

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

That the City Council accepts the 10-Year Strategic Plan, entitled Border Solutions: Ending Chronic Homelessness in El Paso, Texas, developed by the Mayor's Ad Hoc Task Force, the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless and the Department of Community and Human Development.

ADOPTED this 6th day of April, 2004.

CITY OF EL PASO



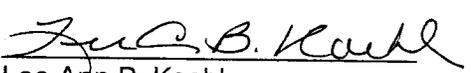
Joe Ward
Mayor

ATTEST:



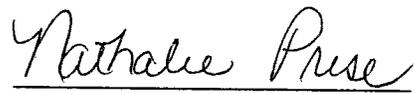
Richarda Duffy Momsen
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Lee Ann B. Koehler
Assistant City Attorney

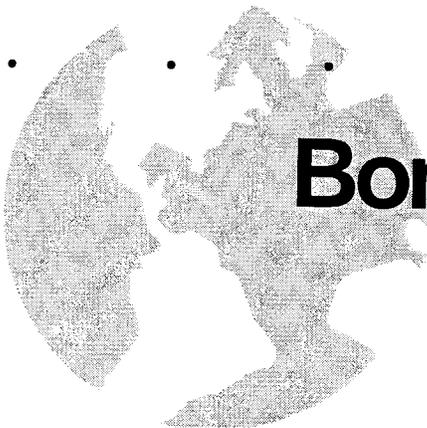
APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:



Nathalie Prise, Interim Director
Community and Human Development



City of El Paso, Texas



Border Solutions

*Ending Chronic Homelessness
in El Paso, Texas*

The City of El Paso acknowledges the following individuals for their contribution of time, energy, insight, and most of all, for their compassion for homeless issues and their work for the greater good of our community:

Mayor's Ad Hoc Task Force

Susan Austin, City Representative – District 1
Ben Bass, Director, Recovery Alliance
Ned Beman, Director of Public Housing, Housing Authority - City of El Paso
Mike Breitingner, Executive Director, Downtown Management District
Ralph Briones, Regional Administrator, Texas Department of Human Services
Terry Crenshaw, Vice President for Program, El Paso Community Foundation
Adan Dominguez, Director, Area Agency on Aging
William Gilmer, PhD, Vice President in Charge, Federal Reserve Bank
Diana Kirk, Assistant Chief, El Paso Police Department
Gary Larcenaire, Executive Director, El Paso MHMR
Philip LoPiccolo, Senior Field Representative, Congressman Silvestre Reyes
Rosemary Neill, Director of Family and Community Services, El Paso County
Phylis Rawley, Executive Director, El Paso Empowerment Zone
Sandy Rioux, Executive Director, El Paso Center for Children
Luis Rivera, Branch Manager, Magnolia Coca Cola Bottling Company
Vivian Rojas, City Representative – District 7
Earl Sanchez, Campaign Director, United Way of El Paso
Ray Tullius, Executive Director, Opportunity Center for the Homeless
Angela Waddy, Homeless Coordinator, El Paso VA Health Care System

City of El Paso Support Staff

Elvira Galindo, Grants Planner, City of El Paso
Nathalie Prise, Interim Director, City of El Paso
Robert Salinas, Social Services Administrator, City of El Paso
Anthony Shaar, Senior Grants Planner, City of El Paso

Thanks to the member agencies of the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless and to El Paso's Faith-Based Community.

Special thanks to Melinda Read, Grants Planner, El Paso Coalition for the Homeless, who pulled this Plan together, and whose contagious enthusiasm for confronting the issues of chronic homelessness makes eliminating it a reality.

Border Solutions

Ending Chronic Homelessness in El Paso, Texas

On January 8, 2004, Mayor Joe Wardy convened an ad hoc task force to develop a plan to end chronic homelessness in El Paso within the next ten years. The committee formed to complete this task consisted of 23 individuals with strong leadership ability, and who were able to approach the problem of chronic homelessness from differing perspectives.

At the initial task force meeting on January 22, 2004, all members of the committee were supplied with basic information regarding the homeless population in El Paso, and were given a list of the services that are currently available in the community. Task force discussions centered on homelessness in general, until a group consensus was reached that chronic homelessness had specific issues that set it apart from general homeless issues. Discussions focused on: (1) how to engage the chronically homeless in order to provide services; (2) what services are needed; and (3) how housing can be provided.

After reviewing programs currently operating in other parts of the United States, the task force concluded that the “Housing First” concept appeared to offer the best approach for ending chronic homelessness when coupled with effective discharge planning. The mission for ending chronic homelessness in El Paso clearly became that of:

1. Preventing homelessness whenever possible.
2. Rapidly re-housing people when homelessness cannot be prevented.
3. Providing wrap-around services that promote housing stability and self-sufficiency.

These concepts, along with the need to utilize employment and social service programs to ensure that the chronically homeless sustain their housing, became the foundation of El Paso’s plan.

Background

In El Paso approximately 10,000 people, both individuals and families are homeless at some point during the year. The high levels of homelessness in the city are due, in part, to El Paso’s location on the Mexico/US border. El

Paso is characterized by a large immigrant population, high levels of poverty, high unemployment rates and a growing number of homeless. The demographics and social service needs of the homeless in El Paso are influenced by the city's proximity to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

For more than a century, the continued economic and political instability of Mexico has created severe hardships for poor families. Traditionally, El Paso has been the "pass" for a better life and brighter future for Mexican immigrants. Upon their arrival, however, many immigrants continue to struggle for survival. El Paso itself is a poor city with a current unemployment rate of 8.1 per cent (Texas Workforce Commission 2-2-04) and a lack of affordable housing.

In an effort to understand and deal with the issue of homelessness in El Paso, the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless has conducted yearly "point-in-time" surveys since 1994. The scope and nature of the survey has expanded over time. The most recent survey (**Exhibit A**) conducted by the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless on January 6, 2004, reflects an adequate number of beds in emergency shelters, transitional shelters and permanent supportive housing programs. These numbers, however, can be misleading as they do not reflect the large number of individuals and families that are currently on waiting lists for transitional housing, permanent supportive housing and affordable permanent housing. Clients entering the system designed to help the homeless frequently become "stuck" in emergency or transitional shelters. Additionally, many shelters accept specific population groups – women and children only or families only. The hardest to serve, the severely mentally ill, the fragile elderly and persons with chronic substance abuse disorders remain under served.

Following the point-in-time survey, member agencies of the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless met to discuss the needs of the homeless in our community. In February 2004, the Coalition prioritized the top ten needs for El Paso's homeless (**Exhibit B**), with (1) transitional housing, (2) employment and (3) permanent supportive housing heading the list. Additionally, the El Paso VA Health Care System conducts an annual community assessment process to ascertain the needs of homeless veterans in the city. The need for permanent housing for homeless veterans was determined to be a critical need in the community.

Lower educational levels in the City of El Paso further complicate the struggle toward permanent housing for the homeless. About 75% of the general population in the United States complete high school, compared with 50% of El Paso's general population. The journal article, "Homeless Families On the Border: a Demographic Profile," a study conducted by Ryan and Hartman, indicated that of El Paso's homeless only 37% have 12 or more years of formal education. Additionally, over half of the individuals studied received

their education in Mexico, where it is far less common to have 12 years of formal education. Unlike the majority of the United States, the reason given for not completing school was financial rather than lack of childcare or pregnancy.

Also, El Paso has a large number of unskilled and semi-skilled workers who contribute to the community's low median income figure. In El Paso, the problem is compounded, as unsubsidized rents are very high in relation to the median income figures for the city. The percentage of families living below the federal poverty guidelines in El Paso is currently at 20.5% (City of El Paso Planning Department, 2004). The combination of low wages and a lack of affordable housing contribute to chronic homelessness among single disabled individuals.

Available Statistical Data

On January 6, 2004, 1,177 individuals and families were housed in El Paso's 23 shelters, transitional living centers and permanent supportive housing programs. Another 58 homeless were counted on the streets, bringing El Paso's total count on this date to 1,235. Of the 724 homeless respondents that completed the Coalition's annual point-in-time survey (**Exhibit C**), slightly less than 50% of this total reported being single and disabled and homeless for more than a year or experiencing four or more episodes of homelessness during the past three years. The top three reasons given for homelessness by the population sampled were the loss of jobs, inability to pay rent and the inability to find affordable housing. The Housing Authority of the City of El Paso reports a waiting list of 3,304 on the Housing Authority complex list and 929 on the Section 8 certificate waiting list.

Characteristics of Chronic Homelessness

The chronically homeless, those single disabled individuals that cycle in and out to the local shelters each month represent the hardest to serve segment of El Paso's homeless population. State statistics indicate that 27% of homeless single adults meet HUD's definition of chronically homeless. This population group has a high rate of mental illness and substance abuse disorders, and they use a disproportionate amount of the system's resources. The El Paso VA Health Care System estimated that El Paso had 1,350 homeless veterans in 2003. The number of homeless veterans in El Paso is influenced by El Paso's location on a major interstate, the presence of a large military base, and our temperate climate.

Actions Taken to End Chronic Homelessness

As early as 1994, the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless looked at ways and means to address the needs of the chronically homeless in El Paso. One significant group of chronically homeless in the shelter systems is the fragile and elderly homeless. Composed of both men and women, this group contains many former farm workers who are no longer capable of physical labor. Funding for a Single Room Occupancy (SRO) facility was secured through HUD's Continuum of Care application and a 20-bed facility opened in October of 2002. An additional SRO designed to serve chronically homeless women was planned and funded at the same time, and will be operational in 2004.

In response to the specific issue of chronic homelessness, the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless convened a series of meetings in early 2003. Participants included representatives from the El Paso VA Health Care System; the local mental health authority, the Housing Authority of the City of El Paso, the Opportunity Center for the Homeless, San Vicente Medical Clinic, community volunteers and the City's Department of Community and Human Development staff. The group concluded that the exact number of chronically homeless currently in El Paso was not known, however, the chronically homeless can be characterized as having mental health issues, being monolingual Spanish speakers with limited formal education or training that rely on sporadic employment; or veterans that have mental health issues, substance abuse disorders or other disabling conditions.

Meeting participants concluded that the existing barriers to addressing the problems of the chronically homeless in El Paso are the inability of the local mental health providers to expand services to meet identified needs for additional services; the lack of appropriate housing solutions that would be able to offer "wrap around services" in addition to housing; and the lack of sufficient transitional or permanent supportive housing options. The results of these meetings were shared with all El Paso Coalition members at the annual gaps analysis/strategic planning session in January 2003.

Coalition members recommended that:

- A "Safe Haven" be created that would serve as a magnet for the chronically homeless mentally-ill;
- That additional psychiatric and counseling services be made available in El Paso's emergency shelters to engage the chronically homeless mentally ill in the community;
- That both an emergency shelter and a transitional shelter for chronically homeless single women be developed to offer supportive living arrangements;
- That aggressive outreach to chronically homeless veterans be continued in an effort to engage and support this population group; and

- That additional substance abuse disorder treatment and outreach be developed to assist the chronically homeless on the streets and in shelters.

As a direct result of these sessions, El Paso's 2003 Continuum of Care submission contained (1) requests for a "Safe Haven" for the chronically homeless mentally ill; (2) the provision of mental health services at a local emergency shelter and day resource facility; and (3) a relapse prevention program aimed at chronically homeless persons with substance abuse disorder. All of the projects were funded and will come on line in 2004.

The Coalition actively encouraged the development of services to the chronically homeless in an effort to strengthen El Paso's Continuum of Care process. Community meetings regarding the chronically homeless were resumed on December 11, 2003, at a general Coalition meeting. Sixty-five (65) Coalition members, agency representatives, elected officials and community leaders met to discuss the issue of chronic homelessness in El Paso. The Coalition voted to commence work on a formal plan to end chronic homelessness in ten years. Coalition members asked that the plan to end chronic homelessness be completed in 90 days. In order to accomplish this goal, the Coalition asked Mayor Joe Wardy to establish an Ad Hoc Task Force with broad-based community representation to assist in developing a plan for the City of El Paso.

In addition to the Mayor's Ad Hoc Task Force, 33 representatives from El Paso's faith-based community met on January 21, 2004, to address the role of the religious community in ending chronic homelessness in the city. The religious community is aware of the shortage of permanent supportive housing in the community, and is exploring ways to address this problem. Faith-based community members see themselves as being ideally suited to initiate an engagement process that will assist the chronically homeless in accessing community resources.

In an effort to address the issue of homeless youth, the El Paso Area Foster Parent Association initiated a new program in 2002. The El Paso Area Foster Parent Association, working in partnership with the Housing Authority of the City of El Paso, aids youth that have aged out of the state foster care system. Former foster care youth have historically become a part of the chronically homeless population. In an effort to break the cycle of homelessness among this population, the Foster Parent Association places youth directly into subsidized housing utilizing Section 8 vouchers when they leave foster care. Once housed, the Foster Care Association provides supportive services to these youth to ensure that they are able to access educational, vocational and employment resources.

Additionally, the El Paso Coalition's planning committee assists in developing effective strategies that address the needs of El Paso's chronically homeless.

In 2003, the Coalition, in conjunction with the City of El Paso, arranged for a community meeting to discuss how to implement effective discharge planning that would limit the number of chronically homeless. The El Paso Coalition for the Homeless has utilized input from its 35-member agencies that serve the homeless, the religious community and business leaders to develop El Paso's action plan to end chronic homelessness in El Paso. El Paso's plan is based on a multi-pronged approach that incorporates engaging the chronically homeless; providing needed support services to enhance their independence; and the provision of affordable housing with access to supportive services.

The task force members have called for the continued funding of a minimum of one Grants Planner with appropriate support staff to ensure that the plan presented to City Council is realized within the allocated time frames. Additionally, the task force feels that a permanent city position(s), charged with ensuring chronic homelessness is eliminated within the allocated ten-year period recommended by the United States Interagency Council, be established within the next four to six years. In the short term (May 2004), the City of El Paso, utilizing Community Development Block Grant funds, will once again extend the contract of the current Grants Planner to May 2005.

Barriers to ending chronic homelessness include:

- Lack of permanent affordable housing
- Lack of permanent supportive housing
- Inability to access mainstream resources (SSI, Food Stamps, Medicaid, Texas Workforce Commission)
- Limited mental health assistance
- Lack of sufficient substance abuse disorder treatment and recovery programs
- High unemployment
- Lack of training and employment programs for the chronically homeless
- Lack of a coordinated discharge plan from public agencies and institutions

STRATEGY # 1 – ENGAGING THE CHRONICALLY HOMELESS

Current Engagement Efforts

- Meals are provided in area emergency shelters that assist in engaging the chronically homeless
- The El Paso Mental Health and Mental Retardation authority operates a street outreach program for the mentally ill
- The Opportunity Center operates a Veterans' Outreach program that contacts homeless veterans in area shelters

- The Opportunity Center delivery of meals to the streets to facilitate the engagement of the chronically homeless
- An informal cooperative effort with law enforcement agencies exists that encourages referral to local shelters
- Aliviane’s “Puertas Abiertas” program provides substance abuse counseling and outreach to the chronically homeless
- The El Paso Area Foster Parent Association and the El Paso Housing Authority provide housing assistance and supportive services for youth aging out of foster care
- The El Paso VA Health Care System provides outreach, treatment and referrals for homeless Vets

Enhanced Engagement Efforts

GOAL #1: A campaign to educate the community about El Paso’s chronically homeless			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Utilize existing community groups as a base to educate citizens about actions they can take to affect the chronically homeless	Neighborhoods First, the Mayor’s initiative to give neighborhoods a voice in City government	2005	City of El Paso, Community Groups
Utilization of local radio, print and media outlets to educate the community regarding chronic homelessness	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless member agencies	2008	Existing agencies serving the homeless; the El Paso Advertising Council; Downtown Development
Reporting of chronically homeless to expedite service delivery	Handled through 211 project	2005	Lead agency for 211 project
Utilization of a mobile van staffed with professional staff skilled in engaging the chronically homeless	Centro San Vicente Medical Clinic	2006	Grant funding
Provision of emergency food and clothing made available through the mobile van	Centro San Vicente Medical Clinic	2006	Grant funding

GOAL #2: El Paso’s faith-based community will utilize local churches to provide outreach and referral in an effort to engage the chronically homeless			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Training on chronically homeless issues and	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless, Area Council	2008	N/A

provision of resource directories to all faith-based organizations	on Aging, Faith-Based Partners in Caring		
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GOAL #3: A homeless management data base will be utilized to coordinate services for the chronically homeless in the community			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Initiation of a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless in conjunction with area agencies serving the homeless	2008	HUD Continuum of Care funding and local homeless agencies

GOAL #4: A coordinated discharge plan will be developed with the county jail, the state prison, area hospitals and the psychiatric hospital			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Development of MOU's that address discharge planning between homeless service providers and jails, hospitals, and mental health facilities and local homeless shelters	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless and the Interagency Council	2005	N/A

STRATEGY #2 – PROVIDING SERVICES TO THE CHRONICALLY HOMELESS

Available Services

- El Paso has nine emergency shelters, 13 transitional living centers and five permanent supportive facilities with a combined capacity of 1,383
- Aliviane provides residential treatment facilities for persons with substance abuse disorders
- Medical care for the homeless is provided by Centro San Vicente Medical Clinic
- Shelters provide showers, storage facilities, a mail accommodation address for homeless clients
- Child care is available through the YWCA Mi Casa child care program
- The Opportunity Center for the Homeless provides educational opportunities in the form of computer instruction, GED's, and self-investment classes
- Area shelters provide case management, life skills classes, job referrals, and housing assistance

- The Opportunity Center provides a transportation system that serves all area shelters
- A legal clinic is available for homeless clients that provides assistance with civil law issues excluding immigration issues
- The Opportunity Center offers a coordinated network of services that include medical care, mental health services, transportation, legal services, housing placement, employment, and ninety-one units of permanent supportive housing
- Region XIX provides programming for homeless school age children that includes counseling and educational enrichment programs
- Region XIX Headstart Program provides enrichment programs for infants age birth through three
- El Paso VA Health Care System provides medical, mental health and benefits for eligible veterans

Planned Services

GOAL #1: The number of mental health and substance abuse professionals in local emergency shelters will be increased			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Funding requests to both private and public funding sources	El Paso Mental Health and Mental Retardation; Aliviane; Centro San Vicente Medical Center; Opportunity Center for the Homeless; Recovery Alliance	2009	SAMHSA; HUD; TACADA; Private foundations; El Paso VA Health Care System

GOAL #2: Dental services will be available to the chronically homeless			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Submission of grant requests to provide dental care	Opportunity Center for the Homeless; Centro San Vicente Medical Center	2007	Foundation funding; El Paso VA Health Care System (for eligible Vets)

GOAL #3: Coalition wide referral system to facilitate SSI, Social Security Disability applications, and Veteran's benefits			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Grant submission for specific personnel to serve as liaisons for SSI and SSD application for the chronically homeless	Opportunity Center for the Homeless	2005	Grant funding through the Social Security Administration; El Paso VA Health Care System

GOAL #4: Coalition wide access to food stamps, Medicaid applications for the chronically homeless			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Establishment of a liaison to connect chronically homeless clients to expedited services	Texas Department of Human Services	2004	Texas Department of Human Services

GOAL #5: Development of a case management system that allows for one case manager to follow a client through the service delivery system regardless of where services are initiated			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Coordination of case management utilizing the HMIS system	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless HMIS system	2006	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless member agencies; HMIS

GOAL #6: Exploration of the feasibility of creating a mental health court			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Enhanced handling of the chronically homeless mentally ill in the local court system	El Paso County Attorney's Office	2008	Grants and foundation funding

GOAL #7: Creation of a mental health unit within the Public Defender's Office			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Provision of legal and social work services to the mentally ill to facilitate linkages to supportive services	El Paso Public Defender's Office	2004	Texas Task Force on Indigent Defense

GOAL #8: Development of additional transitional housing for the chronically homeless			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Seek board approval from City of El Paso Housing Authority to create a priority list for the chronically homeless	City of El Paso Housing Authority	2006	City of El Paso Housing Authority; El Paso Coalition for the Homeless member agencies

GOAL #9: Substance abuse/mental health services for the elderly			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Develop appropriate facilities for fragile elderly and chronically homeless	Area Agency on Aging	2006	MHMR; Aliviane

GOAL #10: Provision of medical services on site at area shelters			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Will utilize existing resources to provide medical care, especially in the area of communicable diseases	El Paso County	2006	City-County Health Department

GOAL #11: Explore the specific need for increased transportation services for the chronically homeless			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Will assess current transportation needs	Sun Metro; Opportunity Center	2008	City of El Paso Sun Metro; Opportunity Center for the Homeless; El Paso Coalition for the Homeless member agencies

GOAL #12: Development of recovery houses to assist clients in transitioning to permanent housing following detox/treatment			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Will seek funding to provide a system of recovery houses	Recovery Alliance; Aliviane	2005	Grants (SAMHSA, TACADA)

STRATEGY #3 – ESTABLISHING THE CHRONICALLY HOMELESS IN INDEPENDENT LIVING OR LONG TERM SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Current Resources

- The Magoffin Single Room Occupancy offers permanent supportive living for 20 frail and elderly homeless
- AA Grupo 24 offers a residential program for 37 substance abusers

- The Housing Authority of the City of El Paso provides eighty Section 8 certificates for youth that have aged out of the foster care system in cooperation with the El Paso Area Foster Parent Association
- Missouri Street residence, a single room occupancy facility provides housing for 39 single homeless residents
- The El Paso Mental Health and Mental Retardation provides scattered site housing to 37 mentally ill consumers

Planned Housing and Employment Resources

GOAL #1: Creation of scattered site permanent housing for the chronically homeless

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Collaboration among existing agencies	El Paso MHMR; Housing Authority of the City of El Paso	2007	City, State and Federal funding

GOAL #2: Creation of housing opportunities that will allow for a return to housing following a short stay in a residential care facility (detox, hospital)

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Exploration of possible funding sources	Recovery Alliance; Aliviane	2006	SAMHSA; TACADA

GOAL #3: Provision of long term supportive housing

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Development of additional collaboratives between agencies to secure funding	Housing Authority of the City of El Paso; VA Health Care System; El Paso MHMR	2008	HUD Continuum of Care funding

GOAL #4: A "Safe Haven" for chronically homeless and mentally ill individuals

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Complete construction of planned Safe Haven	Opportunity Center for the Homeless	2005	HUD Continuum of Care funding; Opportunity Center for the Homeless; El Paso VA Health Care System

GOAL #5: Direct placement of the chronically homeless into housing from institutions, hospitals and jails			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Development of a system wide placement with appropriate supportive services	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless acting as the coordinating agency	2008	City of El Paso Housing Authority; area affordable housing projects; MHMR; Veterans Association; Opportunity Center for the Homeless; El Paso County Adult Probation; State Prison; County Jail; local hospitals; El Paso VA Health Care System

GOAL #6: Emphasis on housing first options for the chronically homeless			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Effort coordinated by the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless	El Paso MHMR; City of El Paso Housing Authority; El Paso VA Health Care System	2010	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless member agencies; Federal, State and local funding sources; private foundations

GOAL #7: Employment opportunities for the chronically homeless			
Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Dates	Resources
Training for specific and linked employment	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless	2008	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless agencies; Upper Rio Grande Workforce Development Board; Project Bravo; Texas Rehabilitation Commission
Financial incentives for employers who hire the chronically homeless	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless member agencies	2008	El Paso Empowerment Zone; Upper Rio Grande Workforce Development Board
Establishment of a pool of tolerant employers willing to hire the chronically homeless	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless member agencies	2008	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless member agencies; Upper Rio Grande Workforce

			Development Board
Utilization of job coaches to help the chronically homeless get and hold jobs	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless member agencies	2008	El Paso Empowerment Zone; Upper Rio Grande Workforce Development Board

EL PASO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS SHELTER/STREET COUNT ON JANUARY 6, 2004 – FINAL REPORT

EMERGENCY SHELTERS						
SHELTER	MEN	WOMEN	CHILD	TEEN	TOTAL	CAPACITY
ANNUNCIATION HOUSE	22	10	6	0	38	52
CHILD CRISIS CENTER	0	0	10	0	10	28
DAME LA MANO	0	14	35	0	49	37
EL PASO CENTER AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE	0	16	25	8	49	98
OPPORTUNITY CENTER FOR THE HOMELESS	143	19	0	0	162	150
RESCUE MISSION	126	28	15	0	169	140
EL PASO CENTER FOR CHILDREN	0	0	0	6	6	6
SALVATION ARMY	3	21	30	7	61	65
SIN FRONTERAS	55	0	0	0	55	120
TOTALS	349	108	121	21	599	696

TRANSITIONAL SHELTERS						
SHELTER	MEN	WOMEN	CHILD	TEEN	TOTAL	CAPACITY
CASA VIDES	5	4	5	4	18	25
CHRISTIAN HOME	29	0	0	0	29	31
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF EP-SNAP	9	27	24	6	66	66
LA POSADA HOME, INC.	0	11	22	1	34	50
PROJECT VIDA	0	6	17	3	26	26
REYNOLDS HOUSE	0	6	5	0	11	20
SALVATION ARMY – 1 ST STEP	0	2	5	2	9	20
SALVATION ARMY – TLC	3	9	22	0	34	42
TLP HOMELESS TEEN MOTHERS	0	14	16	0	30	30
VICTORY IN JESUS	12	0	0	0	12	25
VETERANS' TLC	20	0	0	0	20	20
INDEPENDENCE HOUSE	0	6	6	1	13	20
YWCA – TLC	0	17	27	1	45	51
TOTALS	78	102	149	18	347	426

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE SHELTERS						
SHELTER	MEN	WOMEN	CHILD	TEEN	TOTAL	CAPACITY
AA GRUPO 24	27	4	0	1	32	32
EL PASO COMMUNITY MH&MR CENTER	18	12	7	0	37	37
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF EP – ON MY OWN	26	49	28	0	103	133
MAGOFFIN SRO	14	6	0	0	20	20
MISSOURI STREET RESIDENCE	28	11	0	0	39	39
TOTALS	113	82	35	1	231	261

COMBINED SHELTER STATISTICS	540	292	305	40	1177	1383
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HOMELESS LIVING ON THE STREETS

AS SERVED BY OPPORTUNITY CENTER	9
AS SERVED BY SALVATION ARMY	38
AS SERVICED BY FOSTER PARENT ASSOC.	1
MISSOURI STREET RESIDENCE	10
	58

TOTAL SHELTER/STREET COUNT	598	292	305	40	1235
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**TOP TEN RANKED NEEDS OF EL PASO'S HOMELESS
EL PASO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS – FEBRUARY 2004**

AGENCY RANKING	AREA OF SERVICE/NEED	GAP IN SERVICES IDENTIFIED
1	TRANSITIONAL HOUSING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ THERE STILL IS NOT ADEQUATE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING, PARTICULARLY FOR SINGLE WOMEN. ✓ PARTICULAR NEED FOR TRANSITIONAL HOUSING WITH SUPPORT STAFF FOR PERSONS WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDERS.
2	EMPLOYMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ NEED FOR SITUATIONS WHERE THE HOURS HAVE FLEXIBILITY. ✓ USE OF INTERNSHIPS/ON-THE-JOB TRAINING COULD BE A VIABLE OPTION FOR THE HOMELESS IN SEARCH OF WORK. ✓ NEED FOR TAX INCENTIVES FOR EMPLOYERS TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO EMPLOY THE HOMELESS.
3	PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ NEED FOR PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR THOSE CHRONICALLY HOMELESS, FOR THE MENTALLY ILL, PERSONS WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDERS AND THE ELDERLY.
4	CHILD CARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ NEED AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE. SOME THAT IS AVAILABLE IS NOT AFFORDABLE FOR THE HOMELESS. NEED FOR MORE SLOTS FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN. ✓ ACCESSIBILITY IS OFTEN DIFFICULT DUE TO TRANSPORTATION ISSUES. ✓ AFTER HOURS/AFTER SCHOOL DAY CARE IS NEEDED.
5	MEDICAL/DENTAL HEALTH SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ SPECIFIC NEEDS ARE FOR GLASSES, MEDICATIONS AND DENTAL CARE.
6	PERMANENT HOUSING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ NEED FOR NURSING HOME TYPE RESIDENCE FOR ELDERLY HOMELESS. ✓ ACCESSIBILITY TO AFFORDABLE PERMANENT HOUSING CONTINUES TO BE A MAJOR ISSUE.
7	MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ PSYCHIATRIC CARE NEEDS TO BE MORE STABLE AND THERE IS A REAL NEED FOR ADDITIONAL CARE PROVIDERS. ✓ SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR MENTALLY ILL CLIENTS IS STILL A REAL NEED. ✓ NEED FOR FUNDING FOR MEDICATIONS FOR THE HOMELESS MENTALLY ILL CLIENTS. ✓ CONTINUING NEED FOR CRISIS MENTAL HEALTH CARE (ADMISSION TO THE PSYCHIATRIC CENTER STILL DIFFICULT).
8	EDUCATION/TRAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ NEED FOR INDIVIDUALIZED TUTORING FOR GED FOR YOUTH AND SPANISH SPEAKERS. ALSO A NEED FOR ENGLISH SPEAKING GED TRAINING. SOME NEED PRE-GED TRAINING. ✓ NEED FOR TRAINING FOR THOSE WITH CRIMINAL RECORDS AS THEY OFTEN HAVE THE GREATEST DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING WORK.
9	MEDICAL/DENTAL HEALTH SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ SPECIFIC NEEDS ARE FOR GLASSES, MEDICATIONS AND DENTAL CARE.
10	EMERGENCY SHELTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ MORE BEDS NEEDED FOR WOMEN WITH FAMILIES. ALSO A NEED FOR SPACE FOR MEN WITH CHILDREN.

INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS – JANUARY 6, 2004

724 INDIVIDUAL CLIENT RESPONSES

HOMELESSNESS CAUSED BY:

LOSS OF JOBS	368
INABILITY TO PAY RENT	311
UNABLE TO AFFORD HOUSING	231
FAMILY DISAGREEMENT	204
HEALTH PROBLEMS	200
DRUG/ALCOHOL PROBLEMS	161
MENTAL HEALTH	117
DOMESTIC ABUSE	113
OVERCROWDING	99
HOSPITALIZATION	98
FOSTER CARE	91
LOSS OF PUBLIC AID	82
RELEASE FROM INSTITUTION	69
LANDLORD DISPUTE	65
RESIDENCE BEING TORN DOWN	28

TYPE OF SERVICES NEEDED:

FINDING A PLACE TO LIVE	518
TRANSPORTATION	489
JOBS	423
MEDICAL CARE	340
EYE CARE	283
DENTAL CARE	263
LEGAL SERVICES	182
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES	179
ASSISTANCE WITH BUDGETING	163
CHILD CARE	153

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

HOMELESS FOR A YEAR OR MORE	350
HOMELESS FOUR OR MORE TIMES IN THE LAST THREE YEARS	237
PHYSICAL DISABILITY	174
MENTAL DISABILITY	160
DRUG RELATED	82

BORDER SOLUTIONS
10 Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in El Paso

Mayor's *ad hoc* Task Force Committee Members
Appointed by Mayor Joe Wardy-January 2004

Susan Austin

Representative-District 1 2003-2005

Ben Bass

Executive Director-Recovery Alliance

Ned Beman

Director Public Housing-Housing Authority City of El Paso

Mike Breitinger

Executive Director-Downtown Management District

Ralph Briones

Regional Administrator, Texas Department of Human Services

Terry Crenshaw

Executive Vice President Programs-El Paso Community Foundation

Adan Dominguez

Director-Area Agency on Aging

William Gilmer, PhD

Vice President in Charge, Federal Reserve Bank

Diana Kirk

Assistant Chief-El Paso Police Department

Gary Larcenaire

Executive Director-El Paso MHMR

Philip LoPiccolo,

Senior Field Representative-Congressman Sylvestre Reyes

Rosemary Neill

Director of Family and Community Services-El Paso County

Phyllis Caves-Rawley

Executive Director-El Paso Empowerment Zone Corporation

Sandy Rioux

Executive Director-El Paso Center for Children

Luis Rivera

Branch Manager-Magnolia Coca Cola Bottling Company

Vivian Rojas

Representative-District 7 2003-2005

Earl Sanchez

Campaign Director-United Way of El Paso

Raymond M. Tullius, Jr.

Executive Director-Opportunity Center for the Homeless

Angela Waddy

Homeless Coordinator-El Paso VA Health Care System

El Paso Coalition for the Homeless

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Executive Committee**

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President
Recovery Alliance

Raymond M. Tullius, Jr.
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Opportunity Center for the Homeless

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Child Crisis Center

Linda King
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El Paso MHMR

Angela Waddy
El Paso VA Health Care System

BORDER SOLUTION
Annual Report to the City of El Paso
August 16, 2005

Prepared By:

David W. Gillooly
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BORDER SOLUTIONS

Annual Report to the City of El Paso

Ending Chronic Homelessness in El Paso, Texas

On April 6, 2004, history was made in the City of El Paso and the State of Texas as our community became the first major city in the state to adopt a 10 year plan to address chronic homelessness. While other cities were still debating the issue, El Paso began the process of moving forward in addressing the issue that has been plaguing communities such as ours for decades.

The Honorable Joe Wardy, former Mayor of El Paso, in partnership with the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless, led the charge to develop the plan. Shortly after the appointment of the Mayor's *ad hoc* taskforce on January 8, 2004, twenty-three (23) local community leaders, service providers, elected officials, and members came together in a series of meetings to discuss and prepare the plan. Discussions focused on: 1] how to engage the chronically homeless in order to provide services; 2] what services are needed; and 3] how housing can be provided.

After reviewing the programs currently operated in other parts of the United States, the task force concluded that the "Housing First" concept appeared to offer the best approach for ending chronic homelessness when coupled with effective discharge planning. The mission for ending chronic homelessness in El Paso clearly became that of

- 1] Preventing homelessness whenever possible
- 2] Rapidly re-house people when homelessness cannot be prevented
- 3] Providing wrap-around services that promote housing stability and self-sufficiency.

These concepts, along with the need to utilize employment and social service programs to ensure that the chronically homeless sustain their housing became the foundation of El Paso's plan.

One year later our community of service providers, working in partnership with the City of El Paso, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless, members of the faith community, and others, has made great strides in implementing the Border Solutions plan. The following pages reflect our success thus far and are a clear indicator of our efforts to curb the cycle of homelessness in El Paso.

No one agency or entity can take the credit for the successes we have accomplished to date. It was and will continue to be the unique partnerships formed over the past decade by the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless and the community that makes Border Solutions-A Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness a potential reality and not just a dream.

Annual Report to the City of El Paso, Texas



BORDER SOLUTIONS
ENDING
CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS IN
EL PASO, TEXAS
A TEN YEAR PLAN

Prepared by
The El Paso Coalition for the Homeless
August 2005

BACKGROUND on HOMELESSNESS in EL PASO, TEXAS

The El Paso Coalition for the Homeless estimates that at any point in time there are over 1,576 homeless men, women and children in our community. An estimated 10,000 El Pasoans are homeless throughout the course of a year. This figure includes both individuals and families. The high levels of homelessness in our community are due, in part, to El Paso's location on the Mexico/US Border. El Paso is characterized by a large immigrant population, high levels of poverty, high unemployment rates and a growing number of homeless. The demographics and social service needs of the homeless in El Paso are drastically influenced by the city's proximity to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

For more than a century, the continued economic and political instability of Mexico has created severe hardships for poor families. Traditionally, El Paso has been the "pass" for a better life and a brighter future for Mexican immigrants. Upon their arrival, however, many immigrants continue to struggle for survival. El Paso itself is a poor city with a current unemployment rate of 7.3 per cent (Texas Workforce Commission report for May 2005) and a lack of affordable housing.

In an effort to continue to understand and deal with the issue of homelessness in El Paso, the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless has conducted the annual "Point in Time" survey since 1994. The scope and nature of the survey has expanded over time. The most recent survey (Attachment A) conducted by the Coalition on January 19, 2005, continues to reflect an adequate number of beds in emergency shelters, transitional shelters and permanent support housing programs. These numbers, however, are misleading as they do not reflect the exceedingly large number of individuals and families that are currently on waiting lists for transitional housing, permanent supportive housing and affordable permanent housing. Clients entering the system that is designed to help the homeless frequently become "stuck" in emergency or transitional shelters. Additionally, many shelters target specific groups of homeless – women with children only, or families only. The hardest to serve, the severely mentally ill, the fragile elderly person and persons with chronic substance abuse disorders remain underserved at this time.

Currently within our system (July 1, 2005) there are a total of 29 shelter programs, of these, 9 are designated as Emergency Shelters, 15 Transitional Living Centers (maintaining a 2 year occupancy limitation) and 5 permanent supportive housing. The following reflects the number of shelters/providers that house persons who meet the definition of chronic homeless; 3 emergency shelters, 4 Transitional Living Centers and 3 Permanent Supportive Housing programs.

CHARACTERISTICS of CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines the chronically homeless as, those single disabled individuals that have been homeless for a year or more or have had four (4) or more episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years. It is this population of homeless men and women that cycle in and out of the shelter system each month that represents the hardest to serve segment of El Paso's homeless population.

State statistics indicate that 27% of the homeless single adults meet the HUD definition of chronically homeless. This population has a significantly high rate of mental illness and substance abuse disorders, and they use a disproportionate amount of the system's resources. Locally, the 2005 Point in Time Survey indicated that of the 1,576 who were accounted for on January 19, 2005, 495 met the HUD definition of chronically homeless.

ACTIONS TAKEN to END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Since its inception in 1994, the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless has sought to establish a means to address the needs of the chronically homeless in our community. One significant group of chronically homeless is the shelter system is the fragile and elderly homeless. Composed of both men and women, this group contains many former farm workers who are no longer capable of physical labor. In response to this need, funding was sought through the HUD Continuum of Care program to establish a 20 unit Single Room Occupancy (SRO) facility specifically for this population. The funding was awarded by HUD and the facility was opened in 2002. A similar scenario developed as related to the homeless single women (one without children at the time of homelessness) again, funding was sought through the HUD Continuum of Care program and a new 12 unit SRO for homeless single women is scheduled for completion and residency in August 2005.

As part of the initial plan to address chronic homelessness the participants concluded that the existing barriers to address the problems associated with this issue in El Paso was the lack of the local mental health providers to expand services (due to funding limitations) to meet identified needs for additional services.; the lack of appropriate housing solutions that would be able to offer "wrap around services" in addition to housing; and the lack of sufficient transitional or permanent supportive housing options. The results of these meetings were shared with the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless members at the annual gaps analysis/strategic planning session in January 2003. From this, the Coalition members recommended that:

- A "Safe Haven" be created that would serve as a magnet for the chronically mentally-ill;
- That additional psychiatric and counseling services be made available in El Paso's emergency shelters to engage the chronically homeless mentally ill in the community;
- That both an emergency shelter and a transitional shelter for chronically homeless single women be developed to offer supportive living arrangements;
- That aggressive outreach to chronically homeless veterans be continued in an effort to engage and support this population group; and
- That additional substance abuse disorder treatment and outreach be developed to assist the chronically homeless on the streets and in shelters.

As a direct result of these meetings and the partnerships within the local Coalition, the 2003 Continuum of Care application to HUD included the following requests: [1]

request for funding to establish a “Safe Haven” for chronically homeless mentally ill, [2] provision of mental health services at the Day Resource Center facility; and [3] a relapse prevention program aimed at chronically homeless persons with substance abuse disorders. All of the projects were funded and came on line in 2004

A similar scenario occurred during the 2004 gaps analysis/strategic planning process and through the local CDBG process that included the construction funding of a 15 unit Safe Zone for persons in recovery. The HUD COC application included the funding of 20 units of Shelter+Care for mentally disabled homeless persons; the funding of the Women’s in Transition TLC (homeless single women) and the funding of additional mental health counseling services targeting chronically homeless men and women as well as families. Homeless youth were also a part of the 2004 COC application with the funding of the “Homeless Youth Initiative.” This new program will target homeless youth, particularly those most vulnerable to becoming chronically homeless at the various emergency shelters. This initiative will seek to place this population in housing and provide the necessary supportive services to assure their long term self-sufficiency.

The recently submitted 2005 Continuum of Care application to HUD (submitted June 10, 2005) also contained projects that will target and assist service providers addressing the chronic homeless issue in our community. This year’s COC application included a 15 unit Shelter+Care program submitted by the Housing Authority of the City of El Paso and the local VA Health Care System; a 15 unit Safe Zone substance abuse recovery TLC project (operational and supportive services funding only); our communities first efforts at addressing a formal discharge coordination system within the medical community and shelter providers and the renewal application for the Legal Clinic for the Homeless that assists homeless to include the chronically homeless in addressing legal issues.

The faith community played a key role in the development of the initial plan to address chronic homelessness in El Paso through their round table discussions held throughout 2003 and the early part of 2004. From those meetings and the adoption of Border Solutions, a better line of communication and interaction has occurred between the faith community and the service providers. The faith community members continue to see themselves as being ideally suited to initiate the engagement process that assists many of the chronically homeless in accessing the various community resources.

The task force called for the continued funding of the Grants Planner position with the appropriate support staff by the City. This funding was approved by City Council in 2004 and again in 2005 with gap funding through the months of June-August, 2005. Commencing in September of 2005 the Grants Planner position will become a part of the Community Development Block Grant program and should continue to be approved on a yearly basis. Additionally, the task force recommended that a permanent city position(s), charged with ensuring chronic homelessness is eliminated within the allocated ten-year period as recommended by the United States

Interagency Council, be established within the next several years. To date this effort has not been addressed by the City nor any discussions held with the Coalition for potential expansion of funding to provide a separate dedicated position within our community's Continuum of Care.

SUCCESS SINCE IMPLEMENTATION

The *ad hoc* task force created three (3) specific strategies for addressing our plan to end chronic homelessness

Strategy #1: Engaging the Chronically Homeless

Strategy #2: Providing Services to the Chronically Homeless

Strategy #3: Establishing the Chronically Homeless in Independent Living or Long Term Supportive Housing

Each of these strategies's had specific goals that are targeting the ten year period commencing in April 2004 and concluding in March of 2014. The following depicts those goals and objectives that were to be addressed during the initial 12 months of the plan. If a particular goal scheduled for years two through year ten has been addressed during the initial 12 months of the plan it is also included with this report.

STRATEGY #1: Engaging the Chronically Homeless

Enhances Engagement Efforts

Goal #1: A campaign to educate the community about El Paso's chronically homeless.

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Utilize existing community groups as a base to educate citizens about actions they can take to affect the chronically homeless	Neighborhoods First, the Mayor's initiative to give neighborhoods a voice in City government.	2005	City of El Paso, Community Groups

Response: Throughout the reporting period a concerted effort was made by the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless staff and member agencies to discuss and address the issue of chronic homelessness. In 2004-2005 the United Way of El Paso also conducted a community needs assessment where this issue was presented as a need and actively discussed among the participants. The Coalition expended numerous hours of media coverage on the issue of homelessness and chronic homelessness specifically during this reporting period. Little effort was made on the

part of the Neighborhoods First to include this issue in discussions with the exception being the Magoffin Neighborhood that is home to several shelter providers. It should be noted that the establishment of additional homeless shelters/housing created an outcry by the Magoffin Neighborhood Association. The project successfully passed all hearings, however any additional program expansions of this nature will need city staff support when working with the respective neighborhood associations.

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Reporting of chronically homeless to expedite service delivery	Handled through 211 project	2005	Lead agency for 211 project

Response: At this time the 211 project is being completed and will include the listing of shelter and service providers that specifically work with the homeless and chronically homeless. Members of the faith community have also taken it upon themselves to notify shelter and service providers of persons who are homeless and/or chronically homeless. This has been most effective in the downtown area of El Paso through the local church community along Montana and Mesa Streets.

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Utilization of a mobile van staffed with professional staff skilled in engaging the chronically homeless	Centro San Vicente Medical Clinic	2006	Grant Funding

Response: Funding for this project was secured by Centro San Vicente through the 2004 Continuum of Care application and the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health. This project is expected to begin in the last quarter of 2005 with expanded mental health outreach to areas frequented by the homeless and chronically homeless. Funding for the operation of a mobilized van is still being sought at this time. The Opportunity Center for the Homeless in partnership with the VA Health Care System in El Paso sought and secured 3 years of funding to develop a chronically mentally ill outreach program for homeless veterans. This project began in January of 2005 and is fully staffed at this time with a project coordinator, case manager, and peer-on-peer counselors,(all OC staff) as well as a dedicated nurse and case manager (VA positions). A van is provided to the CMI team for transporting and outreach efforts to homeless veterans.

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Provision of emergency food and clothing made	Centro San Vicente Medical Clinic	2006	Grant Funding

available through the mobile van			
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Response: While the initial van through CSV is not a part of the project at this time, the CMI-(Chronically Mentally Ill) program through the Opportunity Center and the VA Health Care System does have access to a van and does provide emergency food and clothing to homeless veterans only. Other outreach efforts through EPMHMR and the OC also provide food or staples necessary for survival on the streets of El Paso. The outreach is used as a tool for engaging the homeless to come into the various shelters for services they normally would forego by living on the streets or in abandoned buildings.

Goal #2: El Paso’s faith-based community will utilize local churches to provide outreach and referral in an effort to engage the chronically homeless. A campaign to educate the community about El Paso’s chronically homeless.

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Training on chronically homeless issues and provisions of resource directories to all faith based organizations	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless, Area Council on Aging, Faith-Based Partners in Caring.	2008	Not Applicable

Response: Prior to the adoption of Border Solutions and throughout the first year of this plan, the faith community has played a vital role in helping to get the message out about homelessness and chronic homelessness. A one-day training for the faith community was held with 35 local churches and staff members participating. This event brought together mental health providers, outreach workers, social workers, service providers and government agencies to discuss with the faith community their role in working with the homeless. From this interaction, several of the service providers in the immediate downtown area have seen increased involvement of the faith community in assisting the homeless.

This action step is on-going and will be addressed throughout the term of this plan as the Coalition members and the faith community continues to work in harmony in addressing homelessness.

Goal #3: A homeless management data base will be utilized to coordinate services for the chronically homeless in the community.

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Initiation of a Homeless Management Information System	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless in conjunction with area agencies serving the homeless	2008	HUD Continuum of care funding and local homeless agencies.

(HMIS)			
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Response: The HMIS system was funded in the 2003 Continuum of Care application by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The program began on July 1, 2004 with the hiring of staff and training of agencies. During its initial year of service over 2,803 homeless individuals have been entered into the data base system with appropriate information being shared as needed by the participating members. This system is expected to expand its services to additional shelters in 2005-2006. Funding for the continuation of the project was included in the 2005 Continuum of Care application submitted to HUD on June 10, 2005.

Goal #4: A coordinated discharge plan will be developed with the county jail, the state prison, area hospitals and the psychiatric hospital

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Development of MOU's that address discharge planning between homeless service providers and jails, hospitals, and mental health facilities and local shelter providers.	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless and the Interagency Council	2005	Not Applicable

Response: This project is being overseen by the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless and as such the Discharge Planning committee agreed to separate the action steps into two specific areas: Medical (to include hospitals and mental health facilities) and Correctional (to include jails (county and state) as well as prison systems (state and federal)). Following a series of meetings with local hospital staff members and a review of discharge plans from across the country, a formal MOU is expected to be developed and implemented in the last quarter of 2005. In an effort to assure the success of the Discharge Planning Process for our area, the 2005 COC application included a request for funding of a Discharge Coordination Team under the supervision of Centro San Vicente Medical Clinic.

Strategy #2: Providing Services to the Chronically Homeless

PLANNED SERVICES

Goal #1: The number of mental health and substance abuse professionals in local emergency shelters will be increased.

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Funding requests to both private and public	El Paso MHMR; Aliviane; Centro San	2008	SAMHSA; HUD; TACADA; Private

funding sources for additional professional staff	Vicente; Opportunity Center for the Homeless; Recovery Alliance.		foundations, El Paso VA Health Care System
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Response: Services within the Emergency Night Shelter system has expanded since the establishment of Border Solutions. El Paso MHMR has restructured its efforts in providing on-site staffing at the Day Resource Center 5 days a week. Additional MH staffing is being provided through Centro San Vicente Mental Health Project that will include expanded services to chronically homeless individuals. The partnership between the Opportunity Center and El Paso VA Health Care System for the CMI (Chronically Mentally Ill) homeless veteran is in place at the Day Resource Center and Veterans Transitional Living Center. Additional on-site case management is being provided to the Emergency Night Shelter operated by the Opportunity Center through the Magoffin Avenue Safe Haven-Case Management staff.

Goal #2: Dental Services will be available to the chronically homeless

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Submission of grant requests to provide dental care	Centro San Vicente Medical Clinic; Opportunity Center for the Homeless	2007	Foundation funding; El Paso VA Health Care System (for eligible veterans)

Response: Several applications for funding were submitted in the past year to various foundations and national programs. Centro San Vicente has opened a dental clinic within their main clinic facility on Alameda that is available for homeless persons through a referral system from the Homeless Medical Clinic program at the Day Resource Center. This has proven to be quite beneficial for short term and emergency dental care. Through separate arrangements with members of the local Dental Association, and at their request, the Opportunity Center for the Homeless assisted in coordinating the “Community Smiles-for El Paso’s Homeless” program. This pro-bono service was provided by over 32 local dentists and provided extended services to the homeless to include braces, partials, cleanings, and extractions. Homeless Veterans who have successfully completed 60 days of residency in the Veterans Transitional Living Center program are referred to the dental care program at the local VA Health Care System.

Goal #3: Coalition wide referral system to facilitate SSI, Social Security Disability applications and Veteran’s benefits.

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Grant submission for specific personnel to serve as liaisons for SSI and SSD applications for the	Opportunity Center for the Homeless	2005	Grant funding through the Social Security Administration-HOPE program; El Paso VA Health Care System

chronically homeless			
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Response: The Opportunity Center for the Homeless submitted the 2004 HOPE grant that would benefit all homeless persons within the El Paso Continuum of Care. Unfortunately funding by the Social Security Administration was not authorized at this time. The application was ranked at number 39 of 345 applications. Funding ceased at number 34. The Center was encouraged to submit a second application when the funds are released by SSA. The El Paso VA Health Care system provides assistance through the outreach and homeless veterans programs to homeless veterans in acquiring VA and other related benefits. The Legal Clinic for the Homeless, based at the Day Resource Center also assists in the facilitating of benefit applications and appeals of denials.

Goal #7: Creation of a mental health unit within the Public Defender’s Office

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Provision of legal and social work services to the mentally ill to facilitate linkages to supportive services	El Paso Public Defender’s office	2004	Texas Task Force on Indigent Defense

Response: The Public Defenders office did receive funding through the U.S. Department of Justice to establish the Mental Health Court. The original intent was a one year funding for the project with the costs being integrated into the County budget. Due to budget constraints the County Commissioners were unable to include the project in the budget for long-term funding. Efforts were made by the staff of the Public Defenders Office to secure alternative funding via grants and foundations. At this time the project is partially funded.

Goal #8: Development of additional transitional housing for the chronically homeless

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Seek board approval from the Housing Authority of the City of El Paso to create a priority list for the chronically homeless	Housing Authority of the City of El Paso	2006	Housing Authority of the City of El Paso, El Paso Coalition for the Homeless member agencies.

Response: At this time no formal approval for priority listing for chronically homeless has been established by the Housing Authority for the City of El Paso. Discussions have continued with Housing Authority staffing related to this issue.

However, several programs related to housing for the chronically homeless have been developed in response to Border Solutions. These include the following actions:

The establishment of a 20 unit Safe Haven for mentally disabled homeless men and women. This facility is operated by the Opportunity Center for the Homeless and is funded through the 2003 Continuum of Care application submitted to HUD. The facility, located at 1307 Magoffin Avenue opened in August of 2004.

Goal #11: Explore the specific need for increased transportation services for the chronically homeless.

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Will assess current transportation needs	Sun Metro; Opportunity Center for the Homeless	2008	City of El Paso Sun Metro, Opportunity Center for the Homeless; El Paso Coalition for the Homeless member agencies.

Response: The continued transportation of homeless persons, to include the chronically homeless was addressed through the renewal of the Coordinated Transportation Program grant through the 2004 Continuum of Care grant to HUD. This project enables the Opportunity Center to provide transportation for homeless persons, to include the chronically homeless, Monday-Friday from 6 am to 6 pm. In a separate application to HUD as part of the 2004 Continuum of Care program the Opportunity Center for the Homeless secured funding for the purchase of two new vans commencing in July 2005. One of the current vans will be kept on-line to supplement transportation as needs. This project operates as a \$15,000.00 short fall in funding and is supplemented by the Opportunity Center. Alternative funding must be sought in order to continue to provide this service to the homeless. Additionally, \$12,000.00 is needed to provide the matching funds for the purchase of the new vans. At this time these funds are being earmarked by the Opportunity Center. This is the only coordinated transportation project in our community that provides services to all area shelters and homeless persons. Some agency's do operate vans for their population, however these trips are limited and directly related to that shelters services.

The CMI project operated by the local VA Health Care System and the Opportunity Center also has a designated van for use by the staff in transporting homeless veterans, particularly the chronically mentally ill homeless veterans to and from various appointments. This vehicle operates six days a week.

The Transportation Project continues to utilize the Sun Metro-job Express vans to assist in down times and weekend-holiday coverage should the Opportunity Center's system be unavailable. The Sun Metro-Job Express provides services only to those homeless who are working or attending school.

Goal #12: Development of recovery houses to assist clients in transitioning to permanent housing following detox/treatment

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Will seek funding to provide a system of recovery houses	Recovery Alliance, Aliviane	2005	Grants (SAMHSA, TACADA)

Response: Several programs have been implemented in our community in response to the need for providing specialized housing for persons in recovery. The following reflects those efforts:

The Rescue Mission of El Paso sought and secured funding in 2003 for the establishment of a faith based recovery program that is long term in nature and works with the clients to move forward into a more permanent housing arrangement. Funded through the 2003 Continuum of Care program the Recovery House accommodates up to 25 homeless persons.

Recovery Alliance entered into an agreement to provide short term housing for persons completing the detox/recovery programs. Casa Vida De Salud accommodates up to 16 men in recovery at its Welch street location. A second location is being researched at this time to address the issues of women in recovery.

The Opportunity Center for the Homeless secured CDBG-Public Facilities funding to establish the “Safe Zone” a 15 unit Transitional Living Center facility within the current Day Resource Center-Night Shelter Facility. Matching funds for this project were provided through the Meadows Foundation. This project is part of the 2005 Continuum of Care application that was submitted to HUD in June 2005. The funding request to HUD will provide the necessary support staff and operational costs for the project.

Strategy #3: Establishing the Chronically Homeless in Independent Living or Long Term Supportive Housing.

Planned Housing and Employment Resources

Goal #1: Creation of scattered site permanent housing for chronically homeless

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Collaboration among existing agencies	El Paso MHMR; Housing Authority for the City of El Paso	2007	City, State and Federal Funding

Response: The awarding of the community’s first Shelter+Care application between the Housing Authority for the City of El Paso and El Paso MHMR to create 20 units of housing for mentally disabled homeless. These funds were awarded as part of the 2004 Continuum of Care application and are currently being placed under contract with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Occupancy is expected to begin in early 2006.

The submission of a second Shelter+Care Grant application between the Housing Authority for the City of El Paso and the El Paso VA Health Care system. The application was part of the 2005 Continuum of Care application to HUD in June, 2005. When awarded this project will create 15 units of housing for chronically homeless veterans and will be provided outreach and supportive services through the Chronically Mentally Ill (CMI) project between the VA Health Care System and the Opportunity Center for the Homeless

Goal #3: Provision of long term supportive housing

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Development of additional collaboratives between agencies to secure funding	Housing Authority for the City of El Paso, VA Health Care System; El Paso MHMR	2008	HUD Continuum of Care Funding

Response: The Housing Authority for the City of El Paso formed a collaborative partnership with the local VA Health Care System to establish a 15 unit housing program targeting chronically homeless veterans. This partnership will include utilizing 15, one-bedroom apartments in a dedicated complex by the Housing Authority and the provision of supportive services, ie: Case Management, counseling and access to other VA related service by the El Paso VA Health Care System. The application for funding of this project was part of the 2005 Continuum of Care application submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The project ranked as the number one priority for our continuum’s application.

Goal #4: A “Safe Haven” for chronically homeless and mentally ill individuals

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Complete construction of planned Safe Haven	Opportunity Center for the Homeless	2005	HUD Continuum of Care funding; Opportunity Center for the Homeless; El Paso VA Health Care System

Response: The 2003 Continuum of Care application to HUD included the request for funding to establish the community’s first dedicated Safe Haven for mentally disabled homeless men and women. Funding totaling over \$749,000.00 for three (3) years of services and operations was announced in early 2004 and the program was put under HUD contract in July of that year. The facility located at 1307 Magoffin Avenue opened on August 1, 2004. The facility is staffed 24 hours a day and provides not only residential living quarters (private and semi-private) but also a variety of day programs for the residents and other mentally disabled homeless clients. Matching funds for the program were provided through the El Paso Community Foundation and the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health and Mental Retardation.

This facility only provides housing for 16-20 mentally disabled. This is only a small step in meeting the unmet needs of the mentally disabled homeless population. The opening of the new Women’s Center in August 2005 will also provide a limited amount of housing for chronically homeless single women, but again is viewed as a small step in addressing this issue. Emergency Shelters in our community have traditionally acted as a safe haven for the mentally disabled. The establishment of the Opportunity Center’s Emergency Night Shelter in 1994 was viewed by many in our community as the “place of last resort” for mentally disabled and hard to serve homeless men and women. This same scenario is true today, 11 years later as it is one of the primary facilities in El Paso that accepts the chronically mentally ill who are transported to the Center by the local police authorities or those being discharged from public institutions.

Goal #5: Direct placement of the chronically homeless into housing from institutions, hospitals and jails.

Action Steps	Responsible Organization	Target Date	Resources
Development of a system wide placement with appropriate supportive housing	El Paso Coalition for the Homeless acting as the coordinating agency	2008	City of El Paso; Housing Authority of El Paso; area affordable housing projects; MHMR; Veterans Association, Opportunity Center for the Homeless; El Paso County Adult Probation; State Prison; County Jail; local hospitals; El Paso VA Health Care System

Response: This issue is being processed through the Discharge Planning committee comprised of local shelter providers and area hospitals. As previously reported in addressing discharge planning, the Coalition felt it was in our best interest to separate criminal justice discharges from medical and psychiatric discharges. The initial Discharge Plan for the local Continuum of Care is being developed at this time to address the issue of medical-psychiatric discharges. Every intention is to have this in place prior to the end of the year. Housing will be a major component that will be incorporated into the long range discharge planning process. As part of the 2005 COC application to HUD, we included a Discharge Planning Coordination program under the supervision of Centro San Vicente Medical Clinic to assist in the development of our system and its implementation within our shelter and medical community.

CHALLENGES EFFECTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BORDER SOLUTIONS

In a recent meeting of the National Alliance to End Homelessness it was noted that “obstacles were noted in every community reporting on their first or second year of implementing their plans to address chronic homelessness. While some were minor obstacles others had to face the challenge of reworking plans to be more effective.” El Paso in our opinion falls in the middle of these two extremes. Since its inception in 1994, the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless has been working to address what was previously referred to as the “long-term homeless.” The term chronic homeless only became the buzz word when the current Bush administration, working in partnership with the Interagency Council on Homelessness, set as their goal the elimination of the chronically homeless by 2010.

Some of the most significant challenges faced by the El Paso community in addressing the issue of the chronically homeless and the implementation of Border Solutions are:

- The stunning effect of the Wardy administration in their reallocation of homeless funding has affected coalition efforts to address chronic homelessness. The second consecutive year of cutting CDBG funds to homeless services caused one of the primary shelters to forego its CDBG funding in an effort to keep the other shelters stabilized. The cutting of CDBG funding to homeless services and its eventual allocation to “Economic Opportunities Collaborative” immediately set in motion a potential decrease of shelter and supportive services in the Opportunity Center, the primary shelter and point of contact for the chronically homeless. Regardless what many may think, it is common knowledge that the provision of safe shelter and the basic essential of human existence such as food and clothing, is the first step in the engagement process for the chronically mentally ill homeless person.
- The local services providers who participate in the HUD-Continuum of Care process must find matching funds in order to draw upon the HUD funds. Efforts to establish new programs and sustain the current programs that serve the chronically mentally ill will face potential cut-backs of programs unless stable matching funds are developed. The continued securing of matching funds cannot and should not be the sole responsibility of the service provider but instead a partnership between the service provider and the local government entity should be forthcoming. An eventual influx of city and county funding will be needed to continue operations.

- The lack of a response by the previous administration to address the recommendations of the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Taskforce concerning the CDBG program to establish a social services trust fund has potentially set this effort 18 months behind schedule. The shelving of plans and taskforce recommendations by the local leaders will not bring an end to the issue of homelessness, but only exacerbate the situation.
- Limited long-term supportive housing needs to be developed annually through the HUD-COC process. Our current housing efforts to the chronically homeless are only a small step in the right direction. In order for local non-profits to develop these specialized housing programs and more affordable low-income housing programs the housing funds allocated to the City must be redirected in an effort to assist the homeless service providers. These funds include the HOME, CDBG and other programs that only the City is eligible to receive.
- The recommendation by the Mayor's *ad hoc* taskforce to establish a permanent position (recommended to be a city position) charged with ensuring chronic homelessness is eliminated within the allocated ten-year period as recommended by the United States Interagency Council has not been addressed in prior or current city budgets. While many at this point feel it is not necessary to include this as a city position, the funding for the establishment of the independent implementation of the process needs to be addressed. One solution towards this effort would be establishing a position similar to the Grants Planner/HUD Project Coordinator as funded by the City to the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless.