinated Entry is the intake process. This can be completed at a variety of locations (Bridge House, the Resource Center, BOHO, the Shelter and other front-door entry points). The intake should be performed by people trained in trauma-informed care and motivational interviewing (this could include both staff and volunteers). The intake is a more detailed form that collects information about a person's history (housing, homelessness, physical and mental health, etc.) and provides the opportunity for the intake worker to better understand an individual's story in order to determine what he or she ultimately wants and what path is going to be best. Of course, intake would look different at different locations. Staff at BOHO, for example, would not have the time to do an intake on all of their more than 100 guests in one night, but could capture their names and, with a shared data system, be able to determine if an intake had already been done. If not, when time permitted, an intake could be completed in the EWC or in another location.

As part of a regional approach that is being led by the Metropolitan Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI), Boulder should consider aligning itself with the Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement System (CAHPS). CAHPS is a system that enables a community to accomplish the following in a coordinated fashion:

- (a) Assess and identify the housing and support needs of all individuals experiencing homelessness;

- (b) Target outreach and housing navigation for those who are most disabled, most in need and have been homeless the longest;
- (c) Match the right level of service and/or housing intervention to these individuals as quickly and efficiently as possible, while being respectful of client choice and of local providers.

With these goals in mind and in coordination with the efforts of the 7-County Denver Metro region, **we recommend that Boulder adopt the VI-SPADT (Vulnerability Index and Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool) as their common intake and assessment tool.** For more information about CAHPS and the VI-SPADT, see Appendix C.

Data sharing goes hand in hand with the need for a coordinated entry and intake process. Responses from the board survey indicated that members from all three boards felt it makes sense to collaborate with one another on data sharing. We are not recommending a single point of entry into the subsystem for single adults experiencing homelessness. However, we are recommending a single data system across all three organizations so that the system of services becomes more efficient and effective. Only if this single data system exists will it be possible to track individuals across the organizations, and avoid duplication of services and data entry. Such a data system also requires agreement among the organizations regarding data sharing; there must be a memorandum of agreement among the organizations about which data each agency needs, which data need to be shared, and procedures for doing so. See Appendix D for an example of a Group Inter-Agency Data Sharing Memorandum of Agreement.

Boulder needs a shared data system for a number of reasons. First, there is a lack of consistent data. Second, there is a lack of true understanding about who an individual is, and what happens to that individual once he/she leaves an organization. Finally, a shared data system allows for a more coordinated picture of who the homeless in Boulder really are. A shared data system will enable the organizations to better serve the individuals with whom they interact.

We recognize that each agency is currently using a different database. We also understand that there is no common software package currently being used throughout the City or the County. Bridge House is using Sales Force, BOHO is using Excel, and the Boulder Shelter is using an Access database as well as HMIS. Other agencies in the Boulder area are using the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) software. All three agencies will need to have a really hard conversation about what they are willing to do when it comes to a shared data system.

We are certainly cognizant of the complexities of the current information situation and the difficulties in implementing two new data collection systems/tools. Therefore, we recommend a several step approach: join the MDHI pilot effort to implement the VI-SPDAT and

after developing some experience with this instrument, determine how you want to proceed in utilizing it and/or the eLogic Manager system and scales. The eLogic system will allow for coordinated assessment and housing placement to go hand in hand; it will also collect data and measure long-term impact once individuals have entered the system. We have worked closely with the creator of eLogicManager, and we are convinced that this software is the most user friendly one available and that the scales are the most objective and behavior-oriented indicators available. (In an effort to provide “truth in lending,” the Burnes Institute has a formal partnership with the Center for Applied Management Practice, the home of eLogic Manager, and would receive a small compensation for an implementation of eLogic in Boulder.)

There are some concerns about each system, namely their relationship to HMIS. The Performance Management & Communications Platform has been developed by Google. After the launch of the Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement System this June, the platform is being implemented as a pilot around the Metro region. MDHI has worked with the creators of this platform to ensure that data collected from the VI-SPADT will interface with HMIS. The designers of eLogicManager have now incorporated all of the relevant HMIS data elements into their system, so as it stands now, eLogic can generate all the relevant HMIS data. In addition, eLogicManager can be used as a case manager-planning vehicle, an organizational strategic planning tool, and a built-in method for true outcome measurement.

When this change occurs, HMIS must be set up to and operate as an open system, allowing client information to follow the clients if they move between programs. This helps to reduce the number of times that clients have to provide their information, and it also makes it easier to track outcomes. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) protected health information and domestic violence related information cannot be viewed. Transitioning to an open HMIS requires data sharing agreements between organizations as well as a client release of information (ROI) consent form. See Appendix E for an example of a County HMIS Client Notice and Consent for Release form.

Because it is the goal of each of the three Continua of Care (CoCs) to have as many communities and agencies in the state of Colorado using HMIS as possible, Boulder will not only be well positioned to align itself with the region’s CoC (and ultimately, the state) but will also be a real trend setter and model for what a community can accomplish with a shared data system. We absolutely hope for Boulder to be a leader in moving in this direction, although we realize it may take some time to get there.

BEDS

- 4. Reserve all 160 of the Shelter’s beds for individuals who are in some sort of transition.**
- 5. Have BOHO become the provider for all emergency shelter “beds” through the Emergency Warming Centers (EWC) and extend committed nights of EWC operations**

from October 15 - April 15 (the Shelter's current emergency shelter season). Weather dependent EWC will be in effect from April 16 - October 14.

6. House Ready to Work clients at the Shelter and if feasible, expand RTW to accommodate 60 individuals from the planned 48.

7. Expand BOHO's Summer Sleep program to accommodate up to 50 individuals, if needed.

Currently BOHO and the Shelter provide emergency shelter for individuals, with the Shelter providing 100 emergency beds from October 15 thru April 15, and BOHO accommodating anyone seeking shelter from November 15 thru March 15 in Emergency Warming Centers. Outside of these dates, BOHO operates on a weather dependent basis. BOHO averages 106 people a night, but has seen upwards of 150. They turn no one away unless they are a danger to themselves or others or are unwilling to abide by BOHO's rules. The EWC guests did not get into the Shelter because they didn't draw a low enough number for the nightly lottery, have been kicked out of the Shelter for rule infractions, or prefer the EWC environment.

We are recommending that all of the 160 Shelter beds be classified as "transition" or "secure" beds which means they are devoted to individuals who are making a sincere effort to improve their lives and **that BOHO become the provider for all emergency shelter "beds" through the Emergency Warming Centers (EWC).** While secure beds at the Shelter are certainly not permanent supportive housing, the idea is the same as the underpinnings of the Housing First model: once an individual has a roof over his/her head, s/he can begin the stabilization process and address some of their underlying reasons for being homeless. This is obviously a huge shift, for the Shelter, for BOHO, for persons experiencing homelessness, and for partner agencies and will require additional financial resources and partnering in new ways.

This recommended shift is more closely aligned with current community values in that it emphasizes putting more resources towards helping people transition out of homelessness. It also reflects the reality that Boulder currently runs two unrelated emergency shelter programs in the winter, with the Shelter offering much nicer physical accommodations than BOHO's make-shift sleeping rooms in congregations' social halls. The Shelter is obviously far more expensive to operate. Making the Shelter a place for individuals committed to making real changes in their lives provides an incentive, a step-up, and a larger reinforcing community of individuals poised to make real progress.

This approach puts into place a more deliberate and strategic way of offering services to homeless individuals in Boulder and addresses at least a few current realities: 1) there are not enough secure beds for individuals who are working to address their underlying causes of being homeless; 2) the Shelter's Lottery system is demoralizing and leads to an even greater sense of uncertainty and logistical challenges for people; and 3) the Shelter is an underutilized resource in that the majority of its beds are empty for six months of the year.

To accommodate this shift in Shelter operations, **we recommend that BOHO's committed nights of EWC be expanded from their current schedule (November 15 - March 15) to October 15 - April 15, which is the Shelter's current emergency shelter season. Weather dependent EWC will be in effect from April 16 - October 14 (instead of the current March 16 - November 14).** In effect, BOHO will become Boulder's recognized provider of Emergency Shelter for single adults experiencing homelessness during the winter months. Individuals will be able to have certainty about where they are sleeping each night and there will be a clear progression of stepped up service availability and accommodations based on an individual's readiness to make changes to their circumstances. **As part of these changes, we recommend that the Shelter house RTW clients and, if feasible from a programmatic standpoint at Bridge House, expand RTW to accommodate 60 individuals or as many beds as can be allotted at the Shelter for this program.**

The Shelter's secure or transition beds will be filled by the Shelter and partner agencies. The rules for operations will need to be developed collaboratively with the partnering agencies and ideally with input from the residents who will make up the inaugural group participating under this new model (in keeping with trauma informed care practices). Additionally, partner agencies will be providing case management services to their clients housed at the Shelter. Other cost sharing arrangements will need to be explored.

Sample bed allocation schemata:

Shelter's Existing Transition Program: 30 - 40 beds

Shelter's First Step Program: 20 - 30 beds (Suggest that a wait list replace the daily 4:30 phone call currently required for admittance to this program.)

Ready to Work participants: 48 - 60 beds

Addiction Recovery Centers (ARC): 10 beds (For persons actively engaged in Vivitrol treatment, completed TRT course, or coming out of detox and committed to sobriety. Relapse policies to be developed in conjunction with ARC.)

Work Release program and/or Focus ReEntry (5 beds)

Respite/sick beds: 2-10 beds

Bridge House Referrals: 5-10 beds

OUR Center Referrals: 10 beds

We recognize that these recommendations may require some reconfiguring of sleeping spaces and at some point it may make sense to look into increasing the Shelter's capacity from 160 to 180 beds. Again, these are decisions that would be made in conjunction with partnering agencies and would proceed with cost sharing agreements.

We suggest that the partners devise a plan for how the beds will get filled in the start-up phase. It may be that some organizations can quickly fill available beds. If that is the case, it

would make sense to increase their initial allotment so space is utilized most effectively. Additionally, if the beds can't be filled with transition clients by October 15, 2014, the partners will need to evaluate whether it makes the most sense to fill beds on an emergency basis until such time as the shift is complete. If this occurs, we recommend that those beds be filled during the day by staff at Bridge House, rather than through the current Lottery system.

Summer Shelter

Lack of year-round shelter was consistently cited as a significant gap in available services. By shifting all beds at the Shelter to year-round transition beds, there are an additional 100 beds available in the summer. In addition, BOHO just opened their Women's Summer Shelter (see below), a supplement to their Summer Sleep program that provides sanctioned, safe, congregated outdoor sleeping on the grounds of Har Hashem. The hope is that over time more single adults experiencing homelessness in Boulder will choose to enter the various transition programs offered at the Shelter, thereby reducing the numbers seeking admittance to BOHO's Summer Sleep program. Should that not be the case or until that is the case, **we recommend increasing Summer Sleep's capacity to accommodate up to 50 people if needed, since there are no alternatives for legal, safe sleeping options from April 16 thru October 14.**

Lack of Services for Women

Lack of services for women also came up repeatedly in the surveys and interviews. In recent years the providers have implemented a number of programs to address this concern. The most recent addition: effective June 1, 2014 BOHO opened a women-staffed, women-only summer shelter program. Up to 18 women will be admitted to the program, which will rotate to different congregations each night of the week. During the 2013/2014 season, BOHO offered separate women's sleeping areas at the EWC and piloted a women only EWC site. Bridge House has women only hours and a women's support group. The Shelter has separate sleeping quarters for women and any woman who arrives at the Shelter by 5 p.m. is guaranteed to get a bed, i.e. they don't have to take their chances with the lottery.

One of the implications of eliminating the Shelter's emergency bed program is that women who are not committed to a transition plan will no longer have a guaranteed bed at the Shelter during the winter season. However, women are guaranteed indoor sleeping at the EWC, which will hopefully expand to span from October 15 - April 15. We considered recommending that some Shelter beds be reserved for women, regardless of their engagement in case management, but decided that would be disruptive to creating a re-enforcing culture among those living at the Shelter.

The Boulder Homeless Women's Initiative is a group attempting to bring together the providers with faith-based groups that are focused on increasing services for women who are experiencing homelessness. Currently, the Reverence Movement operates out of the Resource Center on Tuesdays, providing a support group for women and offering one-to-one mentoring support. In February, they launched a women's only day services program held at Pine Street Church every Monday. There are concerns that the Reverence Movement may be proselytizing in addition to offering assistance to women. It would probably be helpful if the Homeless Planning Group could offer some structure and/or leadership to the Boulder Homeless Women's Initiative efforts.

While we do not offer a specific recommendation focused on the availability of services for women, several of our recommendations will impact the services provided to women. Specifically, a greater emphasis on providing Trauma Informed Care will improve service delivery to women, and relocating and expanding day services will increase capacity to offer women spaces and services.

DAYTIME SERVICES

- 8. Relocate and enhance Day Services provided by Bridge House.**
- 9. Consider that the building at 4747 Table Mesa Drive become the Day Services location. If this is not feasible, then the City needs to come up with a suitable location.**
- 10. Locate Bridge House's Resource Center at the Shelter.**
- 11. Keep the Shelter open 24/7, with Bridge House staffing the daytime hours and the Shelter covering evening and night hours.**

Another consistent message from the surveys, interviews with key stakeholders, conversations with individuals experiencing homelessness, and practices in other communities, is that additional day services are needed.

“It is my understanding that Bridge House has been attempting to locate a new structure/office location that could better serve the needs of their clients in regards to space, but that there is difficulty in getting the City of Boulder, residents, and business owners to allow them to move locations. Having the space to offer the resource center programs 5 days a week, with a more spacious kitchen/dining area, and case management areas/computer labs would more effectively provide safe space and areas in which homeless clients could work on their transition out of homelessness. Emergency shelter being open year around with more case management services offered would help individuals to possibly transition out of homelessness quicker. ARC services interfacing more with these agencies could also be helpful. These agencies interfacing more with the housing authorities and their landlord development meetings could also be helpful as housing is quite difficult to establish at this time in Boulder County. Better integration of Boulder County Human Services in providing some services at the Bridge House resource center could also make it easier for people to get needed benefits. For example, the Community Resource & Referral Center for the VA in Denver has the County of Denver SNAP program come to the center once a week for enrollment related purposes.” – Community Partner

The space at Bridge House is simply not sufficient to serve the number of people who walk through their doors on a daily basis. They are operating out of a 2-story, 1,200 square foot refurbished carriage house and see an average of 117 people a day (and upwards of 150 at times). Most clients are drawn to Bridge House for the meals (breakfast and lunch), but others utilize the space to take a shower, visit with friends, get mail, use the computers, receive assistance in the form of case management, or engage with outreach workers from Mental Health Partners and Clinica. All of this occurs under very crowded conditions that routinely violate fire code. The crowding and lack of privacy creates a very stressful environment for clients and staff, and is a significant deterrent for people to engage in services beyond meals and quick stops for a shower or to pick up mail. The small size also means that Bridge House isn't able to provide respite to everyone during extreme weather. Under pleasant weather conditions, participants eat their meals in the adjacent alley and parking lots, since the facility has no outdoor space of its own.

The reality is that there is no designated place for nonworking individuals experiencing homelessness to go during the day to access needed services or to engage in productive activities like art classes, jewelry making, meditation classes, etc., all of which are soft touch, therapeutic activities. In addition to accessing services, individuals experiencing homelessness simply need a safe place to go during the day.

There is considerable community concern that individuals experiencing homelessness have taken over public spaces (the Library, the Municipal Campus, the Courthouse lawn, areas along Boulder Creek, the parking lot next to Bridge House, etc.). Recent laws have been aimed at addressing this issue, leading to heated public debate over the criminalization of the status of being without a home in Boulder. The Library, responding to the concerns of their housed patrons, has implemented policies that make it difficult for those experiencing homelessness to spend time there, e.g. disallowing bags or packs larger than a certain size to be carried into the Library. The West Senior Center, the CU Campus, and coffee shops and fast food restaurants, are other places where those experiencing homelessness congregate during the day.

To address these current realities, **we recommend relocating and enhancing Day Services provided by Bridge House.** In addition to having the space to comfortably and safely offer their current services, the building should be equipped to also provide laundry and storage facilities. Having a welcoming center that offers needed services won't do away with the public's discomfort in sharing public spaces with those experiencing homelessness; however, it will take pressure off of those places and more importantly will provide the opportunity to constructively engage individuals.

We recognize that siting of a day services facility is highly problematic and requires the full and active endorsement of the City. **We propose that Bridge House and the City give consideration to the possibility of the building at 4747 Table Mesa Drive becoming the new day services location.** Bridge House is currently under contract to purchase this building, and we believe that with some interior work, it could accommodate staff offices, as well as a breakfast and lunch site, showers, laundry facilities, mail pick-up, and storage of personal belongings. Additionally, the space could also accommodate access to computers, constructive activities, women's only programming space, and a place for outreach workers from Mental Health Partners and Clinica to engage clients.

We understand that Bridge House is intending to use this building to provide housing associated with its Ready to Work Program and that all funding, private and public, has been allocated to the project solely for this purpose. To meet the aggressive closing timeline of September 2, 2014 per the contract with the seller, it is highly unlikely that Bridge House could close on this deal should the building's intended use change. Due diligence on zoning and neighborhood outreach has been performed on the property with only housing for Ready to Work housing as a use. There is great risk that the building could be lost to the continuum of services if current plans are altered.

Clearly, repurposing this building to house a day center, as outlined above, carries certain risks. Public and private financial support could disappear, and neighborhood reactions could change. However, we think it makes no sense for the Bridge House to add temporary housing to

its already very full plate, when that is the primary service provided by the Shelter. Therefore, we encourage the Bridge House leadership to explore a possible renegotiation of financial resources with funders and to discuss a repurposing of the facility with neighborhood leaders. We think that the greater alignment among the three organizations that this report lays out could be persuasive to the community and funders. The recommended repurposing of 4747 is part of an overhaul in terms of how services are currently provided, instead of continuing as three very separate organizations that move forward independently. Specifically, repurposing 4747 is central to a commitment by these three organizations to provide services in a coordinated fashion to (1) maximize the resources that are going towards individuals committed to moving out of homelessness; (2) maximize the use of existing facilities; (3) increase the opportunity to constructively engage individuals who are not yet ready to address their problems by providing adequate space to offer day services; and (4) create a comprehensive, shared data system that informs organizations and the community about the resources that are needed to help individuals experiencing homelessness.

If the leadership of Bridge House decides not to accept the above recommendation, the three organizations, in conjunction with the City, must discuss the need for and identify a location to provide Day Services in a different location. The current argument seems to be that during the nice weather, individuals experiencing homelessness do not need a daytime facility. However, complaints from officials about the concentrated presence of individuals at public facilities such as the Library, the Municipal Campus, etc., suggest very strongly that this argument is simply not accurate. In addition, our survey respondents and interviewees consistently reiterated the need for such a facility. We have also heard from the City, the Shelter, and other agency partners that the North Boulder community will not tolerate such a facility being housed at the Shelter. The geographic location of 4747 Table Mesa may offer a more palatable solution for the City.

Extreme Weather Conditions

Currently, there is a very modest accommodation for daytime shelter during extreme winter weather conditions: the Shelter will stay open when there are no other alternatives. In practice, this means the Shelter may stay open on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years. Likewise, the City has asked BOHO to provide emergency indoor shelter on Saturdays and public holidays when other facilities aren't open and the forecast calls for a daytime high of 25 degrees or 32 degrees and actively snowing. It is interesting to note that the providers and the City seem to believe that public facilities such as the libraries are the solution for protecting individuals experiencing homelessness from dangerous winter weather conditions.

If our recommendations are adopted, the new Day Services facility may assume the responsibility of providing day shelter on the weekends and public holidays when weather

(extreme hot, cold, or wet) creates a public safety issue. Likewise, with the Shelter's new configuration as a 24/7 facility for persons actively working on transition, their residents will have safe accommodations during dangerous weather.

Resource Center

Bridge House's Resource Center received high praise from partner agencies and donors and is regarded as an important recent addition to the panoply of available services. As it currently exists, the Resource Center operates two days a week out of the Annex at First Presbyterian Church, providing a place for persons experiencing homelessness to access multiple service providers under one roof. The goal is to help individuals obtain employment, access assistance in signing up for public benefit programs, participate in support groups, get help resolving minor court issues, engage in case management, and attend mentoring programs.

We recommend that the Resource Center move from its current location and operate out of the Shelter. Based on current utilization of the Resource Center, its hours of operation appear sufficient. However, as more individuals occupy transition beds at the Shelter, the demand for the services of the Resource Center is likely to increase and may warrant expanded hours of operation. This recommendation reinforces the Shelter facility being the place where individuals are engaged in moving beyond their current circumstance and also helps support implementing the following recommendation:

In addition, we recommend that the Shelter be kept open 24/7. It does not make sense that the nicest facility serving single homeless adults is not available during daytime hours, when clearly individuals and programs need space. **We are recommending that the Shelter stay open during the day, housing the Resource Center and accommodating the daytime needs of the residents who are, in effect, living at the Shelter while they are working to transition into permanent housing.** With an expanded ARC presence at the Shelter, it may be possible for them to hold support groups or offer some daytime programming for their clients. Daytime hours at the Shelter will accommodate individuals needing respite/sick beds and residents who work nights, graveyard, or part-time hours. They also will provide residents with a safe place to have some down-time without feeling like they are unwelcome loiterers around town. They will be able to tend to daily living chores like laundry, email correspondence, required study for training programs, as well as complete their assigned duty that contributes to the cleanliness of the Shelter. Having a safe place to be during the day to both engage in constructive activities, as well as a place to relax, will alleviate some pressure on public spaces, allow people to remove themselves from some negative peer influences, and be an additional reward for their commitment to taking steps necessary to move beyond their current position of homelessness.

We recognize that this has budget implications and will require additional staffing. **Since Bridge House will be on-site to run the Resource Center, we propose that the organizations consider that Bridge House will cover the Shelter's extended weekday hours - keeping the current delineation of Bridge House being the provider of day services and the Shelter the provider of overnight services.** The enhanced outcomes evaluation and tracking made possible through eLogic will help determine whether providing these additional resources to people actually improves their success rate. If it does, we believe the organizations will be able to make a strong case for ongoing funding for these programs. We believe it could also be helpful to discuss these changes and service enhancements with the individuals who will be able to access these programs at the Shelter, letting them know that their individual and collective ability to achieve their goals will determine whether this level of support is able to continue. The intention is to build a culture of shared success and support between the providers and the clients. Those persons who can't demonstrate a commitment to moving beyond homelessness will receive services geared to their level of engagement, namely emergency service accommodations.

The Boulder Shelter's Management Plan

We realize that our recommendations will require a renegotiation of the Shelter's Management Plan. Changes to the Management Plan require City approval and will require negotiation with the North Boulder Neighborhood Group. While we can not predict the City's reaction, we are hopeful that the proposed changes will be viewed as being in close alignment with their desire to see more people transitioning out of homelessness and that they will champion the change to the Management Plan and play a central role in working with the neighborhood group. Negotiations with the neighborhood will be delicate, especially due to the recent upheaval with regard to the new Lee Hill Housing First units being built adjacent to the Shelter.

Those involved with the Lee Hill Project indicated that they learned many lessons about how communications with the neighbors should have been handled during that process. Since that time, the Neighborhood/Shelter Action Group (NSAG) has been reinstated, with all the nearby neighborhoods being represented. The Shelter has done a good job of sending postcards to the neighborhood, listing their representatives on the NSAG, holding meetings with neighborhood business owners, involving the police liaison officer in that process to explain public safety issues and procedures, and listening to business concerns. They are also working hard to keep City Council informed of what is happening at the Shelter on a quarterly basis and are offering businesses training on how to deal with/interact with the population experiencing homelessness. The Shelter Board and staff are very mindful that they must work continuously to maintain positive communications with the neighborhood.

The work that the Shelter has done to improve neighborhood relations over the last six months is critical to continuing a dialogue about potential changes to the Management Plan. The question the neighbors have, and have always had, is about the density and distribution of homeless services, where affordable housing exists, and whether North Boulder is “saturated” with homeless services.

The changes we are recommending for the Shelter, while a radical departure from current operations are actually shifting some of the “less desirable elements” away from the neighborhood. Everyone who will be living at the Shelter or coming to the Resource Center during the day is committed to working to overcome their homelessness.

Altering the nature of the Shelter’s operations is happening within a deliberate system of service delivery designed to better accommodate those individuals who are willing to work on their situation. It will be a place of hope, recovery, hard work, and commitment to a brighter future. It is not a place that is offering a handout.

Of course, these negotiations with neighbors will not be easy. It will require a carefully crafted message and strong endorsement and participation from the City and other community leaders. The community is clamoring for someone to address the “homeless problem.” The changes that we are recommending to how these three organizations serve single adults experiencing homelessness in the City of Boulder provides an opportunity to communicate a cohesive strategy that will produce measurable results.

Jobs & Job Training

Currently, there are some excellent programs in place through Bridge House and BOHO that are helping formerly homeless individuals and individuals currently experiencing homelessness find work. Bridge House established the Ready to Work (RTW) program as a transitional employment program for individuals experiencing both homelessness and joblessness. So far, the program has been highly successful in getting people trained and placed into jobs, for up to 20 hours a week, with the City of Boulder. The model is one that could be expanded to other cities in the County, especially in Longmont and other places where city departments (Parks & Open Spaces or Public Works) might be willing to form a partnership and employ RTW participants. RTW is also starting to expand within the Community Table program, getting trainees into a culinary arts program so they can gain skills to transition into a kitchen job. Based on the program’s success and the number of applicants who are currently turned away, Bridge House plans to expand the number of people admitted to the program and add a housing component, through the intended acquisition of 4747 Table Mesa, recognizing that a secure bed will increase participant success rate.

It is our understanding that there are numerous volunteers and groups that support providing food services at the Shelter, and we suggest that this process might be streamlined and offer the opportunity for job training and employment. One congregation we surveyed had a few suggestions about how the process for preparing and serving food at the Boulder Shelter could be improved. The congregation asked that there be more consistency in food supplies, and it would be helpful to know ahead of time the number of residents who are expected for breakfast and supplies need to be purchased. Apparently, a lot of the communication goes directly through the Volunteer Coordinator at the Shelter. We suggest that Bridge House and the Shelter explore a potential partnership to put a RTW trainee from the culinary arts program into the Shelter as an apprentice. If this person could help run and manage the kitchen and food services through a more streamlined and effective process, that person could ultimately be hired as the Shelter's Kitchen Manager.

With any employment opportunity, an important factor is obviously the job training. RTW focuses on training and giving people hands on experience. Based on survey results, for other job opportunities where on-the-job training may not be in place, more emphasis should be placed on skills such as resume writing, interview coaching and preparation, and basic "tips of the trade" for people preparing to enter the workforce. These services could be provided at the Resource Center. Mental Health Partners also has a "Journeys Team" that provides job support and placement support for persons with mental illness. Presumably this is a known resource for Case Managers.

Meals

Feeding the homeless in the City of Boulder is no small task. Many different players contribute to the effort, and there does not seem to be a significant shortage of places to get a meal.

Both Bridge House and the Shelter serve more than 70,000 meals a year. Bridge House serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner Monday through Friday for anyone in need of a meal. The Shelter provides breakfast and dinner to all Shelter guests. Breakfast is also available at the Shelter for individuals who have not slept there. Among the 17 churches involved with BOHO, meals are provided to participants who stay at an EWC each night they are open, except for Sunday night. Most congregations also provide a breakfast snack for people when they leave the EWC at 7 a.m.

A large noon meal is provided by downtown churches on Sundays throughout the year. In addition, people bring food to those experiencing homelessness at various locations around town on a fairly consistent basis. We aren't clear whether individuals or groups are picking up the slack with regards to meals on Saturdays and Sunday breakfasts and dinners. Bridge House recently started hosting a lunch on Saturdays in the off months of Lambs Lunch, run by the First

Presbyterian Church. If there are known gaps, those could be publicized, as there may be individuals or groups willing to step up to meet the need.

While there doesn't seem to be a shortage of food, there may be a shortage of information about where and when people can access meals. Therefore, we suggest compiling a master list of meals, showing the day, time and location(s) where each meal is offered. This information should be included in a flyer that has a more detailed list of all available services for single homeless adults. (See recommendation #18 below.) It probably makes sense for Bridge House to compile information on meals and to announce any known gaps in weekend coverage.

INTERNAL OPERATIONS

- 12. Place a much higher emphasis on staff training for all three organizations (along with some board training) that includes trauma-informed care and motivational interviewing techniques.**
- 13. Wherever possible and appropriate, develop joint training for staff at all three organizations.**
- 14. Agree on standard case management practices and utilize them wherever appropriate.**
- 15. Supplement case management services with trained volunteers.**
- 16. We recommend that all three organizations consider ways in which they could work together on issues of education, outreach, messaging, and advocacy and hire one staff person to provide leadership on this.**
- 17. Make the Boulder Shelter's comprehensive website listing of available resources for single homeless adults more useful by ensuring that organizations can easily print off needed sections. Remind partner agencies that this information is available. Additionally, each organization should print out the materials and post them prominently at their service site.**

Staff Training

Most staff at all three organizations seem to really like their jobs, and we heard great compliments and praise from many clients and community partners about the staff at all three organizations. All staff from BOHO who responded to the survey say that they like their jobs most days, and are proud to work at BOHO. Four of six strongly agree or agree that they are satisfied with their supervisor, while two answered Don't Know. At the Shelter, 32 out of 34 staff strongly agree or agree with the statement, "Most days I like my job." Only two staff members disagreed. 26 Shelter staff strongly agree or agree that they are satisfied with their

supervisor, 4 were neutral, and 4 disagreed. At Bridge House, all of the staff respondents (14) answered strongly agree or agree that they like their job and are proud to work there; feel well equipped to do their job well; and are satisfied with their supervisor.

However, a common theme from all three organizations – through Board, staff and volunteer surveys as well as from interviewees - is that the staff at each organization needs to be better trained. They could all benefit from a much higher level of training that is trauma informed and more client centered. We realize that many staff, especially from BOHO and Bridge House who may be formerly homeless themselves, still may have a high level of trauma and/or some mental health concerns. Most workplaces have a degree of dysfunction. This is difficult to avoid since we are all human beings. Working with individuals who are literally struggling to survive is a very high stress situation, and, for best results, calls for staff who are aware of their own issues, know how to maintain appropriate boundaries, are adept at defusing volatile situations, know how to resolve conflict, and provide a solid, caring presence that earns people's genuine respect. It is very difficult to successfully manage the stressful situations that each of these organizations handle on a daily basis when the staff is still very close to the same challenges that their clients are facing.

BOHO:

BOHO's staffing model is fairly unique in that all of their staff have formerly experienced homelessness. This allows individuals who have come through the organization and are familiar with it an opportunity to serve in a peer-to-peer role, while gaining job experience. The data show that additional staff training is needed to ensure that people who work at BOHO are properly trained in models of trauma-informed care and motivational interviewing, and have the skill set to appropriately set boundaries between being staff and clientele.

Some BOHO guests expressed major concerns with the appropriateness of staff conduct. Even the staff at BOHO believe there is room for improvement. Results from the staff survey show that half the staff at BOHO said that they strongly disagree or disagree with the statement that staff communicate well with one another.

Through our interviews and surveys, we learned that there are major concerns with BOHO's current staffing structure and some of the interactions that may go on between staff and clients. While there is a very warm, welcoming environment at the EWC, these concerns warrant consideration. We suggest that BOHO's Board of Directors take a much closer look into the interactions among staff members, and among staff and clients, and consider making some changes to its staffing policies.

The Denver Rescue Mission's Crossing Program also employs individuals who have formerly experienced homelessness. However, they require that individuals be in stable housing,

i.e. removed from being homeless, at least one year before being employed with their program. This is an approach that BOHO might want to consider. Another possibility would be for staff to agree to a mental health assessment and engage in treatment to deal with their own trauma and trigger issues if appropriate.

The Shelter:

We understand that there is a high level of (front line) staff turnover, especially at the Shelter. This is likely because they tend to hire young professionals, perhaps straight out of college. The expectation is that they will stay one or two seasons before moving on. Many go to the Peace Corps or enroll in graduate school. The leadership at the Shelter does not find turnover to be an issue and they are pleased to be able to hire high quality people for relatively low salaries.

We heard from clients that Shelter staff can be petty and punitive and that they don't treat clients well. With all of the rules that are put into place, it feels to clients like they are being set up for failure rather than getting help to succeed. One survey respondent commented, "I wish they were more flexible. For example, their operating season is rigid and doesn't flex with the weather; they have many rules that tend to exclude people."

Bridge House:

We heard from clients at Bridge House that case managers did not always listen to them. We also heard that there is no way for clients to file a grievance unless they have been kicked out of a program, although there is a suggestion box available to all clients, and the Executive Director holds a weekly community meeting to ask for program and operational input. If what we heard is true, we suggest that Bridge House develop policies and practices to address and handle client concerns.

Overall, we learned that staff from all three organizations try hard to be of real service and to be compassionate, but that, in some instances, individual staff members are less than totally effective. **Therefore, we recommend that all three organizations improve their training for staff, including the possibility of joint training sessions and sessions focused on trauma-informed care and motivational interviewing.** (See Appendix F for key principles of a trauma-informed approach.) Dr. Bob Unger from Naropa has started coming to the Shelter every other week to facilitate staff training around motivational interviewing. We think this is a wonderful practice and partnership and wonder if his trainings could be open to staff from BOHO and Bridge House, thus launching the practice of **joint staff trainings**.

Board Awareness

There is a lack of awareness on the part of the members of each organization's Boards about what the other organizations do. The opportunities that began last fall and have continued throughout this research process to learn about each other's organization is a major step in the right direction and is forcing the Boards to think about what they do and how they can collaborate differently and better. When the Boards of Bridge House and BOHO initiated a conversation last fall with the Shelter about a possible merger, the Shelter Board analyzed the situation carefully and decided they were against it. However, the conversation opened up an opportunity to examine other ways of collaborating.

We think that the Board and the staff of each organization should visit the other two agencies to understand their high service areas. For example, Board members and staff from BOHO and Bridge House could go to the Shelter in the early morning when 20-30 individuals experiencing homelessness are waiting for morning services. Similarly, Board members from the other two agencies could travel to BOHO's EWC to see the 150 individuals sleeping on blankets, or alternatively, go to Bridge House at breakfast or lunchtime, or attend a Community Table for dinner.

In addition, we suggest that Boards and staffs should get together on a semi-annual basis to learn more about each other's organizations. Our research suggests that the increased knowledge about what the other agencies are doing could improve services.

We heard from one BOHO Board member that BOHO has a relatively "young Board" in terms of their governance experience and stages of development as Board members. While the Board at BOHO does a tremendous amount of work in the day-to-day operations and essentially fulfills all administrative roles, it was questioned if this model is truly sustainable.

A Board member from the Boulder Shelter suggested, "The Boards of all three organizations should conduct a day-long planning retreat to assess current challenges, identify opportunities, make true progress in the 10-year plan to end homelessness, and start making changes to that plan to reflect current realities and implement needed changes". This suggestion would be a very useful addition to the efforts at joint coordination and collaboration.

Case Management

Currently, single adults experiencing homelessness in Boulder can receive case management support from the Shelter, Bridge House, Addiction Recovery Centers, Mental Health Partners, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, and Boulder Senior Services. In addition, the Reverence Movement offers case management to women experiencing homelessness and

there may be other faith-based groups that are “walking alongside” those experiencing homelessness as they attempt to get off the streets.

Bridge House provides Basic Needs Case Management to about 70 percent of their clients (700 individuals) and Intensive Case Management to 6-10 individuals plus 16 Ready to Work trainees at any given time. The Shelter provides Case Management services to participants in their Transition Program (30 people), to residents they have placed in their transitional housing units, and to Housing First residents. While the population of single adults experiencing homelessness receives services from multiple agencies, there does not appear to be much overlap in terms of case management. However, unless an individual is discussed at the Complex Client Group, the partner organizations are not systematically made aware of the services individuals receive from the other service providers.

Currently, the Complex Client Group is managed by Clinica (People’s Clinic). The group meets monthly if there is someone to discuss. However, the group doesn’t meet every month, despite the fact that all of the partners find those meetings to be helpful for coordinating care for individuals, building relationships and understanding across organizations, and for providing emotional support to staff. While we are not advocating that the group meet just for the sake of meeting, we suggest that consideration be given to convening the Complex Client Group monthly to confer on individuals even if they don’t rise to the current definition of Complex Client. Based on the numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness in Boulder, there is the possibility of a very personalized and coordinated approach for each individual. The fact that it can take years for an individual to be ready to move off the streets is all the more reason for professionals working with this population to be closely allied to provide support in the most coordinated and attuned fashion as possible.

We believe that high quality case management coupled with volunteer support has the best chance of helping an individual transition off the street and once housed, stay off the street. Several of our recommendations result in improving case management services: the common intake process and shared data system will increase case managers’ ability to see what other services an individual is accessing and hopefully create a deeper awareness of an individual’s progress or challenges. Additionally, enhancing staff expertise in trauma informed care and motivational interviewing techniques will hopefully result in more individuals engaging at the level where case management services become available to them. Likewise, an enhanced Day Services program, with well-trained staff and volunteers, also creates an environment more conducive to building trusting relationships that has the potential of leading people into more comprehensive services.

If the Shelter becomes a program that only serves individuals in transition, 130 additional people will soon be engaged in case management. To address concerns we heard from clients about current case management practices at both the Shelter and Bridge House and to strengthen

the quality of case management services overall, **we recommend that all of the entities providing case management to Shelter residents come together to create a common understanding as to what constitutes case management and that this common set of standards be utilized where appropriate.**

Similar to the Shelter's Resource Specialist, it might make sense to designate a "Housing Specialist" that works across programs. The Housing Specialist would have relationships with landlords, maintain a master list of available properties, help individuals with the search process, know which landlords will rent to ex-felons, assuage landlord fears by promising to help problem solve when issues arise, and explore the possibility of establishing Master Leases to assure landlords that they will be paid. Since Mental Health Partners already has a number of housing specialists, perhaps they can provide this service to Shelter residents. It might also make sense for the Shelter's current Resource Specialist to be housed at Bridge House's enhanced Day Services facility, since all Shelter residents will now be actively engaged in case management.

We also recommend that case management support be supplemented with trained volunteers who can provide additional moral support, transport and accompany the individual to intimidating meetings or appointments and serve as a "friend from the housed world" that can help smooth the person's entry into a very new reality. After all, 30-60 minutes a week of formal case management is not much support for someone tackling very challenging issues.

We heard pretty consistently from current and past clients that the Shelter is very rule bound. Some clients report feeling like the staff is waiting for them to fail, rather than working with them to succeed. In shifting to only serving individuals in transition, the Shelter has a great opportunity to reexamine its rules in conjunction with partner agencies and residents to create a more healthy and therapeutic environment. We recognize that because the staff has to enforce rules, they will rarely be able to develop the rapport that an outside volunteer will be able to do. Having both a paid professional and a trained volunteer working with an individual increases his/her chances of making a successful transition out of homelessness.

Education, Outreach and Advocacy

We heard in interviews and surveys collected that there is a high level of support for improved collaboration in the areas of education, outreach and advocacy. The common feeling was that organizations would do better if they were to come together as a united front in these areas. **We recommend that all three organizations consider ways in which they could work together on issues of education, outreach, messaging, and advocacy and hire one staff person to provide leadership on this.** For example, comments were made about improving public relations and messaging efforts to help the public better understand the face of homelessness and what each of the organizations is doing to address the issue. Another

suggestion was that there be collaboration on press releases and information blitzes for informing the community about who they are and who the people they serve are. BOHO's Library Series could be advertised by and through Bridge House and the Shelter. The educational photography project and the Humanity Project that Bridge House recently hosted could be supported by the Shelter and BOHO. There are numerous examples of public awareness and outreach efforts that the three organizations could work on together to have a much greater impact. We also suggest that there be joint shared training for police and other community organizations and groups. These sessions could include approaches for giving to specific causes or programs (i.e. discounted memberships to the B-Cycle program or to recreation centers for those experiencing homelessness) and for raising awareness of the issue.

In the final analysis, a total community approach to ending homelessness will ultimately depend on changing public attitudes about persons who are homeless. The three organizations are in a prime position to provide information about persons experiencing homelessness and about services and programs that address issues facing some of our most at-risk citizens. A collaborative approach among the three organizations to help mount a broad public opinion blitz could be instrumental in changing public opinions.

Information about available services.

We recommend that the Boulder Shelter make its comprehensive website listing of available resources for single homeless adults more useful by ensuring that organizations can easily print off needed sections; that partner agencies be reminded that this information is available, and that each organization should print out the materials and post them prominently at their service site. This would increase the utility of the Shelter's list and make it more available to those who need it.

From speaking to clients, it was evident that many are unaware of the services that are available to them, both at the location where we encountered them and at other sites. They find it difficult to learn about what services are available and indicated they find out about services via word-of-mouth. They questioned why information isn't more accessible. It seems logical for the organizations to remove this straightforward obstacle that their clientele is experiencing. In addition to implementing the above recommendation, each organization could increase their efforts to inform clients of the services available at their own facility:

While the Shelter offers new guests a tour of the facility and explains what resources and services are available, it is probable that first-timers are overwhelmed (and/or possibly intoxicated) on their first night at the Shelter and don't retain a lot of what they are told on the tour. It would be helpful to have the information about Shelter services and programs in written form that people can refer to later.

A Bridge House and Resource Center client suggested that staff members have their title and qualifications (e.g. MSW) on their office doors, so clients can know what types of support that person might be able to offer. Individuals are also not aware of the various services available at the Resource Center.

BOHO might have a small white board on site at each EWC offering process information for newcomers, such as time for lights out, last smoke break, and morning wake-up/vacate timing. In addition, they could share relevant information such as what time the van that is taking people to church will be leaving in the morning, or how to apply for Summer Sleep, etc. It might also alleviate the concerns about favoritism, if there is a clear explanation (perhaps written on a poster board) explaining how individuals “earn” the privilege of going to an overflow site.

[Side Note: We had a conversation with a Senior Resource Specialist from the West Boulder Senior Center who indicated that the Center has become a place that those experiencing homelessness (seniors and non-seniors) go to come inside, get a cup of coffee, and possibly use computers. Center staff has developed a flyer that lists services available for individuals experiencing homelessness. The Specialist noted that they have needed to update the information. Evidently, they are unaware of the list of services.]

The Senior Resource Specialist also explained that they have worked with three times as many seniors experiencing homelessness since the flooding in the fall. They primarily refer these seniors to other organizations, but they will provide assistance when possible in obtaining housing. They have funds designated to pay for first month’s rent. In addition, they will give seniors bus tokens, grocery store gift cards, and meals in their cafeteria. The Specialist shared that she knows of a few seniors experiencing homelessness who have intentionally hurt themselves so they could have some time in a nursing home. She would welcome closer collaboration with the homeless providers.

COORDINATING WITH OUTSIDE RESOURCES

18. All three organizations should determine transportation needs and negotiate with VIA, RTD and Boulder B-Cycle as a unified block, with the City as a key ally.

19. Capitalize on existing faith community partnerships to develop a more deliberate strategy for further engaging the faith community as valuable partners in addressing homelessness issues.

Transportation

As we surveyed various people and talked with others, including clients, we became aware, yet again, that transportation is extremely important to those experiencing homelessness but one regularly overlooked. Almost none of the individuals experiencing homelessness have access to a private vehicle; individuals must either use public transportation or walk. In fact, navigating between service locations is one of the most difficult and time-consuming activities in the life of an individual experiencing homelessness.

Therefore, it is important that service agencies and the public sector consider ways to improve transportation for those experiencing homelessness. For example, would Boulder consider a Bike share program for the homeless? In researching a program in Washington, D.C. we learned that a partnership with the local B-Cycle program was formed that allowed people experiencing homelessness to purchase discounted memberships for \$10/year, for the use of a bike which served as their main mode of transportation around town. There would likely be groups (college students, faith-based groups, local businesses, etc.) willing to pick up the cost of these memberships if this partnership could be established. We believe the City is best positioned to take the lead on moving this forward.

Bus routes and schedules need to be made more accessible. We learned that the Shelter's morning services are under attended because the city bus schedules and routes do not make it possible for someone to get there (especially, if someone has stayed at an EWC the night before that is located on the other side of town from the Shelter). A client expressed concern that after the Shelter closes in mid April, the bus no longer comes to the Shelter in the mornings, making it difficult for her to get around without a bus pass. As suggested with the B-Cycle program, it would be worth engaging RTD in conversation to see if they would be willing to offer bus passes for discounted rates for those individuals experiencing homelessness. In addition, at the present time, each organization negotiates separately with VIA for services.

Given these circumstances, we recommend that the organizations come together to discuss the transportation challenges for their clients, outline their needs, and negotiate with VIA, RTD, and Boulder B-Cycle as a unified block, with the City as a key ally.

Engaging the Faith Community

BOHO is widely lauded for its successful engagement of the faith community. Their programming, dependent on the willingness of congregations to host the Emergency Warming Centers, Summer Sleep, and most recently the Women's Summer Shelter, demonstrates that congregations are able and willing to be a valuable partner in providing services to the homeless. Congregations are also central to Bridge House programs, hosting Community Table and

providing facilities for the Resource Center and the Bridge House. Additionally, congregations have a long-standing tradition of cooking and serving meals at the Shelter. Individuals from congregations volunteer with each organization and many of the congregations regularly make financial contributions to BOHO, Bridge House, and the Shelter.

Unfortunately, only six congregations responded to our online survey; however, those that did offered valuable insights. All said that they would welcome coming together on a periodic basis with each other and the three organizations, and most believed that the faith community can play a larger role in addressing homelessness.

One agency partner said that the City and County are reluctant to act as partners with the faith community, commenting that this is leaving a large resource significantly underutilized. Additionally, this individual wondered whether using congregations as shelter providers was the best use of the faith community's resources, suggesting that individual congregants' passions for helping individuals makes them excellent allies (when properly trained) for people working to address their underlying challenges that have led to homelessness. (This suggestion, as well as other communities' experience with engaging volunteers, and local examples of church volunteers providing one-to-one support to individuals led to Recommendation #16 under the section on Case Management.) Likewise, an expanded Day Services facility opens up additional opportunities for engaging more volunteers with a passion for connecting to individuals experiencing homelessness.

A few people have expressed concern that the scale at which the EWCs are operating may be outgrowing congregations' capacity, i.e., the program is no longer a temporary stop gap measure. BOHO is a full-fledged emergency shelter provider, consistently serving as many people as the Shelter does with its emergency beds. It is not unlikely that before too long, if the numbers don't decrease, there will be a serious conversation about the need for another permanent emergency shelter in Boulder. Keeping the congregations in the loop, informed and central to crafting solutions, may help to keep that conversation at bay and also to build a more vocal constituency for a permanent housing solution.

There is evidence both locally and nationally that congregations are involved in addressing housing issues. For example, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania's 10-Year Heading Home Plan challenges its faith community to provide 60 affordable, permanent housing units to house persons experiencing homelessness.

As it stands now, there are local churches taking action to provide housing. For example, Trinity Lutheran Church at 2200 Broadway recently announced groundbreaking to build 24-units of affordable senior housing on church-owned downtown real estate. It is unclear whether this effort was done in coordination with the City, the 10-Year Plan, or Boulder Housing Partners.

We also learned that a few churches have bought houses for the purpose of housing individuals experiencing homelessness, either rent free or at a significantly reduced rent for a period of time. This practice, if nurtured, could become a part of the solution in Boulder. If ten congregations each had a home that could house 3-5 people, there is the possibility of creating a significant dent in the lack of low-income housing, on a par with the very expensive Housing First projects. If congregations knew they could rely on agencies to provide the case management support needed by their occupants, how many more congregations would be willing to make this investment? We think it's worth exploring.

It is clear that congregations in Boulder have considerable resources - wealth, real estate assets, commitment to the issue, ability to educate and reach a broad audience, and perhaps even a bully pulpit -- all of which can be mobilized. The recent visit to the Shelter by Boulder's ecumenical council provides a good opening for further dialogue. **We recommend that the three organizations capitalize on existing faith community partnerships to develop a more deliberate strategy for further engaging the faith community as valuable partners in addressing homelessness issues.** If they aren't already engaged in the 10-Year Plan body of advisors, it would seem that is an oversight that should be brought to the County's attention.

Behavioral Health and Physical Health

Because a large percentage of persons experiencing homelessness suffer from mental illness and substance abuse issues, it is not surprising that access to mental health and substance abuse services was frequently cited as a gap in services. Despite the fact that Mental Health Partners has a large Housing Department, and manages 263 housing vouchers, there are still very limited services for supportive housing for mentally ill adults experiencing homelessness. Staff at MHP indicated they currently have 47 individuals with vouchers who can't get into housing.

Another informant explained that the Boulder jail has become the de facto shelter of last resort, a place to house mentally ill individuals, and it lacks transition support for these individuals when they leave jail. Clearly, jail staff are not equipped to serve as mental health professionals, and, while MHP may provide a professional to work inside the jail as often as possible, there needs to be a stronger emphasis on helping people transition out of jail and back into the community. Only with this kind of support will discharged prisoners avoid cycling through the system from jail/prison to the streets/shelter to the Emergency Room and/or the Detox center and then back to jail, the proverbial revolving door. Therefore, we see the need for closer coordination between the three organizations and the criminal justice system to ensure that the jail does not become the asylum of the 21st Century.

Next year, Addiction Recovery Centers, the major Boulder provider of services for those with substance abuse problems, is going to merge with MHP and move out of its current home under Boulder County Public Health. This shift is in recognition of the close connection between mental health and substance abuse issues and recent changes to Medicaid that ARC may have easier access to as a nonprofit. ARC seems to bend over backwards to provide support to persons experiencing homelessness (e.g. when an individual is brought into the detoxification unit, they will allow them to stay for up to five days, while they try to help them find suitable housing). They also operate a 6-8 week Therapeutic Residential Treatment program (TRT) with one or two of the ten beds reserved for persons experiencing homelessness. However, in actuality they serve more than the bed allotment would indicate because they allow these persons to participate in TRT during the day, while sleeping on the detox side of their facility. They also report that many of their clients who are homeless have an extended stay, while the staff assists them in locating housing or while they are waiting for approval to get into Ft. Lyon. They currently have one bed reserved at the Shelter for persons actively participating in their drug-assisted treatment program (this person has completed TRT). They believe that additional beds at the Shelter for people leaving their programs would be extremely beneficial.

As for access to physical health care, Clinica seems to do a very good job of outreach, and we heard no complaints regarding access to health care facilities. Persons experiencing homelessness that we interviewed seemed well aware of Clinica's clinics, and those who chose to access them seemed perfectly satisfied with the service they were receiving.

The changes to Medicaid have resulted in greater eligibility for persons experiencing homelessness, which makes serving this population much more feasible for these partner organizations. The County has funded a Benefits Acquisition position at the Shelter, recognizing that enrolling people in Medicaid is a critical first step. We have not seen any statistics on enrollment numbers and increased access to services. Those numbers should be monitored to make sure this opportunity is being fulfilled..

In short, the Shelter and Bridge House seem to have made strong connections with Mental Health Partners, Addiction Recovery Centers, and Clinica. (Although these facilities do not interact directly with BOHO, despite invitations to do so, the majority of BOHO guests can access the services of these agencies since most of them currently spend time at either BH or BSH.)

At this point, because of the connections that have already been made, we do not have specific recommendations related to these partners. All were complimentary and appreciative of the work of BOHO, Bridge House, and the Shelter and felt they had a strong and effective partnership with them.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CITY OF BOULDER AND BOULDER COUNTY

- 20. Have the City provide the leadership for siting an expanded Day Services facility and championing a revised Boulder Shelter Management Plan to accommodate changes to their service delivery model.**
- 21. Have the City take the lead in addressing transportation issues and working closely with the three organizations to address needs.**
- 22. Have the County put additional resources and support into the 10-year Plan to End Homelessness, specifically with the end goal of developing a system-wide approach that includes addressing the lack of affordable housing, re-entry programs (after discharge from jail/prison), and improved service coordination and delivery.**
- 23. Have the County consider creating a staff leadership position to assist departmental officials in implementing the 10-Year Plan.**

The Relationship to the City and Boulder County

Finally, in speaking with staff members from both the City of Boulder and Boulder County, along with the Mayor of Boulder, it became clear that the City and County both have diverse approaches to interacting with each of the three organizations and how they are trying to address the issue of homelessness. The roles that the City plays include that of funder and contract manager (for all three organizations), community planning partner, partner in the Homeless Planning Group (HPG), part of the countywide 10-year plan to end homelessness, and regulatory entity. The County, for the most part, has these same roles, with the exception of being involved with the HPG, a much more local effort aimed at addressing city-specific issues.

From what we gathered, each party views the others as needing to do more. *City representatives* would like the County to be more involved with creating a countywide solution to homelessness. Their thought is that since most federal dollars (and some state dollars) go through the County Human Services Department, the County has the ability to do more, because of their increased funding sources. City staff would also like to see the agencies put more of an emphasis on helping those who have “skin in the game” and will move out of homelessness and into self-sufficiency. They see a lack of strong outcomes, especially long-term outcomes, as being a serious issue. It was expressed that no one *really* knows the status of homelessness in the City because there are not enough solid data either on the front end, to determine the number of people who are truly homeless and in need of services, or on the back end, to know who is getting helped and moving out of homelessness. Other issues include the lack of data sharing, integrated service coordination, and a countywide shelter that is open year-round and has the capacity to serve residents from the entire County.

Recent conversations between county and city staff (from the cities of both Boulder and Longmont) and the staff and board from the Boulder Shelter took place to address the fact that

since the Boulder Shelter is the only shelter in the county, it is intended to serve residents from both Boulder and Longmont. However, because 60 of the Shelter's beds have been taken out of the beds available on a walk-up basis, Longmont residents often do not get into the Shelter. This has become problematic and has caused Longmont to withdraw its financial support of the Shelter.

County representatives would like to see the three agencies get on the same page with a uniform approach to case management (standardizing case management was in fact a tenet of the 2008 Human Services Strategic Plan). The challenge with funding from the County, however, is that more county dollars for case management are currently allocated for families rather than individuals. The County would also like to see more outcome data that show what happens to people after they leave one of their programs and how well people are progressing into self-sufficiency. They believe this could be accomplished through better communication as well as having the organizations agree to use a shared data system.

Many providers indicated that they would like both the City and the County to do more with regard to addressing the issue. The 10-year plan to end homelessness was originally developed as a blueprint, but it has not been followed, mainly because of a lack of leadership and funding behind many of the goals in the Plan. Many of the key objectives from the Plan are what people are saying they want to see.

There is general agreement among the various stakeholders about the central priorities of the Plan. The question becomes, how and by whom are these priorities going to be carried out? This is where the providers look to the City and the County to step up and do more.

A theme that came from service providers is that the City and Boulder County, as funders, have the ability to do more (and should be doing more) to hold these organizations accountable for their performance, using the dollars they allocate as leverage. It was also suggested that these funders meet with the three organizations and together discuss how to set consistent expectations around outcomes for adults experiencing homelessness.

Ultimately, we believe that each government entity has the same basic goal, namely that all organizations serving individuals experiencing homelessness in the City and Boulder County eventually be part of an integrated system of services where both short and long term goals are set, outcomes are met, and solid data can be generated that show the impact of reducing homelessness. It is our belief that for some real change to occur, the City must play a much stronger and more active role in creating a citywide approach, and the County must take the lead for a countywide approach.

There are other ways in which both the City and Boulder County can play a greater leadership role. **We recommend that the City provide the leadership for siting an expanded**

Day Services facility and championing a revised Boulder Shelter Management Plan to accommodate changes to their service delivery model, in coordination with the three organizations. We also recommend that the City take the lead in addressing the transportation challenges and work closely with the three organizations to address the transportation needs of the single adults experiencing homelessness.

Housing

The ultimate solution to homelessness is the provision of housing, whether it be permanent supportive housing in the form of Housing First facilities, Oxford Houses, and/or other types and options of independent or semi-independent housing (we also recognize the need for some types of congregate housing/shelter for persons ill-equipped to live independently or semi-independently).

Various groups in Boulder have made efforts to provide such housing, most notably the two Housing First projects on which the Shelter has partnered with Boulder Housing Partners. The City of Boulder gave \$800,000 from general funding to support Boulder Housing Partners (BHP) and the Boulder Shelter for the 31-unit Lee Hill Project.

However, there is much more to be done. Respondents to our surveys and interview questions repeatedly mentioned the need for more housing for those experiencing homelessness. In addition to the absence of dedicated facilities to house those experiencing homelessness, there are not enough landlords willing to accept housing voucher. We learned, for example, that Mental Health Partners currently works with 47 individuals who have vouchers but are unable to find housing.

BHP is the main homeless housing provider. Relevant officials in Boulder need to engage BHP and look at the larger city housing plan (through the Housing Department). A recent article in the Daily Camera indicated that the City is in the midst of developing a Comprehensive Housing Strategy to encourage the development of more housing. (As far as we could tell, there is no mention of housing for persons experiencing homelessness in this Housing Strategy. That has to change.) We support the suggestions in the article to consider changing or getting rid of the Residential Growth Management System that aims to cap growth at one percent a year, and requires non-housing development to contribute a certain amount of residential development.

City and Boulder County officials need to expand conversations with the state Division of Housing to explore the development of new housing for those experiencing homelessness. Providers and developers should create a pipeline of projects for the state DOH to consider. Currently, Bridge House has an application pending for Ready to Work Housing at 4747 Table

Mesa Drive. We understand the immediate need to address the housing circumstances of those ravaged by recent floods, but officials must not forget the needs of other persons experiencing homelessness.

In addition, Boulder might well participate with MDHI as part of the upcoming Permanent Supportive Housing Training and Toolkit. The deadline was recently extended but only until June 10, 2014, which means that Boulder should act quickly if interested in pursuing this opportunity. (We learned at a recent meeting that Bridge House has been accepted into this training program.)

Because of the price of land within the City limits, Boulder is not a cost effective place to build new low-income housing units. Compared to what can be done in other locations, we have to think about the effectiveness of spending dollars in Boulder to build housing. The housing crisis needs to be addressed at a regional level, not just at the City level.

Finally, we have read several articles about the utility of “tiny houses” as a possible cheaper solution for housing for those experiencing homelessness. The construction of tiny houses, between 100 and 900 square feet, is being tried by other communities as a promising strategy for low-income housing. This is an alternative that the City and County should explore.

Existing Collaborative Efforts to Address Homelessness

As we consider the need for the development of the three organizations into a seamless subsystem that is part of a larger system of services, we realize the need to shift the paradigmatic thinking of many of Boulder’s officials and agency leaders. Rather than focus on the effectiveness of single programs, assuming the data to judge their effectiveness are available, it is imperative that those in a position of leadership consider the entire panoply of programs as part of a larger system and address the effectiveness of the system as a whole.

Many will argue that such a shift in paradigms is too big a step. However, we would argue that structures are already in place to take the lead in making this shift. The Homelessness Planning Group, created relatively recently, is ideally situated to address many of the day to day issues of the service system by standardizing such things as case management, service integration, and data sharing.

On a broader, more macro level, it appears to us that the 10-year planning group has recently been revitalized and has received support from the Commissioners to take on a greater leadership role. Broadening and solidifying the leadership role is essential if the City and Boulder County truly are to develop a coordinated, collaborative approach to addressing homelessness. Therefore, **we recommend that the County put additional resources and**

support into the 10-year Plan to End Homelessness, specifically with the end goal of developing a system-wide approach that includes addressing the lack of affordable housing, re-entry programs, and improved service coordination and delivery.

One way of ensuring added resources and support is the creation of a senior staff position to provide executive leadership in the implementation of the Plan. Now would be a great time to put a staff member in place to lead this effort forward. Therefore, **we recommend that the County consider creating such a staff position to assist departmental officials in implementing the 10-Year Plan.** An AmeriCorps VISTA position was recently awarded to Boulder County (through MDHI) in a full-time capacity for the next year. If funding for a full-time staff person from the County is not going to be made available, our suggestion is to see how this VISTA volunteer could support the work of the Plan, assisting County staff with the implementation of certain aspects of it over the next year.

If the City and the County choose to take a more active leadership role in implementing the 10-Year Plan, we suggest that the appropriate leaders from both levels of government and the leadership from all three organizations come together with other service providers and with Boulder Housing Partners in a full planning mode to jointly develop strategies for moving ahead on all relevant fronts. It will be important that the organizations' leadership work closely with City and County officials to determine exactly how best to proceed on the implementation of some of our recommendations as well as on issues.

Conclusion

Bridge House, the Boulder Shelter, and BOHO are the three agencies that provide day and evening services for adults experiencing homelessness in the City of Boulder. It is clear that these three organizations are performing well in addressing the needs of Boulder's most at-risk citizens. The leadership of all three is excellent, good programs are in place, community support is strong and stable, and all three are held in high regard.

However, all three organizations, in conjunction with the Community Foundation of Boulder County, are seeking ways to improve services and service delivery. For this reason, they jointly asked the Burnes Institute to assist them in this effort. Based on extensive data collection and research, Associates at the Institute developed a series of recommendations that they believe will improve both the services and the service delivery system.

Some of these recommendations are system wide, such as developing full-year night and day sheltering, increasing the number of "transition program" beds, creating a coordinated entry system with a coordinated database and data sharing agreements, increasing the availability of transportation, and revitalizing the City's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. Other

recommendations are more programmatic in nature. These include: better and more collaborative staff training, especially around trauma-informed care and motivational interviewing; developing a more standardized approach to case management; and collaborating on public relations and strategies to educate citizens regarding homelessness.

Implementing some of these recommendations should not be difficult. Implementing others will be far more demanding, requiring organizational adaptations and changes in organizational cultures, at the City and County levels as well as at the level of the three organizations. Some changes could be accomplished virtually over night, while others will take time to implement.

We are well aware that implementation of all of these recommendations will be costly. Although determining the actual cost for each recommendation was substantially beyond the scope of the contract, it is quite conceivable that the cost of carrying out these recommendations, excluding creating a brand new day shelter and developing new housing, could run into hundreds of thousands of dollars for adding staff time to carry out expanded programs, retrofitting existing facilities to adapt to new responsibilities, and developing collaborative contracts to provide transportation and other services. Of course, having to create a new day shelter and/or adding new housing will add to these costs exponentially.

However, we would argue implementing these recommendations, even if they are phased in over time, is precisely what is needed for the three organizations, the City, and Boulder County to improve their ability to successfully address homelessness. They are potential partners in this pursuit. The City and Boulder County could provide some financial resources, as could the Community Foundation of Boulder County. The Denver Foundation and Foothills United Way have expressed an interest in supporting more collaborative approaches to working with the population experiencing homelessness. Major fundraising campaigns to support the recommendations in this report could target existing supporters, faith communities, local businesses, and the local citizenry. Support from the state for the development of housing should also materialize. In short, what might seem like an insurmountable task could turn out to be actually doable.

In summary, based on our research, the Burnes Institute interviews is convinced that the implementation of these recommendations will create a more effective and efficient service delivery system. These improvements will lead to an increased ability on the part of Boulder and its service agencies to truly transform the lives of its adults experiencing homelessness.

Appendix A: Data about Single Adults Experiencing Homelessness in Boulder

A first step in any systems approach is to describe the picture of single adults experiencing homelessness in the City of Boulder. According to the 2014 Point-in-Time Survey, there were 265 single adults experiencing homelessness in Boulder. Of these, 76.6 percent were male; 22.4 percent were female; and .8 percent were transgender. Almost three-quarters of the single adults experiencing homelessness were White; about 5 percent were African American; almost 9 percent were Hispanic; and almost 9 percent said they were mixed race. 49.4 percent had received no government benefits, and three quarters of the respondents had not received any money from working in the past month.

Of the 265 single adults experiencing homelessness, 79 or 29.8 percent were considered chronically homeless. 170 respondents had at least one disabling condition; 106 had a serious mental illness; 66 suffered from substance abuse; and 70 had a serious physical health issue. 114 of the respondents had been homeless for at least a year, and 133 had had at least two episodes of homelessness in the last three years.

When asked where they had spent the previous night, three out of every four indicated an emergency shelter, and one in five had slept on the street, under a bridge, in an abandoned building, in a car, or in another place unfit for human habitation.

This year, for the first time, the PIT separated out those individuals deemed “at risk” of becoming homeless. In Boulder City, that number was 28 single adults, almost 40 percent of whom were age 18 to 24, and 68 percent of whom were White. Of these 28 persons, over two out of every three indicated having one or more serious disability, including 14 with a serious mental illness, eight with a serious medical condition, and 11 with a serious substance abuse issue.

Since the PIT survey is done annually during the last week in January, the numbers do not include a group that we heard mentioned several times, the “transients,” or the “travelers,” i.e. those persons, many of whom are younger, who end up spending the summer in Boulder because “it’s a cool place to spend the summer.” We could not ascertain the exact magnitude of the travelers as a group, but the numbers are not insignificant. By and large, these individuals are somewhat service-averse, although some of them do show up for meals at one or another feeding program. However, they do tend to populate important public spaces within and directly outside the city limits, and they are frequently confused in the minds of the public with the more local adults experiencing homelessness.

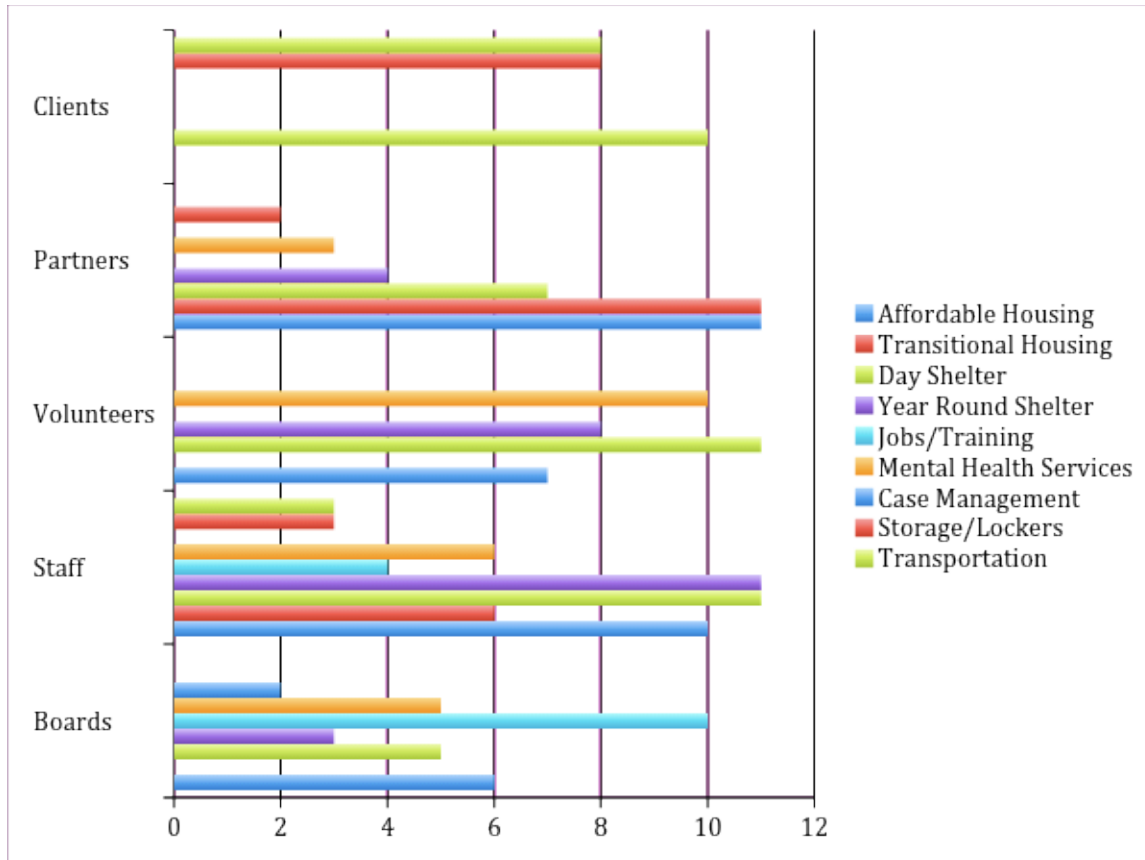
These data from the PIT are quite different from those reported to us by the three agencies.

2013 Data	Duplicated	Unduplicated
BOHO		1465 Unduplicated
Boulder Shelter		~1,000 (Emergency Shelter)
Bridge House		1,262 (Day Visits)
Resource Center		630

As we explain in the body of the report, some of the discrepancy can be attributed to the difference between point-in-time counts and full year counts. However, the differences between these two data sets raise some questions about the accuracy of the PIT data.

Appendix B: Selected Survey Data

What are the top three services that are lacking (in general) for homeless adults in the City of Boulder?



The number of responses indicated below are from stakeholders who answered this specific question through the survey. While we did not conduct a formal survey with clients, in speaking with clients from all three organizations, gaps in services that were mentioned with the highest frequency included: transportation, day shelter, storage/lockers and showers. Numbers in the chart above for client responses are approximate.

Board Responses: 24

Staff Responses: 38

Volunteer Responses: 43

Community Partner Responses: 19

Appendix C:

Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement System (CAHPS)

Aim of the Initiative: Accelerate the pace and integrate our efforts towards ending veteran and chronic homelessness in 25 communities with the largest concentration of those experiencing homelessness

How?

1. Build and strengthen elements of Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement
2. Strengthen and integrate data systems
3. Integrate efforts on homelessness more seamlessly into broader community efforts

Participating communities: Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington DC, Atlanta, Tampa, Orlando, Miami, New Orleans, Houston, Detroit, Chicago, Tucson, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Denver metro, Riverside CA, San Diego, Los Angeles, Fresno, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and Honolulu

What is a Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement System (CAHPS)?

One of the key objectives of this effort is to support each community to strengthen and/or build a system that enables these three processes. The system will know everyone by name, and it will enable the community to rapidly match those with greatest need to housing and services, ultimately accelerating housing placement rates. The system will ensure that those experiencing homeless do not languish on multiple waiting lists, navigate a confusing maze of bureaucracy, or only get help on “first come, first served” basis.

Next steps:

1. Establish pilot project(s):
 - a. Identify common assessment tool
 - b. Determine focus (i.e., geographic, priority population(s), etc.)
 - c. Convene potential partners for initial pilot(s)
 - d. Determine pilot entry points (virtual and geographic)
 - e. Determine process to prioritize most in need
 - f. Identify housing units and resources

For additional information: www.25cities.com

Appendix D:

EXAMPLE OF INTER-AGENCY DATA SHARING MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (Taken from the Whatcom Housing Group)

The Whatcom Housing Group agrees to share client data among participating agencies via the HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) for the purpose outlined below. Each participating agency must complete and comply with the Agency Partner Agreement. Each individual HMIS user must complete and comply with the User Code of Ethics, Policy, and Responsibility Statements. Both documents are available on the WA State Department of Commerce website at <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/site/936/default.aspx>.

Uses of HMIS Data:

- Coordinate housing services for families and individuals experiencing homelessness or facing a housing crisis in Whatcom County,
- Understand the extent and the nature of homelessness in Whatcom County,
- Evaluate performance and progress toward community benchmarks,
- Improve the programs and services available to Whatcom County residents experiencing homelessness or a housing crisis,
- Improve access to services for all Whatcom County homeless and at-risk populations,
- Reduce inefficiencies and duplication of services within our community,
- Ensure that services are targeted to those most in need, including “hard to serve” populations,
- Ensure that clients receive the amount and type of services that “best fits” their needs and preferences,
- Pursue additional resources for ending homelessness, and
- Advocate for policies and legislation that will support efforts to end homelessness in Whatcom County.

Client Protections:

- Informed consent must be given by clients in order for their identifying information to be entered into HMIS and shared among agencies in the Whatcom Housing Group (see Whatcom Housing Group Participating Agencies). Non-identifying client information may be entered in the system for all clients regardless of whether they give their informed consent and regardless of their domestic violence status.
- Only non-identifying information will be entered for clients currently fleeing or in danger from a domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking situation.
- Identifying client information will only be shared among agencies that have signed this agreement. At the time of informed consent, and at any point after, the client has the right to see a current list of the Whatcom Housing Group participating agencies.
- Additional agencies may join the Whatcom Housing Group with notification and consent of current data sharing agencies. As part of the informed consent process, clients must be informed

that additional agencies may join the Whatcom Housing Group at any time and will have access to their information.

- HMIS Users will maintain Whatcom HMIS data in such a way as to protect against revealing the identity of clients to unauthorized agencies, individuals, or entities.
- Clients may not be denied services based on their choice to withhold their consent.

Each party to this memorandum of agreement shall defend, indemnify, and hold all other parties harmless from any and all claims arising out of that party's negligent performance of this agreement. Any loss or liability to third parties resulting from negligent acts, errors, or omissions of a Whatcom Housing Group HMIS user while acting within the scope of their authority under this Agreement shall be borne by that user exclusively.

Agreed to and signed by the following agency representative:

Signature	Name	Agency	Date
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Appendix E:

EXAMPLE OF HMIS CLIENT NOTICE AND CONSENT FOR RELEASE

(Taken from Dayton-Montgomery County)

Participation in data collection is a critical component of the community's ability to provide the most effective services and housing possible.

This client notice and consent form is for the Dayton-Montgomery County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and describes how information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

I, _____ (insert client's name), understand and acknowledge that _____ ("Agency") is affiliated with the HMIS, and I consent to and authorize the collection of information and preparation of records pertaining to the services provided to me by the Agency. The information gathered and prepared by the Agency will be included in a Homeless Management Information System ("HMIS") database and shall be used by the Agency and Montgomery County to:

(a) provide individual case management to me; (b) promote collaborative case management; (c) produce group reports regarding use of services by all clients; (d) track individual program-level outcomes; (e) identify unfilled service needs and plan for the provision of new services; (f) allocate resources among agencies engaged in the provision of services.

_____ (please initial) I understand and acknowledge the following collection of information:

(Initial the kind of information that can be included)

_____ Identifying information (name, birth date, gender, race, social security number, residential information, education level, household information)

_____ Medical records (except HIV/AIDS and alcohol and drug treatment), psychological records and evaluations, vocational assessments, care coordinator's recommendations and direct observations, employment status, etc.

_____ Financial information (income verification, public assistance payments and allowances, food stamp allotments, disability payments, etc.).

_____ HIV/AIDS diagnosis _____ Substance abuse diagnoses, treatment plan, progress in treatment, discharge, etc.

_____ (please initial) I understand that I have the right to inspect, copy, and request all records maintained by the Agency relating to the provision of services to me and to receive a paper copy of this form.

_____ (please initial) I understand that this release can be revoked by me at any time and that the revocation must be signed and dated by me. I further understand that this consent is subject to revocation at any time except to the extent that the Agency has already taken action in reliance on it. If not previously revoked, this consent terminates automatically 180 days after my last treatment or discharge from Agency.

_____ (please initial) I understand that my records are protected by federal, state, and local regulations governing confidentiality of client records and cannot be disclosed without my written consent unless otherwise provided for in the regulations.

Additionally, I understand that participation in data collection is optional, and I am able to access shelter and housing services if I choose not to participate in data collection.

I agree that, by initialing the “yes” below, information in the HMIS may be shared with other agencies. Attached is a description of the information shared and the partner agencies in the HMIS. The agencies that participate in the sharing may change from time to time. However, a copy of the list of agencies is available upon request at any given time. I understand that sharing information between agencies can reduce the number of times I am asked the same questions and can help other agencies do a better job assisting me and/or my family.

Yes: _____ No: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

DESCRIPTION OF INFORMATION THAT IS SHARED

The Dayton-Montgomery County HMIS Client Release Form authorizes the following information to be routinely shared using the Dayton-Montgomery County HMIS to better help me and/or my family.

Evaluation/Assessment Information Related to: Profile Information (Name, Social Security Number, Age) Additional Profile Information, including:

- Family/Household Information
- Income and Benefits Information
- Education and Employment History
- Housing History
- Veteran Information
- Program and Service Involvement

LIST OF COVERED HOMELESS ORGANIZATIONS

AIDS Resource Center Ohio

Daybreak

Goodwill Easter Seals Miami Valley

Greater Dayton Premier Management

Holt Street Miracle Center

Homefull Homeless Solutions (Montgomery County)

Linda Vista
 Mercy Manor
 PLACES
 Miami Valley Housing Opportunities
 Red Cross Dayton Chapter
 Samaritan Homeless Clinic
 St. Vincent de Paul
 Social Services
 VA Medical Center
 Volunteers of America
 YWCA Dayton

Line through and initial any agencies in the above list with whom you do not want to share information.

In addition to the above list of agencies, I agree that, by initialing below, information in the HMIS can also be shared with the following agencies:

INITIAL	AGENCY NAME

Appendix F:

Key Principles of a Trauma-informed Approach

(Taken from www.samhsa.gov)

A trauma-informed approach reflects the adoption of underlying principles rather than a specific set of procedures. These principles are generalizable across all settings, although language and application may be setting- or sector-specific. Basic principles of a trauma-informed approach include:

1. *Safety*: throughout the organization, staff and the people they serve feel physically and psychologically safe; the physical setting is safe and interpersonal interactions promote a sense of safety.
2. *Trustworthiness and transparency*: organizational operations and decisions are conducted with transparency and the goal of building and maintaining trust among staff, clients, and family members of people being served by the organization.
3. *Collaboration and mutuality*: there is true partnering and leveling of power differences between staff and clients and among organizational staff from direct care staff to administrators; there is recognition that healing happens in relationships and in the meaningful sharing of power and decision-making.
4. *Empowerment*: throughout the organization and among the clients served, individuals' strengths are recognized, built on, and validated and new skills developed as necessary.
5. *Voice and choice*: the organization aims to strengthen the staff's, clients', and family members' experience of choice and recognize that every person's experience is unique and requires an individualized approach.
6. *Peer support and mutual self-help*: are integral to the organizational and service delivery approach and are understood as a key vehicle for building trust, establishing safety, and empowerment.
7. *Resilience and strengths based*: a belief in resilience and in the ability of individuals, organizations, and communities to heal and promote recovery from trauma; builds on what clients, staff and communities have to offer rather than responding to their perceived deficits.
8. *Inclusiveness and shared purpose*: the organization recognizes that everyone has a role to play in a trauma-informed approach; one does not have to be a therapist to be therapeutic.
9. *Cultural, historical, and gender issues*: the organization addresses cultural, historical, and gender issues; the organization actively moves past cultural stereotypes and biases (e.g. based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, geography, etc.), offers gender responsive services, leverages the healing value of traditional cultural connections, and recognizes and addresses historical trauma.
10. *Change process*: is conscious, intentional and ongoing; the organization strives to become a learning community, constantly responding to new knowledge and developments.