

Homeless Headlines

A publication of the Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies, 3435 Liberty Drive, Springfield, Illinois 62704 - (217) 789-0125

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VOLUME 20, ISSUE 2

Creating Community Integration Solutions

By, **Bill Nelson**

Creating Solutions for Everyone! - This is not just a catchy phrase, this is the simple and concise mission statement for one community based human service provider, Bridgeway Inc.

Bridgeway is a not-for-profit human services organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities in west central Illinois and southeast Iowa. Services provided include: behavioral health counseling, vocational training, substance abuse, family services, community employment, services to

BRIDGEWAY
Creating Solutions for Everyone



individuals with developmental disabilities and community living. Through these services Bridgeway staff work to provide creative solutions for everyone. Bridgeway employs over 400 staff working with a budget of approximately \$19,000,000 to serve nearly 10,000 individuals each year with a comprehensive array of services. One area of service worthy of highlighting is the services and facilities available for

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**☆Important Notice
for
Homeless Headlines
Readers! ☆
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HUD Budget Targets Homelessness

The HEARTH Act was enacted in 2009 and, once implemented, will streamline HUD's homeless assistance program while also placing more emphasis on the prevention of homelessness. Funding for HUD's homeless assistance programs would increase to \$2.06 billion, a boost of \$190 million, the largest increase in the program's history. HUD is midway through the process of developing regulations to implement the HEARTH Act, and will time completion of these regulations to be in line with the start of the FY11 budget.

A new proposal made in the budget request, the Housing and Services for Homeless Persons Demonstration, funded at \$85 million, would provide public housing agencies with grants to house families and individuals who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness and partner with other federal and state agencies to provide services to households.

This demonstration would be funded within HUD's tenant-based assistance

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Illinois Department of
Human Services



Funding Problems for National Housing Trust Fund

As predicted, the Senate leadership has decided not to include the NHTF in its most recent iteration of a “jobs” bill. While the form that its jobs legislation will take remains in flux, neither the Baucus (D-MT)-Grassley (R-IA) proposal nor the stripped down version that Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) brought forward contain the NHTF.



The NHTF campaign will focus on two avenues to achieve passage of funding to get the NHTF started:

↳ Negotiations between the Senate and the House on jobs legislation, as the House bill passed in December does include \$1.065 billion to capitalize the NHTF and fund project-based vouchers to be coupled with capital

grants.

↳ Other must-pass vehicles to which the NHTF can be attached.

For further information, contact the National Low-Income Housing Coalition at the address in *Headlines Directory*. ■

Senate sources cite the fact that HUD has not yet issued the program regulations, therefore making it impossible for NHTF dollars to actually create jobs in 2010, as the reason the NHTF is not in the bill. In a classic Catch-22, HUD officials state the program regulations will be issued once funding is approved.

VA Homeless Budget

While the bulk of funding to address issues of housing and homelessness is included in the HUD budget, significant components of the budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are also dedicated to issues of homelessness. By establishing “eliminating veteran homelessness” as one of three goals for the VA for FY11, the President’s budget request continues the Administration’s overall commitment to addressing the growing number of homeless households in the country.

The VA budget proposal includes an increase of \$294 million to address

veteran homelessness, to bring the total dollars in the VA budget dedicated to the issue to \$799 million. Unlike HUD’s discretionary funding programs, the VA’s discretionary programs are not subject to the broad three-year budget freeze proposed by the President.

The VA has an ambitious goal of reducing the number of homeless veterans from the current level of 131,000 to 59,000 persons by June of 2012. To house an additional 62,000 veterans in this period of time, the VA will invest additional funds and partner with HUD, the Department of Justice, the Department of Labor, state and local agencies, and nonprofits.

The VA says “homelessness is primarily a health care issue,” and to
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The current issue of Homeless Headlines and back issues are available at <http://www.iacaanet.org/homelessheadlines/>.

Homeless Headlines



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New HUD Rental Assistance Proposed

As part of its FY11 budget request released on February 1, the Administration has proposed a new, multi-phase program that would begin to streamline HUD's 13 rental assistance programs into a single form of subsidy.

The new initiative, called Transforming Rental Assistance (TRA), would begin in FY11 with a first phase in which \$350 million would be committed to allow public housing agencies (PHAs) and private owners of federally subsidized stock to voluntarily convert their current federal housing subsidy streams into a new Rental Assistance for Preservation and Transformation (RAPT). The new federal subsidy stream would be something akin to the project-based voucher program, HUD staff said in a briefing on February 2.



HUD staff said TRA would aim to preserve existing public and assisted housing while putting the converted units on a path to have sufficient

ongoing subsidies through a new RAPT funding stream. TRA would have three broad goals: streamlining the funding and regulation of HUD's rental assistance programs, helping to infuse properties with federal subsidies that can help attract private capital, and providing residents of these units with additional mobility

options, which these programs currently do not provide. HUD Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing Sandra Henriquez, at HUD's February 2 briefing, said that the new program would maintain income-based rents, allow owners to be in a position to address immediate and long-term needs of their properties, and maintain essential resident protections.

HUD staff reported at its February 2 briefing that the agency hopes to provide Congress with a legislative proposal for TRA by March 1. HUD staff also noted that, absent new authorizing language enacted this year, the language included in HUD's budget documents, if adopted within the FY11 HUD appropriations bill, would provide HUD sufficient

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CSH Supportive Housing Institute

CSH is excited to announce its fourth Supportive Housing Institute in Illinois: Opening New Doors, a comprehensive project development and capacity building initiative for supportive housing providers and service providers contemplating housing development in Illinois.

The program helps non-profits learn how to navigate the complex process of developing housing with support services and is expected to reduce the time it takes to obtain funding for homeless housing by improving the planning process. The Institute, established by CSH and funded by the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA), has graduated three classes of potential supportive housing developers in 2007, 2008, and 2009 who have built or have underway an estimated 800 permanent supportive housing units across the state of Illinois.

Opening New Doors provides targeted training, technical assistance, and pre-development financing options to development teams. Teams receive over 80 hours of training including individualized technical assistance and



resources to assist in completing their project. In addition, experts from across the state, including IHDA, provide insight on property management, financing, and building design. Opening New Doors trainings will be located downstate in Bloomington, Illinois with site visits to several projects completed by graduates of the Institute at locations to be determined.

The brochure and application are attached below and can also be accessed at the following link: <http://documents.csh.org/documents/il/>

shiapp10.pdf Please distribute widely to your constituencies via email, your newsletters, and word of mouth.

To apply, complete all sections of the application and include the relevant attachments. Submit one electronic copy of an application to CSH via email by 4:00 pm (CST), Friday, March 26, 2010 to janis.york@csh.org <<mailto:janis.york@csh.org>> CSH will evaluate all proposals and notify applicants of their selection no later than April 30th. The Institute is scheduled to begin on May 25th.

Please feel free to contact Cindy Thomas at Cindy.thomas@csh.org <<mailto:cindy.thomas@csh.org>> or 312.332.6690 x23. ■

Housing Affordability for Working Households Declines

A study released in December reports that housing cost burdens for households have increased, despite declines in housing prices across the nation. The report, produced by the Center for Housing Policy (CHP), shows that the proportion of working households spending more than 50 percent of their monthly income on housing costs (including utilities) increased significantly to 21 percent in 2008, from 20 percent in 2005. The report finds that one reason for this increase is a dramatic 23 percent rise in utility costs between 2005 and 2008. The study also cites increases in monthly payments for homeowners with adjustable-rate mortgages as a factor .

The study uses the American Community Survey (ACS) to focus on the 47.3 million working households in the United States in 2008, defined in the report as households with members working 20 or more hours per week, but with incomes less than or equal to 120 percent of the area median income (AMI). These households make up about 40 percent of the overall population.

Among the 10 million working households spending more than 50 percent of their monthly income on housing costs, the burden was split almost evenly between renters (22 percent of whom were severely cost burdened) and homeowners (20 percent of whom were severely cost burdened). These levels increased for homeowners (18 percent in 2005) but stayed the same for renters. Income profiles showed that renters generally had lower incomes than owners, a finding that remained unchanged between 2005 and 2008.

The study, *Housing Affordability Trends for Working Households*, also provides analysis by census region and state-by-state and can be found at:

<http://www.nhc.org/pdf/Housing%20Affordability%20Trends.pdf>

In Illinois 451,282, or 22 percent of working households were severely cost burdened in 2008. That percentage remained unchanged from 2005.

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

Community Integration

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integrated community housing for people with mental illness.

Mental Health Residential Services

Residential Services are provided to consumers with serious mental illness who require assistance in gaining access to housing and are in need of supervision and/or support of basic major life activities to maintain stability within the community. The Community Housing Services provide services designed to increase our consumers' success and satisfaction in community living with a focus on community integration and engagement in productive and meaningful activity.

Bridgeway operates a comprehensive Community Housing Program within its Mental Health Recovery Services that includes two residential homes, eight apartment complexes, and one transitional apartment.

Galesburg Residential Sites -

Residential services are for persons with serious mental illness.

↳ Bridgeway Apartments (24 hour supervised) - Fifteen unit supervised H.U.D. complexes.

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VA Homeless

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this end the agency will provide \$3.4 billion in health care services for homeless veterans in addition to the \$799 million in homeless-specific funds, for a total of \$4.2 billion dedicated to the care of homeless veterans. The VA anticipates that costs associated with homeless veterans will decrease after the agency shifts its focus to education, jobs, treatment programs, and homeless prevention resources.

The Administration's budget proposal includes two initiatives for homelessness: the Combat Homelessness Pilot Program, which would be funded at \$26 million, and the Zero Homelessness Initiative, which would be funded at just under \$294 million.

The Combat Homelessness Pilot would aim to prevent veteran families from becoming homeless by partnering with nonprofits, consumer co-ops, and other agencies to identify at-risk households and to provide services to help households maintain housing stability.

The Zero Homelessness Initiative would help to house currently homeless veteran households by expanding the capacity of the HUD-VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) voucher program, the grant and per diem program, and two health care programs. HUD did not request additional VASH funding in FY11, but VASH vouchers from FY09 and FY10 are still in the lease-up process.

The VA also plans to intensify outreach efforts, create a call center to link homeless and at-risk veterans to services, offer additional substance abuse clinicians, and provide resources to veterans involved with law enforcement agencies. The department plans to fund 100 community sober living houses as well.

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

Important Notice for Homeless Headlines Readers!

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The Newsletter will continue to be available on the IACAA web site at www.iacaanet.org/homeless_headlines.php

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Homeless Headlines

Community Integration

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- ↳ Windish Woods Apartments (24 hour supervised) - Fifteen unit supervised H.U.D. complexes.
- ↳ Michigan Apartments (24 hour supervised) - Ten unit supervised H.U.D. complex.
- ↳ Willow Way Apartments (supported)
- ↳ Hawkinson Apartments (supported)
- ↳ Jefferson Group Home (24 hour supervised) - Individual bedrooms for 6 people.

Kewanee

Residential Sites -

Residential services is persons with serious mental illness.

- ↳ McKinley Apartments (24 hour supervised) - Fifteen unit supervised H.U.D. complexes.
- ↳ Dewey Group Home (24 hour supervised) - Individual bedrooms for 6 people.
- ↳ Division Apartments (supported)

Macomb Residential Sites - Macomb housing programs provide services to persons with diverse disabilities including developmental disabilities,

physical impairments, and/or serious mental illness.

- ↳ Madelyn Apartments (24 hour supervised)
- ↳ Pollock Apartments (supported)

The residential homes provide 24-hour supervision and the length of stay is determined by the individual's needs. Jefferson and Dewey homes provide housing with individual bedrooms for 6 people.



Bridgeway's Division Apartments in Kewanee

Mental Health Recovery Residential Services also operates nine apartment complexes. These residential options are varied with 5 providing 24 hour supervision, and 4 providing intermittent supportive services. Additionally at the supported

apartment complex, Hawkinson Apartments, a transitional apartment is available.

Bridgeway Apartments, McKinley Apartments and Windish Woods are 15 unit supervised H.U.D. complexes. Michigan Apartments is a 10 unit supervised H.U.D. complex. At these residences consumers have their own individual apartment. Staff is available on-site 24 hours a day to provide support, training, and assistance as needed.

The Hawkinson Apartment complex (21 units), and the Willow Way Apartments (15 units) are located in Galesburg The Division Street Apartments (10 units) in Kewanee provide a more independent housing environment with intermittent supportive outreach

assistance available on-site.

Residential Coordinators, teams of Residential Assistants, and Residential Case Managers provide in-home and case management services to the tenants. Additionally, Nurse Case Managers are available to provide medically related services onsite.

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Targets Homelessness

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account. Services would be administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); the Department of Education (DOE); and state agencies distributing Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, and behavioral health services. President Obama has urged federal agencies to collaborate on critical policy issues.

The demonstration would create two programs, one serving individuals who are chronically homeless and the other serving families that are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. The program for chronically homeless individuals would provide 4,000 vouchers for single, childless adults with income up to 100 percent of the federal poverty level who are already enrolled in Medicaid. Services would include Medicaid case management, substance abuse treatment and mental health services.

Organizational applicants would be required to partner with state Medicaid and behavioral health agencies to provide services. HHS says funds from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) will be available as part of this competitive initiative. An evaluation of the program, focusing on long term stability of tenants will be performed by HHS as part of its collaboration with HUD.

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Rental Assistance

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authority to move forward with RAPT. Staff noted that the agency plans to continue to consult with stakeholders during the development of the RAPT program.

Of the \$350 million requested for the initial phase of the program, \$290 million would supplement existing operating subsidies for approximately 300,000 units. The funding would be to improve these units and also to provide some administrative funds to convert these units to the new RAPT subsidy. The proposal assumes \$20,000 to \$25,000 in rehabilitation needs per unit, according to Barbara Sard, Senior Advisor for Rental Assistance. HUD notes that bringing greater subsidy into each of the units will also enable owners to leverage private financing, which will allow owners to better address properties' capital needs. HUD estimates that the \$350 million in TRA's first phase could leverage \$7.5 billion in private capital for these 300,000 units.

Another \$50 million of the \$350 million requested would be used to meet the mobility goals of TRA. These funds would be used to encourage voluntary regional partnerships among PHAs to enlarge their service areas and mobility assistance to tenants, both of which would allow voucher holders access to areas of opportunity while maintaining the RAPT project-based subsidy for the owner.

In units converted under TRA, residents would have the right to move out of their homes and maintain rental assistance with a housing choice voucher. The property would also continue to maintain its RAPT assistance. HUD is not seeking new vouchers that could be provided to residents who use their mobility rights. While a new pot of vouchers to provide mobility options for TRA residents would be ideal, the federal government's budget constraints do

not allow HUD to request such a pool of new vouchers at this time, HUD staff said.

HUD is working to determine how many people in the converted units might utilize their mobility rights and how housing choice vouchers will be accessed for this purpose. Currently, when a project-based voucher holder seeks to take advantage of mobility options available to them, they typically go to the top of the waiting list and receive the next voucher. If a PHA were to convert a significant number of units to RAPT, it is conceivable that people currently on the housing choice voucher waiting list would continue to languish while RAPT households are served.

Ms. Henriquez said HUD would continue to consult with stakeholders on what resident protections will operate under TRA. HUD has had several stakeholder meetings to discuss the development of its TRA proposal, including one with more than 30 residents of public housing. The National Housing Law Project coordinated this meeting with HUD, which included representatives from NLIHC's Board of Directors, membership and staff.

It is NLIHC's assessment that the TRA initiative demonstrates HUD's commitment to the preservation of public and assisted housing and will be a model for housing assistance that can enhance funding, streamline programs for tenants and administrators, and eventually help add to the stock of housing affordable to extremely low income people. While many details remain to be worked out, NLIHC looks forward to participating in discussions with HUD and Congress to ensure that residents' rights are protected, mobility remains a key feature of RAPT, and that the public investment in public and assisted housing is preserved.

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

Targets Homelessness

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The program for families would serve households with children who are either experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness with 6,000 vouchers. HUD and DOE will target vouchers to areas with concentrations of homeless households. DOE reports that 60% of the 1 million homeless children reported are enrolled in just 1,000 school districts. HUD will seek applicants with a holistic approach to services for families. Grantees will be expected to partner with the district homeless liaison as well as the state or local agency administering TANF. While there is additional funding for vouchers proposed in HUD's budget, the DOE's homeless children and youth budget, which funds the homeless liaisons, is level-funded.

Both programs would allocate vouchers competitively based upon a housing authority's demonstration of partnership with state and local health and service agencies and collaboratively established goals for an effective program. Award criteria will be developed jointly by HUD, HHS, DOE, and the Interagency Council on Homelessness.

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

Community Integration

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The Macomb residential program has a total of 14 units earmarked for persons with mental illness. The Pollock Apartments have 11 units with intermittent supportive services. The Madelyn Apartments, a 12 unit complex, provide 24 hour supervision.

Stable community living for persons with serious mental illness depends to a significant degree on the availability of assistance in securing and maintaining adequate housing and establishing meaningful roles within the community. The lack of adequate, safe and stable housing opportunities is perhaps the most significant unmet need of individuals in our society with serious mental illness. Access to housing that is decent, safe and affordable has been identified by persons with mental illness as a primary need with this need dramatically increasing with the deinstitutionalization movement and downsizing of state hospitals.

A range of housing opportunities is needed by individuals with serious mental illness. These include short-term crisis facilities, rehabilitation-oriented settings and supportive or sustaining environments. The spectrum of housing needs includes emergency, transitional and long-term facilities. These residential needs are being filled through Bridgeway's Mental Health Recovery Services whose Residential Services include Transitional Living, Supported Living Apartment Programs, Supervised Apartments, and 24- Hour Supervised Group Living Programs. Our Residential Services are among the most comprehensive in the rural Midwest and are provided in partnership with our consumers. They are designed to assist persons with serious mental illness to achieve success in and satisfaction with community living.

Residential Service Philosophy and Practice

Residential Services has as its overall goal to assist the consumer to maintain an independent, satisfying life in the community. The services strive to impart a comprehensive set of life skills to the consumer: basic survival and daily independent living skills, interpersonal and communication skills, coping and social skills, and skills in the use of community resources. It is a core belief that consumers can and will improve their lives with the help of a humane, supportive environment combined with direct teaching of relevant skills.

A key concept of Residential Services is that a positive, functional relationship with others provides an appropriate vehicle for return to community living. Emphasis is placed on normalized, spontaneous interactions rather than structured, formalized social activity, and the internal social system of the house/apartment is regarded as vital for creating a milieu that will maximize the individual's ability for performance in society and adjustment to social roles. The atmosphere is as free of institutional type factors as possible and strives to provide a setting and structure conducive to social recovery and independent functioning.

The concept of self-determination/responsibility provides another key concept for the program. Opportunities are provided for residents to take an active part in and responsibility for all activities of the house/apartment. All residents are viewed as integrated components of the therapeutic milieu. A fundamental principle of this milieu is that every individual has strengths that can be developed and utilized for further growth. The acquisition of new skills further strengthens healthy functioning and contributes to an inner sense of mastery.

Every setting in the residential program provides a variety of opportunities for learning and growth including participation in house/apartment routines, participation in off-site programs such as day rehabilitation and treatment services, recreational and leisure programs, vocational services, and on-site services provided through case management and residential staff.

A mix of on-site and off-site services is important in assisting the resident to achieve his/her highest level of independent functioning. Off-site programs assist in integrating the consumer into the community and prevent the facility from becoming a "total institution". On-site services offer opportunities to develop skills necessary for community living and to reinforce what has been learned in the more structured psychosocial rehabilitation skills training services and vocational programs. The opportunities for skill development and in vivo practice of skills promote generalization of skills to the individual's home environment.

The interpersonal environment is also vital in promoting consumer growth. The resident comes to learn that growth is sustained and reality tested in relation to significant others. The Residential Coordinator/Supervisor and other staff set the tone by establishing relationships based on trust and mutual respect. Peer relationships then grow and develop when facilitated through specific interpersonal skill training.

Contact Information

You can learn more about Bridgeway by visiting the website: www.bway.org

Bill Nelson, M.S.Ed., LCPC has been employed with Bridgeway since 1988 and presently serves as the Chief Operating Officer. He can be reached at: office at: 2323 Windish Drive, Galesburg, IL 61401 – (309) 344-4337 – billn@bway.org ■



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