



# A Home for Everyone:

## A United Community Plan to End Homelessness in Multnomah County

Portland prides itself on being a wonderful place to call home, offering the opportunities of a thriving urban environment while maintaining the feel of a close community. Despite our assets, not every resident experiences the same quality of life. High unemployment and a widening gap between the wealthy and poor create an unprecedented need to respond to the crisis of homelessness.

### The Reset Process

In 2012, a committee was convened by the City of Portland, Multnomah County and Home Forward to set a revised course for ending homelessness. It brought together diverse stakeholders to review the need, data and outcomes; listen to the community; and learn from local and national best practices.

### The vision:

**No one should be homeless.**

**Everyone needs a safe, stable place to call home.**

### The Need

Over the past decade, resources to address the national crisis of homelessness have diminished. Communities across the country are struggling to help families and individuals experiencing homelessness return to a home.



Our challenge here is great and growing. In Multnomah County:

- 1,700 people sleep on our sidewalks each night.
- Nearly half (46%) of those experiencing homelessness are people of color, although they comprise only 29% percent of Multnomah County’s population.
- More than 3,000 school children in Multnomah County were homeless last year.

### Responding to the Crisis of Homelessness

Over the past eight years, our community made ending homelessness a priority. The 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness, launched in December 2004, sought to end chronic homelessness. Together, our community made it easier for people to get help when they needed it and invested in permanent supportive housing for people with very high needs. Our successes include:

- Helped more than 12,000 homeless families and individuals find permanent homes. A year later, 84% were still stably housed.
- Opened Bud Clark Commons, which includes a day center, emergency shelter for 90 men (including 45 veterans), and 130 permanent supportive housing units. In FY 2011-2012, the day center provided basic services to 7,100 people. Of these, 637 found permanent housing and 3,669 were connected to services.

- Launched Bridges to Housing, an innovative four-county collaboration providing permanent housing, intensive family services and child care for homeless families with high needs. By 2011, more than 187 families had been helped.
- Created and consolidated our Short-Term Rent Assistance (STRA) program into a centrally administered rent assistance and eviction prevention program. In 2011, more than \$4 million federal, state and local funding from the City of Portland, City of Gresham, Multnomah County and Home Forward, went into STRA, preventing or ending homelessness for 2,365 households<sup>1</sup>.

### Recommendations and Next Steps

We will prioritize and direct new and existing resources to priority populations to achieve the greatest benefit, particularly: families with children, unaccompanied youth, adults with disabilities, women and veterans.

We will focus investments in six program areas that both prevent and end homelessness:

1. Housing
2. Income & Benefits
3. Health
4. Survival & Emergency Services
5. Access to Services
6. Systems Coordination



We will improve how we serve people, by:

- Prioritizing the most vulnerable
- Promoting racial and ethnic justice
- Holding the programs we fund accountable and using data to make decisions
- Engaging and involving the community
- Strengthening system capacity and increasing leveraging opportunities

Our next steps:

- ✓ Present *A Home for Everyone* to Portland City Council, Multnomah County Board and Home Forward Board of Commissioners for adoption.
- ✓ Create a governance committee to oversee the work of *A Home for Everyone*.
- Develop an Action Plan with specific goals, outcome measures and estimated costs to achieve the goals. The plan will include strategies to improve coordination and access to reduce disparities among people of color experiencing homelessness including youth, families and individuals.

We commit ourselves to use each dollar effectively and efficiently. We will set ambitious goals and hold ourselves accountable to meeting them. We will leverage investments among public, philanthropic, business, faith and secular nonprofit sectors. Through these efforts, we will make positive strides to ensure *A Home for Everyone*.

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<sup>1</sup> FY 2010-2011.