



Status Report on Strategic Plan 2006-2010

Summary of Strategic Planning Workshop November 17, 2006

The Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County adopted a five-year strategic plan in December 2005. The top priority in the Alliance's strategic plan is to involve the community in creating a Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County.

The group met at the one-year mark, on November 17, 2006, to evaluate progress within the first year of the plan and to focus on an engagement strategy to turn the Strategic Plan's strategies into a community-wide Ten Year Plan within the coming year.

This summary of the workshop organizes a list of recent accomplishments into the six Strategic Focus Areas that were identified in the strategic plan. Next, it summarizes the key messages, images, and themes that describe the Alliance and what we should be communicating about our work as we strive to involve more stakeholders in our planning efforts. Finally, it prioritizes the community groups we will focus on including in our efforts in 2007, outlining a strategy for what we want to ask of those groups and how we will go about engaging them.

Achievements

The goals of the Strategic Plan 2006-2010 were organized into six Strategic Focus Areas, which are listed below. Under each title is a review of the goals summarized from the strategic plan, followed by a list of achievements in that focus area in the past twelve months.

Chronic Homelessness

GOALS INCLUDED:

- Develop 100 beds of permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless persons over the next five years, especially safe havens and harm reduction models. Launch and fill to capacity new programs currently in the pipeline. Train on harm reduction models. Recruit housing authorities to apply for mainstream vouchers for people with disabilities. Research street and shelter outreach funding sources.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- We hosted a Harm Reduction Training in a west suburban location, 70 participants.
- Safe haven ranked #1 in last SuperNOFA competition.
- West Cook Housing Initiative Partnership (WCHIP) has begun operations and is fully leased.
- Five (5) Oak Park mainstream vouchers for chronically homeless were put into operation and are fully utilized.
- Three new project ideas from our membership were selected to participate in the intensive Supportive Housing Institute, sponsored by the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), to help bring projects from concept to reality.

Family Homelessness

GOALS INCLUDED:

- Create more permanent housing for families by exploring conversion of transitional projects to permanent, funding new projects, and identifying new resources. Increase the percent of families graduating from transitional programs moving to permanent housing. Access Rental Housing Support Program (RHSP) funds and HOME funds for homeless families. Know more about at-risk families and best practices for prevention. Increase homelessness prevention resources.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- We promoted conversion of projects from TH (transitional housing) to PSH (permanent supportive housing): Alliance staff met with HUD and linked agencies to technical assistance.
- IDHS Prevention funding doubled and services percentage increased from 7% to 10% in order to offer more services to more people at risk of losing their housing.
- Three of the new project ideas participating in the Supportive Housing Institute, and some include serving families.
- WCHIP includes families also.

- Responded to the Hurricane Katrina evacuation by serving over 500 people and linking them to landlords, apartment resources and financial assistance.
- WillPower opened two new apartments in the north suburbs for families
- We convened the Rental Support Workgroup to plan how to include homeless families with extremely low incomes in this new program. Over a dozen regional groups participate.
- Increased the outcome of transitional housing graduates achieving permanent housing.

Systems Prevention

GOALS INCLUDED:

- Improve linkages to school system, mental health, substance abuse, employment supports, and other mainstream benefits. Use Regional Roundtable as a resource to improve discharge planning efficacy.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Regional Roundtable's discharge planning committee gave testimony to Governor's Task Force on Re-Entry; two Alliance members participating in that effort.
- Identified new contacts at Cook County Sheriff's office to discuss discharge planning and homelessness prevention ideas
- Veterans Affairs mental health plan led to the creation of a resource guide for incarcerated individuals
- State mental health officials are growing in their support of and education about supportive housing (including co-sponsoring the Harm Reduction Training).

Outcome Evaluation

GOALS INCLUDED:

- Develop a tool and process to benchmark and evaluate supportive housing outcomes related to achieving permanent housing and maximizing self-sufficiency. Monitor Annual Performance Reports and include those results in SuperNOFA project review process. Increase outcomes of transitional housing graduates moving to permanent housing, permanent housing residents staying more than six months, and achieving employment.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Annual Performance Reports (APR's) used to a greater extent in our Project Review process for the SuperNOFA competition.
- Completed training and initial benchmarking with Family Self-Sufficiency Scale. New agencies adopting the scale as a tool.
- Success rates: 83.5% PSH residents stay more than 6 months; 70.6% TH residents achieve permanent housing; 26% of participants are employed at program exit. These are all higher than the national averages.
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is in the testing phase; our member agencies' technical readiness has been established.
- Homeless count planning for 2007 reflects a more sophisticated service-based methodology to supplement the unsheltered count.

- We take a strategic approach to renewals in the SuperNOFA process, using renewal scenarios, brainstorming sessions, incentives and transparency.

Advocacy

GOALS INCLUDED:

- Advocate for additional affordable housing resources and supportive services, in partnership with statewide coalitions. Educate Alliance members on how to use Consolidated Plans as an advocacy tool. Disseminate advocacy alerts to Alliance's 200+ email contact list.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- IDHS Prevention funding doubled from \$5 million to \$11 million, and services in supportive housing increased \$4.2 million.
- Impact on the County's Consolidated Plan. The Con Plan's section on homeless needs and priorities closely matches the Alliance's strategic plan. Ending chronic homelessness is #2 priority in Con Plan.
- Action alerts distributed on McKinney-Vento and other national and state advocacy initiatives.
- New campaign initiated to increase Emergency Food and Shelter program funding at the state level.
- Rental support bill passed to create more housing for people with extremely low incomes.
- Representatives Mark Kirk and Judy Biggert became co-sponsors of SELHA (Services to End Long Term Homelessness Act).
- State mental health officials growing in their support of and education about supportive housing.
- New advocacy around transitional employment (internships, apprenticeships) for homeless youth, led by Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

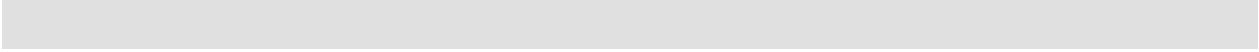
Engaging Stakeholders

GOALS INCLUDED:

- Recruit additional public and private sector participation in Alliance's planning activities. Connect to regional groups with influence over planning issues. Maintain and recruit additional homeless consumer participation on Alliance initiatives. Present Alliance strategic plan to a variety of community groups and stakeholders.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Convened Rental Support Workgroup with over a dozen regional groups participating in planning for more housing subsidies for extremely low-income households.
- South summit follow-up included breaking into subcommittees, inviting elected officials to a special meeting, planning and finding resources for a research study.
- West summit is planned for December.
- Alliance staff and membership educated local officials on using HOME funding for homeless supportive housing projects, including connecting officials from Cook County and Town of Cicero to Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) technical assistance resources.

- Educated Public Housing Authorities about mainstream housing vouchers for people with disabilities, including chronically homeless individuals.
 - More diverse board composition; new groups represented
 - Made more legislative contacts; State Senator Maggie Crotty's sponsorship of south summit for example
 - 5000-name mailing list compiled by Alliance staff
- 

Images & Themes

- The objective of the Alliance is to END HOMELESSNESS.
- The Alliance is a planning body. It makes things happen through good planning.
- The Alliance works to address four major issues: 1) the affordability of housing, 2) ensuring services are provided to those in need 3) alleviating income restraints that prohibit folks from obtaining affordable housing (access to entitlement benefits and job readiness programs) and 4) raising public awareness through education.
- The Alliance is committed to three fundamental principles: 1) Housing is a basic human right, 2) The Alliance wants to help the homeless help themselves, and 3) Everyone is welcome.
- The Alliance has strength in diversity. Its members, clients and communities are extremely diverse.
- The Alliance has universal reach. It engages important and diverse stakeholders in order to generate the right kind of planning and actions to END HOMELESSNESS. It links government officials (local, county, state, federal), businesspeople, residents and consumers to experts in the field.
- By bringing together the diverse stakeholders around expert information and planning, the Alliance creates awareness and generates resources to END HOMELESSNESS.
- Through this work, the alliance generates a unifying voice. Because that voice is unified, that voice is loud in advocacy terms.
- Aspects of the Alliance that are unique: the Alliance includes the consumer's voice, the HMIS database will help to inform and create the right solutions around funding and advocacy, the Alliance has developed new ways for homeless care providers to work together (e.g., the Count).
- The Alliance is a sound investment for donors because through HMIS and the Alliance's network, the organization has a very good sense of where needs and resources are. This means the Alliance can work efficiently to make a difference. It also means the Alliance can impact a lot of service providers at the same time with the right data and information.
- The board is personally involved with the Alliance for the following reasons: committed to ending homelessness; believes the whole is greater than the sum of the parts; gains hope and support from involvement; finds the networking, information, organizing and synergy helpful.

Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

<i>Stakeholder Group:</i>	Identify the Top Priority Stakeholder Group/s.
<i>Person or Path:</i>	List the contact person or path to contact them. Who knows this group? Who can engage them?
<i>Action to Engage:</i>	What is the action to engage them? Present to their meeting? Set an appointment? Send materials? Invite to our meetings?
<i>What's the ASK:</i>	What specific thing do we want from this group? Funds, research, volunteers, cooperation, board membership, vote, come to something, be a host, convener or sponsor?

Stakeholder Group: Homeless consumers
Person or Path: Our member providers, especially PADS day sites.
Action to Engage: Townhall meetings, going to them, providing food or payment. Doing panel presentations at the support centers of PADS. Potential advisory board that meets quarterly.
What's the ASK: Their voice, leadership, involvement and especially their advocacy. Help to define and articulate the need. Help to make the homeless count successful by identifying unsheltered locations and by volunteering.

Stakeholder Group: Media
Person or Path: Start with board contacts (Richard Grove & others volunteer), start the relationships and cultivate them.
Action to Engage: Create a year-round plan. Prepare talking points, statistics, have stories in the wings. Focus on timeliness (News is NEWS, not just a good message). Explore a video or other tools. Explore homeless memorial day options. Promote the lobby day.
What's the ASK: Media exposure. Establish the Alliance as a recognized media resource for suburban homeless/housing issues. The media helps us reach all the other people we want to reach. Fight the invisibility of suburban homelessness. Break down myths. Public education about the lack of affordable housing. Minimum wage is not enough to afford housing.

Stakeholder Group: Housing developers, builders, landlords, managers
Person or Path: Through West Suburban Landlords Association. Through HOME grantee list from Cook County. Through suburban connections of Housing Action Illinois, Chicago Rehab Network, and Community Investment Corporation (CIC).
Action to Engage: Present solutions to their needs, connect to tenants and funding resources, assure of connections to services within supportive housing. Provide training on how to use housing resources (like HOME) to do supportive housing. Connect to technical

assistance such as through the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH).

What's the ASK: Do the development to create new affordable housing units. Connect them to government funds. Promote community acceptance strategies. Make connections between service providers and housing groups.

Stakeholder Group: Employers, trade groups, and workforce programs

Person or Path: Learn more about County P.O.E.T. program via County planning department friends. Learn more about Workforce Investment Act (WIA) boards through participating agencies like CEDA. Learn more about vocational rehab resources, Illinois Skills Match, and public aid resources through our members who connect to these services already.

Action to Engage: Get invited to WIA board meetings, and/or invite presentations to our local councils on employment program resources available.

What's the ASK: We want access to job lists, and case managers want more information about how to connect to services available at One-Stop Centers. We want major businesses as sponsors of Alliance events or activities.

Stakeholder Group: Elected officials (federal, state, county and local)

Person or Path: Through our members and board contacts.

Action to Engage: Write letters, invite them to tour supportive housing developments, visit their offices, involve as conveners. Relate to media-covered events that elected officials can co-sponsor.

What's the ASK: Create more resources and supportive legislation to help end homelessness. Sponsor federal Services to End Long-Term Homelessness Act (SELHA) bill. Implement new state resources. Get County Commission's support of a plan to end homelessness.

Stakeholder Group: Faith-Based Groups

Person or Path: Start with the faith-based groups already involved in Alliance, including current PADS sites. Alliance also has extensive mailing list including 1000+ faith-based groups. Focus on faith networks vs. every individual house of worship.

Action to Engage: Letter about the January homeless count and/or general info.

What's the ASK: Identify the services they are providing to homeless people and people in housing crisis. Attract the resources, volunteer efforts, giving, etc. that faith communities already provide and help focus those efforts on long-term housing solutions. Help connect churches to existing services for the homeless.

Workshop Evaluation

The facilitator led a brief evaluative discussion at the close of the workshop. Also, twenty (20) evaluation forms were returned. To summarize, participants were generally pleased with the focus on images, themes, and engagement. The focus allowed the board to produce specific plans and ideas to communicate the Alliance's purpose. Images and ideas such as 'broad reach,' 'unifying voice,' 'expert information and planning,' and 'collaboration' resonated with several participants in describing the Alliance. Participants identified next steps as refining the message and the engagement strategy, making the strategy more specific in terms of what we are asking of what groups, and following through to engage these groups to help us create a community plan.

Written Responses to Evaluation Questions:

What did we accomplish today?

- Reviewed '05 progress against focus areas, developed ideas/language for external communications, started a stakeholder outreach plan, came together as a group.
- Identified the goals accomplished by the Alliance in 2006, the work we have yet to accomplish, the importance of working together to reach our goals.
- We evaluated where we are in achieving our main goals. We developed ways to talk about who the Alliance is.
- (1) Reaffirmed progress on Strategic Focus. (2) Began development of Alliance Themes & Images and Engagement Strategy.
- I believe today we accomplished a focal point on identifying possible stakeholders & what we need to do & say to get them (org.) on board.
- (1) A workable plan to "Engage Stakeholders" (2) The beginnings of a PR Plan / Alliance Identity plan to promote Awareness.
- I love it that there are engagement plans and groups prioritized. There seems to be agreement about marketing statement components.
- The start of conversation(s) on plans of marketing & fundraising, on how to tell the Alliance story & how to approach stakeholders.
- Focused in on engaging stakeholders by (1) articulating our mission, (2) developing alliance with others outside our group.
- We got the agencies to come together to agree that the Alliance encompasses all of us, and not just a small group.
- Took the next step toward focusing our efforts so we may progress toward solutions vs. spinning our wheels.
- We were able to get a general idea as to who is important in implementing a plan to end homelessness.
- Getting focused on exactly who we want to engage and why and what we have to say to them.
- A focused strategy that helps us to know where to start in telling our story and to whom.
- Defined/honed in on why we are an important group – good group think.
- Development of a starting plan for the engagement of stakeholders.
- I think we came up with some interesting ideas for more work.
- Identify key points to be included in brochure for the Alliance.
- A more concise view of where we're headed as a network.
- Sharing good ideas among all participants.

What do we need to spend more time on in the future?

- Including the voice of consumers in our organization. Solidifying the contributions of friendly businesses and legislators. Utilizing the media to spread our message.
- Homeless consumer engagement strategy and appealing to faith-based organizations.

- Talking about ways to support outreach. Getting out to our stakeholders and making them aware.
- Possibly making sure the board has a good context & understanding of progress against the plan.
- Further discussion/plan of how to market/fundraise to support Alliance's continued efforts.
- Advocacy and systemic change through legislation & public policy.
- Actually engaging the stakeholders that were identified.
- Spend time on focusing on these issues, coming up with the plan, and implementing these plans through actions.
- Setting forth a comprehensive plan toward ending homelessness which will drive priorities, decision making, etc.
- A strategic plan to attack a cause of homelessness. Identify an area and put together a plan to eliminate the cause.
- Fleshing out the ideas – more work on the stakeholder groups in particular.
- I liked the group discussion but found it hard to stay focused on task.
- Further flesh out images, themes, and engagement strategy.
- The Action Steps – moving on the above recommendations.
- Talking about how we connect all involved parties.
- Are we ahead or behind on our accomplishments.
- Implementation of all the good ideas.
- Developing this plan into action.
- I'll think more about this.
- Social activity.

What ideas or thoughts made the biggest impression on you today?

- We're after something different from each target. Consumers: their voices. Developers: units. Faith-based org's: community linkage w/ residents. Media: positive exposure.
- "The Alliance has a unifying voice on working to end homelessness." Board came together well and seemed to enjoy the opportunity to work together.
- It was good to synthesize the information into a workable plan for the next year or so. I am very interested in seeing the results of a unified Alliance mission / statement.
- The fact that the Alliance encompasses so many organizations that basically have the same goal of ending homelessness and maintaining that goal.
- The idea that there are ways of getting out the education about homelessness. The first step is actually doing so.
- Issues about veterans' needs. Homeless issues for those being released from prisons.
- People were thinking in big terms, planning to engage potentially large stakeholders.
- The passion that everyone in the Alliance shares for tackling all aspects of homelessness.
- Helped focus attention on whom and how to engage – key to moving planning forward.
- "Unifying voice" is what makes us most effective at advocacy.
- The commonality of our understanding of the issues at hand.
- Looking at our achievements actually outlined on paper.
- Discussions with others re: Alliance role and benefit.
- I'm impressed with the commitment of individuals.
- Collaboration always produces good results.
- We think alike more than we disagree.
- How Alliance has a unifying voice.
- The cohesiveness of the group.
- Unity among great diversity.
- Collaboration.

What are your thoughts on how this workshop was organized?

- The workshop was well put together, but I would have liked to see more. Writing on a paper is fine (having separate groups); however, we need to become more into discussing how change can occur. The second group [Images & Themes] seemed to just come up with ideas without making it more interesting. If I were a stakeholder, I would want the subject to be more specific and not so broad.

- Focus & breakouts were good but breakouts were somewhat rushed and input curtailed. It may have been helpful to have a bit more time to further flesh out so as to take advantage of the momentum.
- The workshop was very organized in that it identified the goals and allowed everyone to express how they felt and what they see as obstacles.
- Friday afternoon is difficult for concentration. Water or coffee would have been appreciated. Overall, organization was good.
- I liked that the group work went through a couple iterations. The result was less raw than typical small group work.
- I'm not one for the "back patting." It's always great to get a lot of work done at a meeting. Thanks!
- Done well, and again, breaking tasks into workable components is very helpful.
- Could have used more time on small group and less on achievement time.
- The workshop was well organized with enough time to focus on various factors.
- Well organized, good facilitation, excellent participation from everyone.
- Very well structured and facilitated. Thank you.
- It was key to accomplishing today's objectives.
- It was good – an opportunity to discuss ideas.
- A good agenda with good mix of participants.
- Good – very well organized and focused.
- Well organized, stayed on time / on task.
- Good organization & good facilitation!
- Fine.

Other comments:

- Time allotment was perfect!! Facilitator made it happen!!
- Keep up the good work! You are welcome to return to Oak Park Temple for future workshops and meetings.
- This workshop has opened my eyes to what my organization may be a party to, and on a personal level more commitment.
- Good group, good work, & it was a privilege to be part of it all.
- Good leadership & direction. Good group discussion.
- Refreshments would be nice at 4 hr meeting!
- Cramped, need a larger space.
- Good job!
- Thanks!
- Coffee! ☺

Participants

Augustus, Sue	Corporation for Supportive Housing
Davis, Arie	Illinois Department of Corrections
DuBoe, Wendy	United Way of Metropolitan Chicago
DuPaty, Gerry	Housing Authority of Cook County
Galassini, Tom	United Way of Metropolitan Chicago
Golden, Peppy	CEDA Southwest
Gorss, Marvin	West Suburban Landlords Association
Grove, Richard	Community Representative, AHAND
Higgins, Eileen	Catholic Charities
Hill, Jennifer	Alliance to End Homelessness
Hinchy, Tom	Cook County Dept. of Planning & Development
Hopkins, Suzanne	Alliance to End Homelessness
Howard-Frye, Debra	Thresholds, Inc.
Lincoln, Jeannette	The Center of Concern
Manasse, Bryan	Alliance to End Homelessness
Minas, Marianne	Pillars Community Services
Pyron, Shaun	Alliance to End Homelessness
Rohter, Margaret	Suburban Cook County TB District
Romeo, Mary Ann	Hines VA Hospital
Schilsky, Cynthia	Community Representative, WSCH
Schmitt, Ken	YMCA Network
Schueler, Lynda	West Suburban PADS
Shimon, Susan	WilPower, Inc.
Smalling, Tahtia K.	IDHS/DMH PATH Program
Street, Patricia	Pat's House
Suchor, Courtney	Sanctuary/SS Family Shelter
Wasserberg, Mike	South Suburban PADS
Williams, Sandy	Journeys from PADS to HOPE
Wilson, Renae	Alliance to End Homelessness

Special Thanks to...

The Alliance wishes to thank especially Wendy DuBoe of United Way for donating her time and expertise to facilitate this workshop. Also, thanks to the fine staff of the Oak Park Temple for hosting this event.

For more information, contact:

Jennifer Hill, Executive Director
Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County
1107 S. Mannheim Road, Suite 304
Westchester, IL 60154
708.345.4035
708.345.7855 fax
info@suburbancook.org

www.suburbancook.org