

A RESOLUTION relating to the City's homeless policies and priorities, adopting the Homeless Priority Agenda.

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RES. 28045

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RESOLUTION 28045

A RESOLUTION relating to the City's homeless policies and priorities, adopting the Homeless Priority Agenda.

WHEREAS, homelessness has affected Seattle as one of the most serious and persistent human service problems of the decade and is projected to continue into the next decade; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle places a high priority on addressing the problem of homelessness and intends to continue to play a strong role in assessing needs and promoting, developing, and supporting effective solutions to homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the City's goals concerning homelessness are to:

- 1) Prevent homelessness and promote stability for low-income and at-risk populations;
- 2) Meet the crisis needs of homeless families and individuals;
- 3) Restore homeless people to their highest and best participation within the life of the community; and

WHEREAS, the City seeks the development of a coordinated regional response to homelessness and intends to continue working with other governmental jurisdictions to combat homelessness, by leveraging new resources and improving the responsiveness of existing human services systems; and

WHEREAS, the City intends to continue working closely with neighborhoods, community organizations, and private sector entities to mobilize resources and implement approaches which mitigate the impacts of homelessness on the community as well as reduce suffering among individuals; and

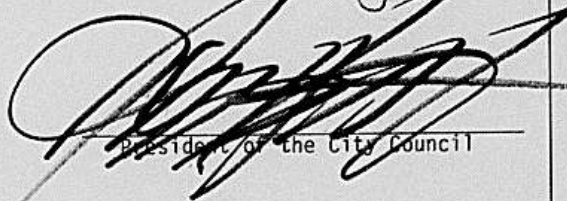
WHEREAS, the City has studied the dynamics of homelessness in Seattle, assessed needs and trends, and developed a Homeless Priority Agenda (attached hereto as Exhibit A) to guide City actions in response to homelessness; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE MAYOR CONCURRING:

The City of Seattle hereby adopts the attached Homeless Priority Agenda, which includes Priorities for City Action 1990-91 and the Homeless Policy Framework; The City shall be guided by the Homeless Priority Agenda in making funding and nonfunding decisions concerning homelessness and in implementing City efforts to combat homelessness.

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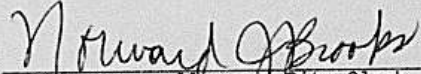
ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Seattle this
7th day of August, 1989, and signed by me in open session
in authentication of its adoption this 7th day of August,
1989.



President of the City Council

Filed by me this 7th day of August, 1989.

ATTEST:


City Comptroller and City Clerk

BY:


Deputy

THE MAYOR CONCURRING:


Charles Royer, Mayor

CITY OF SEATTLE HOMELESS PRIORITY AGENDA

Proposed for Adoption by the
Seattle City Council
July, 1989

Prepared by
Human Services Strategic Planning Office

July 27, 1989

INTRODUCTION

Homelessness has been a serious and persistent problem in the Seattle area throughout the 1980s. All evidence suggests that this problem will continue to challenge the resource and mobilization capabilities of City government and the broader community into the 1990s. The purpose of the *Homeless Priority Agenda* is to clarify, focus, and strengthen the City of Seattle's role in combatting homelessness.

Dynamics of Homelessness in Seattle

A recent study of homelessness conducted at the request of the Mayor and City Council by the Seattle Human Services Strategic Planning Office identified trends, needs, service gaps, and issues that must be taken into account in determining priorities for City action during the next several years. An April 1989 report, the *Status of Homelessness in the City of Seattle*, provides detailed information on the findings of this study. Among the most important considerations are the following:

- *Family homelessness is on the rise, among both single and two-parent households. Families constitute the most rapidly growing segment of Seattle's homeless population. One-quarter of all shelter clients are children, and the number of pre-school-aged children is increasing most rapidly. While family homelessness is often precipitated by domestic violence, substance abuse, relocation, job loss, or other crises that disrupt income, an increasing number of families receiving public assistance or depending upon low wage jobs face serious difficulties in securing and maintaining affordable housing in Seattle.*
- *Homelessness among single adults, while showing some signs of leveling off, continues to be an entrenched problem. The homeless adult population is most concentrated in the downtown area and includes a substantial segment of chronically homeless individuals with serious disability and chemical dependency problems, who draw heavily on Seattle's emergency services and public safety resources. Women comprise a small but significant segment of the chronically homeless population.*
- *A growing number of homeless youth maintain a precarious existence on the streets of Seattle. These young people, including temporary runaways, youth fleeing abusive families, and those who have exhausted other alternatives, face extremely limited options for safe and secure shelter in Seattle.*
- *While there are still a number of serious gaps and many needs that go unmet, Seattle has a community-based system for meeting the emergency needs of homeless people which many believe is the best developed and most responsive in the country.*
- *Seattle has also become a leader in developing new housing programs and services which intervene in the cycle of homelessness and help families and individuals to make a transition out of the emergency system. There are still substantial needs to be addressed in this area.*
- *Less attention has been paid to developing prevention or stabilization strategies which deter homelessness from occurring or reoccurring among high-risk target populations. Prevention strategies are the least developed and toughest to organize, yet they are essential to long-range solutions to the homeless problem.*
- *In addition to its role as an advocate, planner, and partner with the community in developing and coordinating homeless strategies, the City of Seattle has been a major funder of housing and emergency and transitional services for homeless people.*
- *Other funders with responsibilities in the homeless arena include the federal government, the State, King County, United Way, and corporate and community contributors.*
- *Coordinating City efforts with the roles of other current and potential partners, while presenting a challenge, is prerequisite for developing an effective regional response to homelessness.*

The Need For A Priority Agenda

The mounting financial pressures of maintaining an adequate emergency response system coupled with the urgent need to expand transitional efforts and establish effective prevention and stabilization measures present a sobering prospect for the 1990s. Given the magnitude and diversity of needs to be addressed in the homeless arena, it is important to identify priorities for targeting the limited resources that will be available within City government during the next several years. The adoption of a priority agenda will not only help to effectively focus City funding and organizational support for homelessness, it will also help to clarify and signal the City's intentions to other partners in the homeless arena so that they can plan and develop their own roles more effectively.

The Homeless Priority Agenda was developed with the intent of ensuring that City resources shall be focused on: 1) areas of greatest need and potential benefit to the community in combatting homelessness; and 2) initiatives that are most appropriate for and best suited to action by City government. The development of the Agenda was coordinated by HSSPO with substantial support from other City departments and input and involvement from community service providers and other key actors in the homeless arena.

Contents

Included in this document are the following components:

- *Homeless Policy Framework*: policies which provide a framework to guide and shape the City's role in combatting homelessness during the 1990s.
- *Priorities for City Action 1990-91*: specific initiatives for City action, designed to achieve specific objectives in five key areas:
 1. Developing and expanding *prevention and stabilization* strategies
 2. Maintaining capabilities and filling gaps in *emergency and transitional* services
 3. Increasing *housing options*
 4. Promoting *coordination*
 5. Improving the *information* base
- *Implementation*: a description of how the Agenda will be used by the City.

The adoption of the *Homeless Priority Agenda* reflects the City of Seattle's commitment to continue and strengthen its efforts to combat homelessness and to play the most effective role possible in a City-wide and regional response system.

Hoskins
Speaks

HOMELESS POLICY FRAMEWORK

The following policies provide a framework for guiding City actions to combat homelessness among families, youth, and single adult populations. This policy framework draws on the Human Services Policies adopted by the Seattle City Council in 1986 and provides a more specific policy base for the City's role in the homeless arena.

1. The City of Seattle places a high priority on addressing the problem of homelessness and will continue to play a strong role in assessing needs and promoting, developing, and supporting effective solutions.
2. The goals of the City's involvement in homelessness are to:
 - prevent homelessness and promote stability for low-income and at-risk populations;
 - alleviate immediate hardship and meet the crisis needs of homeless families and individuals;
 - restore homeless people to their highest and best participation within the life of the community.
3. The City will seek the development of a coordinated *regional* response to homelessness and will encourage other public and private entities to increase resources and expand services outside of the City.
4. The City expects other government jurisdictions to meet their statutory obligations with regard to addressing the human service needs of populations who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. The City will cooperate with other jurisdictions in seeking ways to improve the responsiveness of existing human service systems.
5. The City will advocate for, and use its resources to leverage increased support for homeless initiatives from the State and federal government.
6. The City will work with neighborhoods, community organizations, and private sector partnerships to mobilize resources and create approaches that mitigate the impacts of homelessness on the community as well as reduce suffering among individuals.
7. The City recognizes the importance of maintaining an effective community system to respond to the emergency service needs of homeless people. While continuing its own support of this system, the City will advocate for expanded support from other funding sources to cover the rising costs of emergency services in Seattle.
8. The City will seek expansion of basic emergency shelter beds in Seattle only for designated populations where specific emergency needs have been identified. The City prefers to reduce demand for emergency services through promotion of increased efforts to prevent homelessness or stop recurring homelessness.
9. The City will place a high priority on supporting the development of new prevention, transition, or stabilization services which effectively decrease potential homelessness, stop recurring homelessness, and promote long-term self-sufficiency.
10. The City will promote and support approaches which integrate services and facilitate the involvement of homeless people in "mainstream" human services programs and existing long-term community-based systems.
11. The City will promote the development of services which are responsive to the needs of minority clients and provide culturally appropriate programming.
12. The City will conduct appropriate oversight and promote evaluation of homeless initiatives. Factors related to program performance, cost, and effectiveness will be considered in making City funding and non-financial decisions.

PRIORITIES FOR CITY ACTION 1990-91

Within the framework of the homeless policies, as presented in this document, specific priorities have been identified for City action during the next several years. These priorities include initiatives to maintain, improve or expand upon existing efforts, as well as providing City support for the development of new services and capabilities to address unmet and critical needs.

To facilitate an organized approach to implementation decisions and action, priority initiatives have been grouped into five functional areas:

- A) Prevention and Stabilization
- B) Emergency and Transitional Services
- C) Housing Options
- D) Coordination
- E) Information

A. DEVELOP AND EXPAND SERVICES WHICH PREVENT HOMELESSNESS FROM OCCURRING OR REOCCURRING

- A.1 Maintain and expand efforts (such as the Homeless Family Assistance Fund) which provide financial assistance to enable homeless households to secure permanent housing and follow-up services to keep them stabilized in these settings.
- A.2 Replicate/adapt the Homeless Assistance Fund model to assist *at-risk* households in avoiding eviction from private market housing.
- A.3 Examine opportunities for early identification of family violence situations. Support development of increased coordinated capacity to target outreach efforts and provide services for victims and treatment for batterers.
- A.4 Work with the Family Support Worker program to identify at-risk families and ensure that resources aimed at preventing homelessness are available to meet the needs of these families.
- A.5 Examine current programs and services intended to stabilize and assist families in public housing. Develop and implement comprehensive and coordinated strategies to stabilize and support families, prevent eviction, and, where appropriate, facilitate transition from public housing.
- A.6 Explore ways to expand stabilization and support services to non-elderly public housing tenants with special needs.
- A.7 Work with State and local treatment programs and institutions to evaluate current discharge practices for at-risk adults and youth. Promote the development of appropriate discharge planning and community reintegration services.

B. MAINTAIN CURRENT CAPABILITIES AND FILL IDENTIFIED GAPS IN EMERGENCY AND TRANSITIONAL SERVICES

- B.1 Maintain City investment in emergency and transitional programs that have demonstrated effectiveness and meet continuing needs. Continue to use City staff resources to support leveraging new funds for new program development.
- B.2 Expand emergency shelter bed capacity and transitional services for youth and families experiencing domestic violence in Seattle. Work with the Human Services Roundtable partners to facilitate expansion of emergency and transitional services throughout King County.
- B.3 Review needs and develop and implement appropriate options for expanding day services to homeless people in the downtown area.

- B.4 Work with King County Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse and local providers to locate a site and develop a program providing social (non-medical) detox and assessment services.
- B.5 Facilitate expansion of appropriate alcohol and substance abuse treatment opportunities for homeless families.
- B.6 Promote the continuation and expansion of shelter outreach efforts by employment, health, and treatment programs that provide needed services and help homeless people gain access to "mainstream" systems.
- B.7 Examine the array of case management and service brokerage capabilities currently available for homeless single adults and families. Find better ways to ensure that these services are available and coordinated effectively for those who need them.
- B.8 Increase access to and availability of services for homeless children which are designed to nurture, reduce trauma, assist development, and mitigate the long-term consequences of homelessness.
- B.9 Promote the development of integrated services and case management approaches designed to ensure better prenatal, childbirth, and follow-up care and increased stability for homeless women and their children.
- B.10 Work with the public schools and community agencies to plan and develop appropriate strategies for meeting the education and support services needs of school-age homeless children.

C. INCREASE APPROPRIATE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS FOR HOMELESS AND HIGH-RISK POPULATIONS

- C.1 Develop City strategies to ensure maintenance and expansion of housing stock that is affordable for low and moderate income households.
- C.2 Maintain/expand City funding and capacity to develop affordable housing opportunities for extremely low-income populations.
- C.3 Continue to use City resources to leverage federal, State, and County support for appropriate housing and housing support services for homeless, special needs, and homeless populations in Seattle.
- C.4 Continue the implementation of the Levy Special Needs Housing Program and evaluate its effectiveness in developing appropriate housing options for homeless target populations.
- C.5 Work in partnership with the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) to ensure effective implementation of the homeless preference requirement and development of special needs and affordable housing opportunities for homeless and at-risk individuals and families.
- C.6 Work with the Human Services Roundtable partners to expand efforts to develop affordable housing opportunities for extremely low-income families and special needs populations throughout King County.

D. PROMOTE A COORDINATED RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS

- D.1 Develop and implement an effective organizational strategy for coordinating, managing, and staffing homeless activities within City government.
- D.2 Develop an advocacy agenda which identifies specific changes or improvements needed in Federal, State, and County systems (e.g., Alcohol and Substance Abuse, Mental Health, Public Assistance, Employment and Training) to respond more effectively to homelessness.

- D.3 Develop effective ways to convene inter-governmental representatives to initiate consistent communication and coordination on homeless issues.
- D.4 Use the Human Services Roundtable to coordinate regional planning, communication, and advocacy on homeless issues.
- D.5 Assess the role of the Mayors Task Force on Homelessness and explore mechanisms and strategies for broadening and improving community involvement and interaction.

E. IMPROVE THE INFORMATION BASE FOR RESPONDING TO HOMELESSNESS

- E.1 Develop and evaluate proposals for improving the collection, coordination, and use of client data generated by Seattle area agencies providing emergency shelter and other services to homeless populations. Support cost effective efforts to improve the client information base.
- E.2 Support efforts to increase our understanding of homeless individuals, families, and youth not served by the emergency services system.
- E.3 Identify specific factors that place families and individuals at high risk of homelessness, and use these indicators to better target preventive services.
- E.4 Sponsor and conduct appropriate evaluation efforts which provide feedback on the outcomes, costs, and effectiveness of City-funded strategies and programs, especially pilot projects or demonstration programs.

IMPLEMENTATION

The initiatives identified in this agenda as priorities for City action are not listed in order of priority. While it is not anticipated that all of the initiatives can be fully implemented or completed by the close of 1991, the City does expect to make substantial progress in carrying out specific initiatives within each identified priority area.

The Homeless Priority Agenda will be used by the Mayor and City Council as a framework for making 1990 and 1991 budget decisions, and identifying priorities and expectations for 1990/91 Executive and Council Work Programs.

A number of the priority initiatives have already been encompassed within the 1989 work programs and 1990 budget requests of City Departments and in the City's Block Grant/Human Services Program. Departments will use the Homeless Priority Agenda in developing internal work programs and projects and suggesting items for the Executive Work Program in 1990 and 1991. Many of the initiatives will require inter-departmental planning and collaboration, which must be conducted on an ongoing basis.

The agenda will provide a policy and priority framework for the 1991 and 1992 CDBG/Human Services Policy Plan, and the planning and allocation of Emergency Shelter Grant Program (ESGP) funds and other discretionary resources available to the City for supporting homeless initiatives within the community.

The City will also use the Homeless Priority Agenda to guide its efforts in leveraging new resources, promoting partnership efforts, stimulating regional services and housing development, and brokering needed changes in federal, State, County, and community systems.

Before the end of 1992, the City will evaluate its performance in carrying out the priorities identified for City action. It will be necessary by this time to conduct a complete assessment of changing circumstances and needs with regard to the status of homelessness in Seattle, and to develop an agenda of new and continuing priorities for City action.

TIME AND DATE STAMP

SPONSORSHIP

THE ATTACHED DOCUMENT IS SPONSORED FOR FILING WITH THE CITY COUNCIL BY THE MEMBER(S) OF THE CITY COUNCIL WHOSE SIGNATURE(S) ARE SHOWN BELOW:

Jane Maud

FOR CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT USE ONLY

COMMITTEE(S) REFERRED TO: _____

PRESIDENT'S SIGNATURE