

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Best Practices Guide (BPG) is a "how-to" guide for employment and training agencies on tailoring their service delivery systems to be more effective in training, placing, and retaining homeless individuals in gainful employment. While this guide is written from the perspective of an employment and training agency (e.g., a Private Industry Council (PIC) operating under the Job Training Partnership Act), much of the material presented is likely to be of interest to the wide variety of public and private organizations providing services to homeless families and individuals. Among the major objectives of this guide are the following:

- to enhance agencies' knowledge of homeless individuals;
- to provide guidance on the types of homeless persons that are most (and least) likely to benefit from employment and training services;
- to identify the full range of services likely to be needed by homeless individuals to be successful in completing training and securing and retaining employment, and how these services can be provided directly by employment and training agencies or arranged through linkages with public or private service providers;
- to identify the specific planning and implementation steps needed by employment and training agencies to establish an effective service delivery system for recruiting and serving homeless individuals; and
- to provide examples of successful strategies used by employment and training agencies, and homeless-serving agencies, in assisting homeless individuals to (re)enter the workforce.

Much of the material presented in this Best Practices Guide is based on the experiences of 63 organizations from across the United States who provided comprehensive services for homeless individuals and families under the Job Training for the Homeless Demonstration Program (JTHDP).⁽¹⁾ JTHDP, authorized under Section 731 of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, was intended to "provide information and direction for the future of job training for homeless Americans."⁽²⁾ Under this legislation, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) was authorized to plan, implement, and test the effectiveness of a comprehensive range of employment, training, and other support services to assist homeless individuals to find and retain employment.⁽³⁾

During the 86 months JTHDP operated (from September 1988 through November 1995), over 45,000 homeless individuals were served by a variety of program grantees, including Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) and PICs, community-based organizations, education organizations, and homeless shelters. Exhibit 1-1 provides a listing of the 63 JTHDP grantees and their locations. Appendix A provides additional background information about JTHDP.⁽⁴⁾

The remaining sections of this chapter provide: (1) a brief overview of the problem of homelessness in the United States, (2) a discussion of the services needed by homeless individuals to break the cycle of homelessness, and (3) an overview of the remaining chapters of this guide.

A. THE PROBLEM OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE UNITED STATES

Since the early 1980s, the problem of homelessness in the United States, particularly within urban communities, has been the subject of increasing public attention. This attention has been generated in part by the increased number of visible homeless, and by important changes in the socioeconomic and demographic composition of the homeless population to include more families, working poor, and individuals suffering from problems of chronic mental illness and chemical dependency.

EXHIBIT 1-1: STATE-BY-STATE LISTING OF JTHDP SITES

PROGRAM	CITY/STATE
Jackson Employment Center	Tucson, AZ
Tucson Indian Center	Tucson, AZ
Center for Independent Living (CIL)	Berkeley, CA
Watts Labor Community Action Committee (Watts Labor CAC)	Los Angeles, CA
Rubicon Programs, Inc. (Rubicon)	Richmond, CA
County of Santa Cruz, Human Resources Agency (County of Santa Cruz)	Santa Cruz, CA
San Diego Regional Employment and Training Consortium (San Diego RETC)	San Diego, CA
Step up on Second, Inc. (Step Up On Second)	Santa Monica, CA

North Coast Opportunities	Ukiah, CA
Denver Dept of Health and Social Services	Denver, CO
City of Waterbury	Waterbury, CT
ARCH Training Center, Inc. (ARCH)	Washington, DC
Home Builders Institute (HBI)	Washington, DC
Jobs for Homeless People, Inc. (Jobs for Homeless People)	Washington, DC
Delaware Dept of Health and Social Services (Delaware DHSS)	New Castle, DE
Business and Industry Employment Development Council (BIEDC)	Clearwater, FL
Broward Employment and Training Administration (BETA)	Ft. Lauderdale, FL
Northern Cook County Private Industry Council (Northern Cook County PIC)	Des Plaines, IL
Elgin Community College	Elgin, IL
Rock River Training Corporation	Rockford, IL
Illinois Department of Public Aid	Springfield, IL
Land of Lincoln Goodwill Industries	Springfield, IL
Hoosier Valley Economic Opportunity Corporation	Jeffersonville, IN
Kentucky Domestic Violence Association (KDVA)	Frankfort, KY
Jefferson County Public Schools	Louisville, KY
York County Shelters, Inc. (York County Shelters)	Alfred, ME
Tribal Governors	Orono, ME
City of Portland	Portland, ME
Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington (Boys and Girls Clubs)	Silver Spring, MD
Boston Indian Council	Jamaica Plain, MA
Community Action, Inc. (Community Action)	Haverhill, MA
Education Development Center (EDC)	Newton, MA

Massachusetts Career Development Institute (MCDI)	Springfield, MA
Hennepin Co. Training and Employment Assistance Office (Hennepin Co.)	Minneapolis, MN
City of St. Paul, Job Creation and Training Section (City of St. Paul)	St. Paul, MN
Job Training for the Homeless	St. Louis, MO
Corporation for Employment and Training (CET)	Jersey City, NJ
St. Martin's Hospitality Center	Albuquerque, NM
Friends of the Night People, Inc. (Friends of the Night People)	Buffalo, NY
Suffolk County Job Homeless Training Program	Hauppauge, NY
Children's House	Mineola, NY
Argus Community, Inc. (Argus)	New York, NY
City of New York, Dept of Employment (City of New York DOE)	New York, NY
City of New York, Human Resources Administration (City of New York HRA)	New York, NY
Fountain House, Inc. (Fountain House)	New York, NY
Homeless Assistance Act Demonstration Program	Syracuse, NY
Wake County Job Training Office (Wake County)	Raleigh, NC
Cuyahoga County Department of Development	Cleveland, OH
Friends of the Homeless, Inc. (Friends of the Homeless)	Columbus, OH
Toledo Area Private Industry Council (Toledo Area PIC)	Toledo, OH
Community Action Committee of Fayette County	Washington Ct. Hs., OH
HOPE Community Services, Inc. (HOPE Community Services)	Oklahoma City, OK
Southern Willamette Private Industry Council (Southern Willamette PIC)	Eugene, OR
Mayor's Office of Community Services	Philadelphia, PA
Charleston County Employment Training	Charleston, SC

Southeast Tennessee Private Industry Council (Southeast Tennessee PIC)	Chattanooga, TN
Knoxville-Knox Co. Community Action Committee (Knoxville-Knox Co.)	Knoxville, TN
Austin/Travis County Private Industry Council (Austin/Travis PIC)	Austin, TX
City of Alexandria	Alexandria, VA
Fairfax County Dept of Social Services	Fairfax, VA
Telamon Corporation (Telamon)	Richmond, VA
Snohomish County Private Industry Council (Snohomish County PIC)	Everett, WA
Seattle Indian Center	Seattle, WA
Seattle-King County Private Industry Council (Seattle-King County PIC)	Seattle, WA

One of the most comprehensive attempts to count the homeless was Martha Burt and Barbara Cohen's 1989 Urban Institute study.⁽⁵⁾ Based on direct counts in shelters and soup kitchens, this study estimated that between 500,000 and 600,000 individuals were homeless in the United States during a seven-day period in March, 1987. Using this point-in-time estimate as a basis, the Urban Institute estimated that more than one million persons in the United States were homeless at some time during 1987.⁽⁶⁾

A number of factors appear to be contributing to changes in the size and characteristics of the homeless population in the United States. Economic restructuring, corporate downsizing, and rapid technological change have led to job loss for some workers, the need to re-locate, and changing skill requirements. The rising housing costs, demolition of lower-cost single room occupancy (SRO) hotels, and gentrification within urban areas have made it difficult for some individuals (especially the unemployed and underemployed) to locate affordable housing for themselves and their families. Finally, there are a host of other factors that, according to experts, seem to have exacerbated the problem of homelessness, including more restrictive eligibility requirements for welfare and disability benefits, reductions in the purchasing power of public benefits, the

deinstitutionalization and lack of mental health care services for mentally ill persons, and growing problems of substance abuse.

In response to apparent increases in the size and changes in the composition of the homeless population in the United States, Congress enacted the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (Public Law 100-77) in 1987. At the time of its enactment, this Act represented the nation's most comprehensive piece of legislation for the homeless population and included nearly 20 provisions to meet the needs of homeless persons. It

provided for emergency shelter, food, health care, mental health care, housing, education, job training, and other community services. This Act, probably more than any other piece of federal legislation, recognized the need to pull together the resources of a variety of government agencies to provide comprehensive services for homeless individuals and families.

B. A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL FOR PROVIDING SERVICES NEEDED TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF HOMELESSNESS

Homeless individuals can face a broad array of problems -- ranging from substance abuse, to basic skills deficiencies, to lack of transportation and appropriate clothing -- that need to be addressed before they are likely to secure and retain employment. For each homeless individual, these problems come in different combinations and intensities, which means that individual circumstances need to be carefully assessed and the range of services provided need to be targeted on the needs of each individual served.

The experiences of the 63 grantees involved in the Job Training for the Homeless Demonstration Program, as well as the results of other important studies on homelessness, suggest that the following core services -- provided either by a sponsoring agency or through linkages with other local human service providers -- need to be made available to assist homeless individuals in securing and retaining employment:

- Case management and counseling;
- Assessment and employability development planning;
- Job training services, including remedial education, basic skills training, literacy

instruction, job search assistance, job counseling, vocational and occupational skills training, and on-the-job training;

- Job development and placement services;
- Post-placement follow-up and support services (e.g., additional job placement services, training after placement, self-help support groups, mentoring);
- Housing services (e.g., emergency housing assistance, assessment of housing needs, referrals to appropriate housing alternatives); and
- Other support services (e.g. child care; transportation; chemical dependency assessment, counseling, and referral to outpatient or inpatient treatment as appropriate; mental health assessment, counseling, and referral to treatment; other health care services; clothing; and life skills training);
- Based on the experiences of JTHDP sites, Exhibit 1-2 provides an overview of a model for providing a comprehensive range of services to effectively assist homeless individuals and families to secure and retain employment.

The need for comprehensive provision of services points to the need for strong linkages and coordination arrangements with other local service providers. Therefore, careful planning of the service delivery strategy is needed, including identifying the agencies within the network of local human service agencies able to provide the needed range of services. JTHDP grantees were able to greatly expand the availability of services for their participants and to leverage funding for providing additional services to participants through extensive use of coordination. For example, as shown in Exhibit 1-3, one JTHDP site (Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee) relied upon over 50 service providers within its locality to ensure each homeless individual received the specific services he or she needed. Among some of the underlying themes that are emphasized throughout this Best Practices Guide are the following:

Establish Linkages with Homeless-serving Agencies. Employment and training agencies need to establish linkages with homeless-serving agencies, such as shelters and transitional housing facilities, to help with outreach, recruitment, and screening of homeless individuals. Homeless individuals need to be carefully pre-screened and assessed prior to acceptance in an employment and training program. Homeless-serving agencies are well-positioned to help in this pre-screening process.

Stabilize Homeless Individuals Prior to Enrollment. Homeless individuals need to be stable prior to enrollment in employment and training programs. This generally means living in, at a minimum, transitional housing or an emergency shelter that allows the individual to have an extended stay. This also means addressing problems such as a lack of financial resources, domestic violence, and other problems that can impact successful participation in employment and training activities, as well as screening out serious substance abusers and those who are mentally ill and unlikely to benefit from participation in your program. Once again, homeless-serving agencies or other agencies referring individuals can be helpful.

Provide Thorough Assessment and Ongoing Case Management. Participant assessment and case management are critical to tailoring services to meet the needs of each individual. Barriers to employment are not always evident at the time of intake; as a result, both assessment and case management should be ongoing activities.

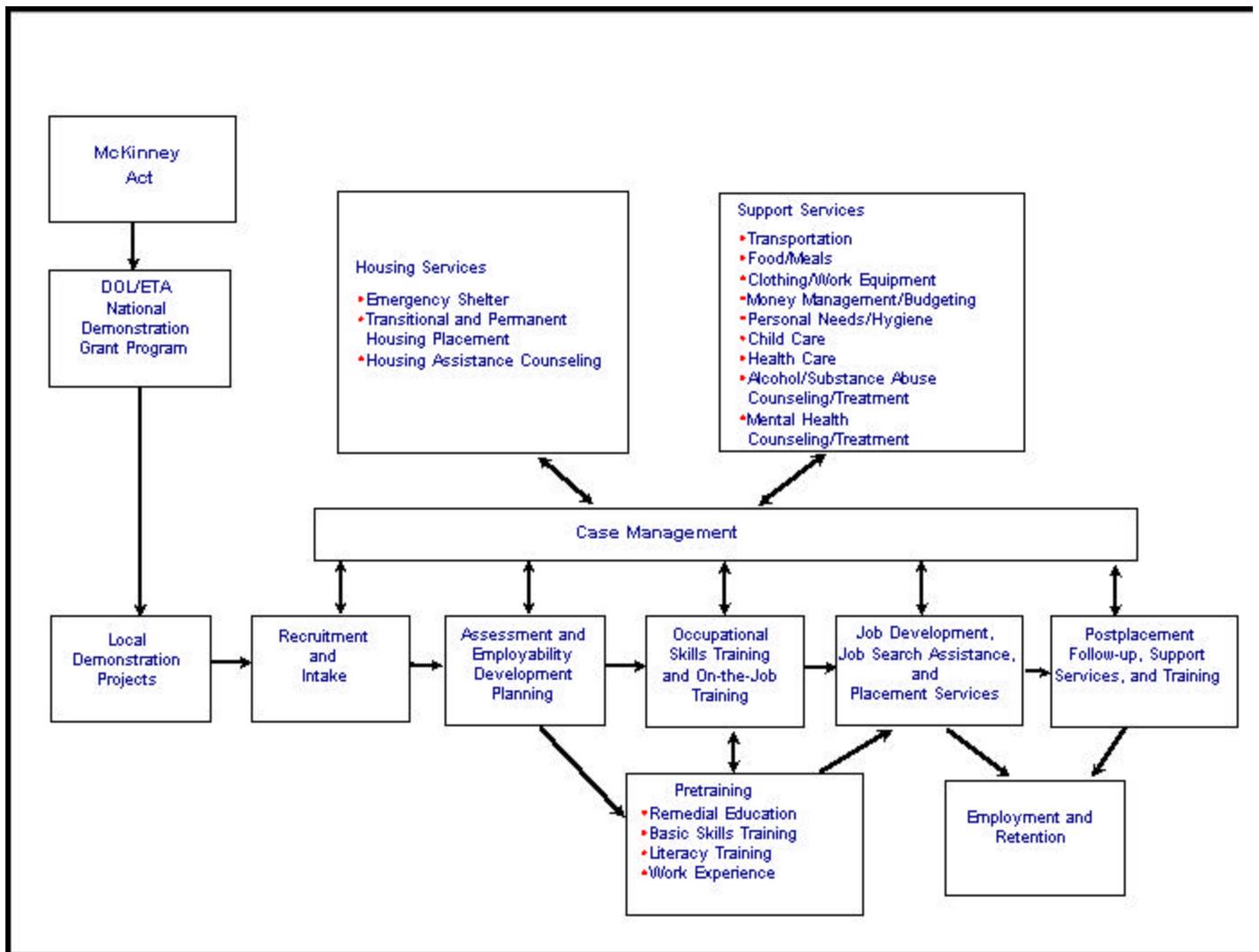


EXHIBIT 1-3: ONE JTHDP GRANTEE'S LINKAGES WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS

Service	Providers
Housing - Emergency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Salvation Army 2. Union Rescue Ministries 3. Volunteer Ministries 4. Serenity Shelter 5. Family Crisis Center 6. Runaway Shelter 7. Vol. of America

Housing - Transitional

1. Midway Rehabilitation Center
2. Barnabas House
3. YWCA
4. Pleasantree Apartments
5. Great Starts
6. Agape
7. Light House
8. Dismas House
9. VMC - Working Men's Dorm

Housing - Permanent

1. Knoxville Community Dev. Corp.
2. Subsidized Housing Complexes (8)
3. Private Providers
4. Knox County Housing Authority

Food

1. Department of Human Services
2. Emergency Food Helpers
3. Shelters
4. Heath Restaurant
5. Fish of Knoxville/Knox Co.
6. Churches

Clothing

1. Union Rescue Thrift Store

2. Salvation Army Thrift Store
3. Baptist Center
4. Private donations
5. Ladies of Charity

Health Care

1. Knox Co. Health Department
2. Knoxville Union Rescue Medical Clinic
3. Interfaith Health Clinic

Mental Health

1. Helen Ross McNabb Mental Health Ctr.
2. Lakeshore Mental Health Institute
3. Overlook Mental Health Clinic
4. Oakwood Mental Health Center

Alcohol-Drugs

1. Detoxification Rehabilitation Institute
2. Lighthouse
3. U.T. Medical Center
4. CAC Substance Abuse Program
5. Peninsula Hospital

Support

1. Knoxville-Knox County CAC
2. Alcoholics Anonymous
3. Helen Ross McNabb Friendship House

Child Care

1. JTPA (child care broker for multiple centers)

Transportation

1. CAC (multiple programs)
3. Pilot Oil
3. Humans' B.P.
3. K-Trans

Education

1. Project Succeed
2. JTPA
3. Pellissippi State Community College
4. Center School
5. University of Tennessee
6. Knox County Adult Education
7. Knox Area State Vocational School

Training

1. JTPA
2. Knox Area Vocational School
3. Goodwill Industries
4. Pellissippi State Community College
5. Tractor-Trailer Operators'
6. TN Dept. of Vocational Rehabilitation

Legal

1. U.T. Law Clinic
2. Legal Aid
3. Pro Bono Service

Financial

1. Consumer Credit Counseling

Management

Arrange for Short-term Job Search Assistance. Homeless individuals are often primarily interested in obtaining employment and improving their housing situation in the shortest time possible. Hence, employment and training programs need to provide, either through in-house capabilities or linkages, job search assistance for those who are primarily interested in obtaining employment in the shortest time possible.

- **Provide Basic Skills and Work Readiness Skills Training.** Some homeless individuals need basic and/or work readiness skills training prior to entry into training and employment. This training can be conducted in conjunction with other training or job search assistance.

Provide Follow-up and Support. The problems that led to homelessness do not suddenly disappear upon entering a training program, finding a job, or securing permanent housing. Ongoing assessment, case management, and follow-up support are important ingredients for assisting homeless individuals in retaining employment.

Provide Staff Training on Serving Homeless Persons. Employment and training agencies may need to provide training for their staff and service providers on the needs of and misperceptions about homeless people, the variety of referral agencies locally available to meet those needs, and the best practices for serving homeless participants.

C. ORGANIZATION OF THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to be practical and user-friendly. Each chapter is organized around a discussion of a specific service or group of services that should be part of a comprehensive employment and training service delivery system for homeless individuals. Each chapter begins with a discussion of the challenges that employment and training agencies may face in providing a particular service to homeless individuals. The discussion then shifts to an assessment of effective strategies for providing each service. Throughout each chapter, examples of effective strategies are illustrated with experiences drawn from JTHDP grantees.

Chapter 2 (Initial Services) addresses the services employment and training agencies are likely to need to provide (or arrange for) in order to effectively recruit and assess homeless individuals. These services include marketing job training services to homeless people, determining which homeless people can benefit from the services

provided by each employment and training agency, developing case plans based on assessment, and using case management as the focal point for connecting participants with the range of services they need.

Chapter 3 (Education and Training Services) discusses effective strategies for providing education and training services for homeless individuals to assist them in securing and retaining employment. The services discussed include: basic skills (i.e., remedial education, literacy training, and English-as-a-Second-Language training) and occupational skills training (including on-the-job training and work experience).

Chapter 4 (Placement and Post-placement Services) examines various strategies for assisting homeless individuals to find and retain jobs over the long term. This includes discussion of job search assistance, job development, placement, and post-placement services (such as regular contact with the participant and employer and re-placement services).

Chapter 5 (Housing and Support Services) examines the critically important range of housing assistance and support services which may be needed by homeless individuals. This chapter identifies the most commonly needed services for homeless people (beyond employment- related services) to be able to secure and retain employment, and illustrates some of the community linkages which have helped JTHDP grantees access those services.