

Recovery Act - Homelessness Prevention Program (HPRP)

Where We've Been

Beginning July 2007, PROP and Preble Street joined forces to create an innovative, regional response to homelessness. The project, funded by the County's CDBG program, tapped the expertise, experience and resources at PROP and Preble Street to develop a strategic approach to reducing homelessness. The project serves all communities participating in the County's Community Development initiative, targeting homeless populations and those that are at immediate risk of homelessness.

Between September 1, 2007 and September 30, 2008, the program engaged with 110 individuals and households, including a shocking number of households with young children. Through the efforts of the program, 81% obtained housing, with the remaining people placed on waiting lists for subsidized and private housing. All received supportive case management and referral to local service providers.

The project has two complementary functions: 1) prevent people from becoming homeless through intensive case management and, 2) assist homeless people in securing, and remaining, in stable housing. The two project staff members at PROP and Preble Street provide outreach and emergency assistance to homeless and potentially homeless individuals and families in the 24 communities served by the Cumberland County Community Development Program. The first objective is assisting people to remain in their home communities to benefit from the support of familiar surroundings and natural support networks.

PROP serves as the lead agency for this homeless initiative. The project is staffed by a Project Coordinator/Caseworker at PROP and a Caseworker at Preble Street. Each provides direct services to homeless individuals throughout the county, and engages municipal officials, and regional service providers in relationships designed to sustain the project's activities. An advisory group provides guidance to project staff and oversee the project.

Where We're Headed: Expansion of Program with HPRP Funds

HPRP funds will allow this successful new initiative to strategically expand with a focus on preventing families from entering the existing shelter system or having to leave their home communities. Project staff will continue to provide services similar to those provided in the first two years of this program by assisting those county residents at the shelters return to their home communities and assisting those families who are at-risk of homelessness identify stable housing and supportive services.

An additional full-time case manager will be based in Windham, a significant source of referrals in the project's first two years. This case manager will focus on serving families at-risk of homelessness in the Lakes Region. Remaining funds will be used to provide direct financial assistance to families throughout the project. These flexible funds provide project staff with the leverage to negotiate security deposits and rent with private landlords, opportunities to address minor financial barriers to housing stability (such as retrieving items in storage, etc.), and provide small amounts of emergency food assistance.