Permanent supportive housing has become a national trend for confronting the problem of homelessness, especially chronic homelessness. Everyone from Chicago’s Mayor Daley to National Public Radio (NPR) have laid out proposals, opinions and statistics ranging from workable to far-fetched. However, the effectiveness of permanent supportive housing remains to be seen as many of these projects are still in the early phases. The West Cook (County) Housing Initiative Partnership (WCHIP) Program is entering into its third contract year and some light is being shed on its effectiveness in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable of the target population: homeless persons whose lives have been impacted by mental health disabilities.

The Problem

Since the de-institutionalization movement of the 70’s and 80’s, programs have attempted to move the persons experiencing a mental illness closer to full integration into “normal” society. Often persons with mental illness have just been discharged onto the streets to survive on their own with little to no access to support services. Social service agencies as well as society at large have subsequently become aware of the many challenges that afflict individuals with a mental illness attempting to re-integrate into communities.

Several programs such as Combined Integrated Living Arrangements (CILA), transitional housing programs and community mental health centers have risen to meet these challenges, but have generally targeted only certain aspects of these individual’s needs. Due to the complexity of mental illness, these traditional targeted programs have often failed to move clients into independent living.

Funding shortages throughout the 80’s and 90’s also created increased pressure on programs to show positive (Continued on page 2)
Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth 2007 (Abstract)

Mark E. Courtney, Amy Dworsky, Gretchen Ruth Cusick, Thomas Keller, Judy Havlicek, Alfred Perez, Sherri Terao, Noel Bost

The Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth (Midwest Study) is a prospective study following a sample of young people in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois as they make the transition from foster care to early adulthood. It provides a comprehensive picture of how foster youth are faring during this transition since the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 became law.

The Midwest Study examines the experiences of these young people across a variety of domains, including living arrangements, relationships with family of origin, social support, receipt of independent living services, education, employment, economic well-being, receipt of government benefits, physical and mental health, health and mental health care service utilization, sexual behaviors, pregnancy, marriage and cohabitation, parenting, and criminal justice system involvement. Because many of the questions they were asked had also been used in the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, it is possible to make comparisons between this sample of young adults who “aged out” of foster care and a nationally representative sample of their peers in the general population. Data from the Midwest Study indicate that young adults who have aged out of the child welfare system are faring poorly as a group compared with their peers. Foster youth in Iowa and Wisconsin are generally discharged from care at age 18, or age 19 at the latest. By contrast, foster youth in Illinois can remain in care until they are 21. Thus, the Midwest Study presents a unique opportunity to compare the outcomes of young people who aged out of care in states with different policies.

“Conditions of Youth Preparing to Leave State Care” provides information about the 732 foster youth in the Midwest Study at the time of the baseline interview, when they were 17 or 18 years old. These foster youth had entered care prior to their 16th birthday due to abuse and/or neglect and nearly all were still state wards. Outcomes at Age 19 is based on survey data collected from the 603 study participants who were re-interviewed at age 19. The report compares the outcomes of the 282 young adults who were still in foster care to the outcomes of the 321 who had already been discharged. Outcomes at age 21 is based on survey data collected from the 591 study participants who were interviewed when they were 21 years old. The Issue Brief “When Should the State Cease Parenting? Evidence from the Midwest Study” discusses the potential benefits of allowing foster youth to remain in care past age 18. In particular, data from the Midwest Study suggest that allowing foster youth to remain in care past age 18 increases their likelihood of attending college and their likelihood of receiving independent living services after age 19. It may also increase earnings and delay pregnancy.

The Midwest Study is a collaborative effort among the public child welfare agencies in Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin, Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, Partners for Our Children at the University of Washington, Seattle and the University of Wisconsin Survey Center.

To view the full report, go to www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1355&L2=61&L3=130
The goal of a National Housing Trust Fund moved one step closer to realization on December 19 when S. 2523, the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act of 2007, was introduced in the Senate. Senators John Kerry (D-MA) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME) were the lead sponsors on this bipartisan legislation. Other Senators who co-sponsored the bill at introduction were Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Pete Domenici (R-NM), Charles Schumer (D-NY), Susan Collins, (R-ME), Ted Kennedy (D-MA), and Jack Reed (D-RI).

H. R. 2895, the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act of 2007, passed the House October 10. The House effort was led by Representative Barney Frank (D-MA) and had strong bipartisan support, passing the House by a vote of 264-148 with 41 Republicans voting for the measure.

The Senate and House bills are nearly identical.

The bill will establish a dedicated source for the production, preservation and rehabilitation of 1.5 million affordable homes in 10 years. At least 75 percent of the funds will be for housing for households that are extremely low income, earning less than 30 percent of an area’s median income.

When Congress returns in January, the National Housing Trust Fund campaign will work to get additional cosponsors on the bill and line up the votes to have the Trust Fund bill passed in the Senate. Advocates will continue to work to have GSE legislation approved in the Senate that will include one of the funding sources for the Trust Fund. And when the House Financial Services Committee and the Senate Banking Committee meet in conference in early 2008 to work out the differences in the FHA modernization bill, the campaign will work to ensure that the House provision that provides a source of funding for the Trust Fund remains in the final bill.

For further information, contact the National Low Income Housing coalition at the address in Headlines Directory.

Affordable homes in 10 years. At least 75 percent of the funds will be for housing for households that are extremely low income, earning less than 30 percent of an area’s median income.

Making the Connection
Identification and Expungement
Contributor: Kathryn Nelson

The authors of this column welcome your comments and questions. See contact information at the end of the article.

This is the final installment in my series about public benefits for persons who have been incarcerated. Individuals leaving jail or prison face many challenges to restarting their lives. Obtaining identification in order to be able to apply for essential benefits or actually being able to become employed due to having a criminal record are two of the challenges faced. As promised this month I will discuss obtaining identity verification and expunging the existing record.

Identification

As you are all aware, it is almost impossible to obtain identification documents in person, if you don’t already have some proof of identity already available. Currently if an individual needs a State ID card he is asked to provide a copy of his official birth certificate. When he applies for the birth certificate, he is asked to show his State ID card.

If an individual has minimal or no ID’s but has a family member or friend who is willing to order the birth certificate on-line using a credit card you can bypass the process of providing a physical identification card. Identity is verified through a series of questions that are asked at the end of the ordering process. Once ordered, the birth certificate is mailed in approximately one week. This is a costly option, but a realistic work around to the problem.

Illinois does have a law that was passed in 2001 (Public Act 92-0240) that states IDOC is to provide released inmates with an identification card. This IDOC identity card can be exchanged for an official state ID at any Secretary of State facility within 30 days of release and payment of $1.00. Now that I have your hopes up, be aware that IDOC does not have to provide every released inmate with this identification. IDOC places the responsibility on the inmate to obtain a birth certificate so the temporary ID can be issued. This means the inmate has to plan ahead, and request and pay for the birth
WCHIP
(Continued from page 2)

The Response in West Suburban Cook County

In the Fall of 2003, several agencies in Western Suburban Cook County initially came together to draft a proposal for a traditional permanent housing program that targeted the standard client base. A new light, however, was shown on the nature of the problem and the identity of those in need by a range of community representatives including several organizations, residents, township leaders, consumers, and consultants, including the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the Corporation for Supportive Housing, and The Veterans Administration. With the insights provided by these various members of the community and past housing models as a guide, the collaborative incorporated aspects of the standard permanent supportive housing model with the cutting edge philosophies of the Harm Reduction model. A permanent housing program was designed that broke down the traditional obstacles to meet the multi-faceted and interconnected needs of the mentally ill disabled homeless person.

Five project partners – Pillars (Community Care Options at the time), Family Service and Mental Health Center of Oak Park and River Forest, Thresholds, Vital Bridges and West Suburban PADS – teamed up to create the West Cook Housing Initiative Partnership Project (WCHIP). Funding was identified from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS). With additional support and collaboration from NAMI Metro Suburban, Hines Veterans Administration Hospital and Cicero Family Service, WCHIP directly subsidizes scattered site housing and provides wrap-around case management for thirty homeless persons with mental illness disabilities throughout the West Cook area.

Twenty-five units are set aside for singles and five are set aside for families.

Collaboration

According to Chicago’s Heartland Alliance, there are currently 5,466 units of permanent supportive housing (housing plus support services) units in Illinois. They estimate that double this amount is needed because of the large number of persons experiencing homelessness. In addition to limited housing resources, a catch-22 has traditionally arisen when attempting to respond to the dual obstacles of mental illness and homelessness—the challenges posed by one condition make the other difficult to address.

The comprehensive nature of the WCHIP collaboration addresses this conundrum. Participants in the WCHIP program are linked to a variety of comprehensive support services that are critical for maintaining stability and wellness, and that are tailored to their specific needs; including:

- Vocational/life skills training,
- Housing management,
- Financial education,
- Mental health evaluation and counseling, and
- Medical assistance.

Since each of the WCHIP agencies has unique assets, by partnering, they can share resources to meet the distinct needs of the participants. Agencies have linked together to create a seamless system of care for persons who are homeless, based on the belief that people create and strengthen communities, from the agencies involved to program participants.

The partner agencies have collaborated fully on all levels:

- The selection of participants
- Identification of housing units
- Implementation of services
- Community outings with participants, and
- Management of issues and concerns.

For example, participants are initially identified through outreach by WCHIP partner and collaborating agencies. After eligibility status is determined, participants’ cases are presented to a roundtable of the partner agencies where the appropriateness of the potential client as well as the capacity of each agency to meet the client’s needs is assessed. The case presentation forum is not only used to place clients with the most appropriate housing option and agency, but also to brainstorm ideas of how to use the collaborative network to best serve the client.

When the program was launched in March of 2006, it became obvious to all involved that the spectrum of barriers that the clients faced was wider and deeper than originally conceived. A collaborative meeting process was structured to include alternating weeks of consulting on clients, and management of programmatic issues. At the same time, there is continued involvement and input from community members and participants. This produces a check and balance where a diversity of cultures, ideas, and systems support the participants as well as the partnering agencies’ staff. As case managers from each partnering agency meet every other week to problem-solve around issues and provide updates on participants, resources are also shared. For example, one client from Thresholds attends Pillars supportive employment program since participants in WCHIP are considered to be part of every partnering agency.

Case managers have had to address the full range of human needs for their clients and the unexpected has become commonplace. Clients have to be taught how to use the microwave. Agency staff have had to get a landlord’s assistance to access a client’s unit since the client had had a stroke. (He got to the hospital in time and recovered.) In the midst of this
Expungement
(Continued from page 3)

The process is complicated. Even though the individual can file independently I strongly recommend that legal help is obtained. If you want more information about the either the expungement or sealing process or further details on eligible offenses you can contact the Office of the Appellant Defender at http://www.state.il.us/defender/exp.html. You will also be able to obtain a brochure about the process, as well as forms to apply and legal resources that can assist from the website.

The DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization focused on advocacy and planning in DuPage County, Illinois and designer and trainer of Making the Connection: A Guide to Accessing Public Benefits. The DuPage Federation is affiliated with Northern Illinois University, Regional Development Institute. Questions can be directed to kneelson@dupagefederation.org or cking@dupagefederation.org.
WCHIP
(Continued from page 1)

controlled chaos, the only constant is the continued collaboration at all levels between the agencies vertically and horizontally, as agencies have forged a community to address all aspects of the client needs. Because of the well-organized structure of the project, and the strength and commitment of the partnering agencies, everyone is able to be more flexible in addressing program participants’ needs.

WCHIP Performance

As of the first quarter of this IDHS fiscal year, twenty-nine of the thirty available units were filled. Thirty-eight individuals (twenty-four males and fourteen females) were included in these twenty-nine households. Forty-five percent of the individuals identified themselves as African American, forty-five percent as Caucasian, and ten percent as other. This closely reflects the statistics found in Cook County’s homeless count conducted on January 25, 2007. That study found 1,237 homeless individuals of whom 55 percent identified themselves as African American, 38 percent as Caucasian, and 7 percent as other.

Additional recent data reveal that of the twenty households entering the WCHIP program with income and/or benefits, all maintained them. Fifty percent of those entering the program without income or benefits were able to secure income or benefits. Nine of the participants were veterans and seventeen met the HUD definition of chronically homeless.

Because of the unique nature of WCHIPS’ collaborative process between its agencies and its participants, it is difficult to find a benchmark for comparison. However, the early numbers indicating the ability to sustain and/or increase income and length of stable housing seem encouraging. WCHIP’s achievements in this pioneering endeavor is laid with the solid groundwork of collaboration which allows the participating agencies to progressively evolve in their ability to meet the needs of this very unique client base, and thus ensure that they remain stable in their new homes, and in their new lives.

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FY08 Appropriation
(Continued from page 1)

House and the Senate make it difficult to obtain the two-thirds majority required to override a veto. Consequently, the Democratic leadership proposed to “split the difference” and cut $11 billion from the proposed levels in an effort to obtain Republican support. When the President again threatened to veto any legislation that exceeded his spending requests, the Democrats, unable to garner enough Republican support to override the promised veto, agreed to the President’s overall spending levels. But many of the President’s priorities were cut in order to fund some of the Democrats’ spending priorities, including the funding of housing programs.

The HUD provisions of the omnibus bill, which are similar to those of the Transportation, HUD and Related Agencies conference report, H. Report 110-446, continue to provide modest yet critical funding increases for many programs. The report also includes important policy guidance on a range of HUD programs. The details of funding levels for various programs can be found at www.nlihc.org/doc/FY08_BudgetChart.pdf. The discussion below highlights most of the significant differences between the omnibus bill and the conference report.

The omnibus bill provides $14.685 billion for Housing Choice Voucher renewals. While less than provided in the conference report, this amount should be sufficient to renew all vouchers in use in FY07. The omnibus bill does provide for renewals to be based on the most recent federal fiscal year data available, with exceptions to the distribution formula for public housing agencies (PHAs) that went into receivership within the previous 24 months, overspent their FY07 allocation or were impacted by the 2005 hurricanes.

PHAs in receivership or that overspent their 2007 allocation will receive funding in calendar year 2008 equal to what they received in calendar year 2007. PHAs impacted by the 2005 hurricanes will receive funding for the calendar year 2008 equal to the greater of the amount provided using the most recent federal fiscal year data or the amount received in calendar year 2007. The bill also reduces the renewal amounts for agencies with large unspent voucher reserves by amounts in excess of 7 percent of the amount of renewal funding allocated to the agency for the calendar 2007 funding cycle. This functionally shifts funds from retention for future needs to addressing current priorities, such as renewals and the funding of the first new incremental vouchers since FY02.

The funding levels provided in the omnibus bill for the HOME, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), and HOPE VI are also below those provided in the conference report. In the omnibus bill, HOME is funded at $1.629 billion, $73 million less than the conference report. CDBG is funded at $3.6 billion, $130 million less than the conference report. The omnibus bill provides $100 million for HOPE VI, $20 million less than the conference report.

For further information, contact the National Low Income Housing Coalition at the address in Headlines Directory.
The TJX Foundation, Inc.
(formerly Zayre Foundation, Inc.)
c/o The TJX Cos., Inc.
770 Cochitiuate Rd., Rte. 1E
Framingham, MA 01701
Telephone: (508) 390-3199
Contact: Christine A. Strickland, Mgr.
URL: www.tjx.com/corprespns/commsupp.html

Type of grantmaker: Company-sponsored foundation.
Total Giving (2006): over $5,500,000
Purpose and activities: The foundation supports organizations involved with domestic violence, disadvantaged families and children, disabled people, women, and homeless people. Fields of interest: Children, services; Crime/violence prevention, domestic violence; Disabilities, people with; Economically disadvantaged; Family services; Homeless; Women. Geographic focus: National

Limitations: No support for political organizations or fraternal organizations. No grants to individuals, or for capital campaigns.
Application information: Proposals should be no longer than 1 page. Visit Web site for nearest application address. Application form required. Applicants should submit:

1) Copy of IRS Determination Letter;
2) Copy of most recent annual report/audited financial statement/990;
3) Listing of board of directors, trustees, officers and other key people and their affiliations
4) Detailed description of project and amount of funding requested;
5) Copy of current year’s organizational budget and/or project budget;
6) Listing of additional sources and amount of support;
7) Additional materials/documentation; Initial approach: Download application form and mail proposal and application form to nearest application address; Copies of proposal: 1; Board meeting date(s): Quarterly

U.S. Bancorp Foundation, Inc.
BC-MN-H21B
800 Nicollet Mall, 21st Fl.
Minneapolis, MN 55402-7000
Telephone: (612) 303-4000
Contact: Kate Waters
FAX: (612) 303-0787

URL: www.usbank.com/cgi_w/cfm/about/community_relations/charit_giving.cfm

Type of grantmaker: Company-sponsored foundation.
Total Giving (2005): $20,271,339
Background: Established in 1979.
Purpose and activities: The foundation supports organizations involved with education, employment, housing, youth development, human services, and community development. Program area(s): The grantmaker has identified Affordable Housing as one of their areas of interest and supports programs designed to preserve, rehabilitate, and construct quality affordable housing that assists low- and moderate-income populations; and provide home buyer counseling and related economic education to individuals and families with low and moderate incomes. The foundation has also identified Self-Sufficiency as one of their program which is designed to assist low- and moderate-income individuals in development of work and life skills essential to self-sufficiency, with a focus on work-entry programs, specific skills training, employment retention, and personal financial management training; and help people transition from welfare to work by addressing child care and transportation issues. Fields of interest: Community development, small businesses; Community/ economic development; Economic development; Economically disadvantaged; Education; Elementary/secondary education; Employment; Employment, training; Federated giving programs; Housing/shelter; Human services; Human services, financial counseling; Youth development; Youth development, adult & child programs. Geographic focus: National with an established history of giving in Illinois

Type of support: Capital campaigns; Employee matching gifts; General/operating support; In-kind gifts; Program development; Scholarship funds. Limitations: No support for fraternal organizations, merchant associations, or 501(c)(4) or (6) organizations, pass-through organizations or private foundations, religious organizations, political organizations or lobbying organizations, United Way-supported organizations, or child care providers.

Application information: Proposals should be no longer than 1 page. Visit Web site for nearest application address. Application form required. Applicants should submit:

1) Copy of IRS Determination Letter;
2) Copy of most recent annual report/audited financial statement/990;
3) Listing of board of directors, trustees, officers and other key people and their affiliations
4) Detailed description of project and amount of funding requested;
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6) Listing of additional sources and amount of support;
7) Additional materials/documentation; Initial approach: Download application form and mail proposal and application form to nearest application address; Copies of proposal: 1; Board meeting date(s): Quarterly

Citations Source: Foundation Center.