



THE NEXT DECADE
MARIN COUNTY'S TEN-YEAR
HOMELESS PLAN

MAY 2006

ART ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Much of the Artwork in this Plan was produced by high school and college art students from throughout Marin County based on the photographs of diners at the St. Vincent de Paul Free Dining Room.

Throughout the document their work is identified by a "St. Vincent de Paul Society of Marin" acknowledgement.

Their artwork is part of the exhibit, *"Windows to the Soul: Putting a Human Face on Poverty in Marin County"* that will open on May 4, 2006.

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Executive Summary

The Marin County 10-Year Homeless Plan was a broad based, creative effort to do new thinking about homelessness and homeless prevention. Over the course of the planning process a group known as the *Visionaries* identified gaps, strategies to meet the gaps and priorities. A smaller subset of the Visionaries, known as the *Drafters*, came together between meetings to do more detailed planning and closer editing of the Plan. A draft of the plan was then submitted to the entire group and made public for comment via a website dedicated to the planning effort.

Three major focus areas and six general goals were developed from the process:

SERVICE DELIVERY

1. Coordinate Services & Improve Access to Services
2. Educate, Outreach & Mentor
3. Identify & Respond to Needs of Non-English Speakers and Immigrant Populations
4. View Health Care and Mental Health Screening as Essential Prevention Strategies

HOUSING

5. Increase Housing Stock

INFRASTRUCTURE

6. Establish Governance/Oversight Structure and Implement Plan

These goals were carefully developed with the unique needs and realities of Marin County carefully taken into account. Because of the high cost of living in Marin and the shortage of land available for development, homelessness was analyzed keeping in mind both the importance of prevention strategies and the need for new affordable and supportive housing options.

The Plan goals are divided into short term, mid-term and long term action items, each receiving an estimate dollar symbol. A public-private partnership is designed to implement the Plan and provide long-term oversight. Proposed partners are identified for implementing each action item and within that group, a lead is designated to take leadership for the action item. Consumers are included as proposed partners throughout in order to include ongoing feedback on the success of the Plan.

The process received financial support from the County of Marin and in-kind support from the Marin Community Foundation who donated meeting space and staff time. Moreover, everyone who committed to the process worked together in a truly productive and positive manner – engaging the public and their constituencies throughout the process. The public meetings we held drew great interest and the feedback was thoughtfully considered and used to deepen our perspectives. People challenged themselves and each other to

envision effective ways to address the issue seriously and with humanity. The overarching goals were to work towards ensuring that every resident in the County, young and old alike receive the housing and services they need.

While the planning process that gave rise to this Plan has come to a close, this Plan is seen as the beginning of a new gateway on the goal of housing and caring for all Marin residents in need.

Ten-Year Homeless Plan

1. Plan Overview

The County of Marin, in partnership with the Marin Continuum of Housing and Services (MCHS), a collaborative composed of 36 member organizations providing housing and related services to the community, has jointly led the planning process. Established in 1993, the Continuum is a collaborative vehicle for coordinating and creating effective change and for improving and increasing housing and services for low-income, special needs, and homeless persons in Marin, beyond what can be achieved by member agencies individually. MCHS is also responsible for preparing the County's annual consolidated Continuum of Care application for federal homeless assistance funding from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and managing the HUD mandated county-wide Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

County participation in the process included involvement and support from the Board of Supervisors, the Director of Health and Human Services Agency and the Community Development Agency. The City of San Rafael has also been an active participant.

These bodies came together to build upon the recommendation, initially outlined by MCHS in August 2005, to develop the ten-year homeless plan. The following eighteen discipline areas were identified as important sectors from which to receive representation.

- Business/Employers
- City Government
- Consumers
- Day Services
- Discharge Planning
- Education
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Food
- Funders
- Housing Developer
- Immigrant Services
- Law Enforcement
- Management Information System – Technical
- Medical
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Policy Makers
- Transitional Housing
- Transportation
- Veterans
- Youth & Young Adults

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In October 2005, a website was launched as a vehicle for public comment and updates (www.marincountytenyearhomelessplan.com). On October 19, 2005, a kick-off event was held to announce the planning process and to encourage community participation. The event was well attended by over 100 members of the community, including service providers, homeless and formerly homeless individuals, government and concerned citizens.

The Working Group of “*Visionaries*”, representing the various key areas identified, began meeting in December 2005. Supervisors Susan Adams and Steve Kinsey represent the County of Marin on the Visioning Committee. A smaller subgroup of six members called the “*Drafters*” worked on the process of drafting and editing the Plan as it was being written.

On January 19, 2005 a public meeting was held to hear and record views from the community on how to address homelessness in Marin County. Approximately 60 people attended the event. Of those attending, fifteen percent indicated that they had utilized homeless services and housing. Attendees reinforced the challenges of living in a county where the cost of housing is extremely high, coupled with a general lack of community connectedness and education about homelessness in Marin. The public echoed the need for improved outreach, health care, shelter accessibility and treatment of homeless people. The information obtained is incorporated into the overall strategies outlined below.

A. Budget Timeframe and Cost Estimate Symbols

The Plan has six major goals and each goal has at least one action step associated with it. Each action step has a timeframe. The timeframes are short-term (1 – 3 years) mid-term (4 - 6 years) and long term (7 – 10 years). The indicated time frames set forth the period in which the Visionaries recommend launching and implementing the particular action step, recognizing that prior to implementation various other types of preparation and planning will often be required.

The Plan has four different budget symbols. These symbols represent the cost ranges estimated for launch and implementation of the proposed action step. The symbols are as follows:

- \$ = \$20,000 or less
- \$\$ = \$20,001 through \$100,000
- \$\$\$ = \$101,000 through \$300,000
- \$\$\$\$ = More than \$300,000

An important issue to consider in reading this Plan is that it does not, and can not, account for budget cuts in existing services that might occur after the Plan is published. Nor can the plan discuss how these budget cuts will play out in terms of the goals outlined in the Plan. Additionally, it is important to

stress that success in meeting the plans goals will require increased funds specifically directed to ending homelessness.

It is approximated that housing and services are funded at \$12–15M annually in Marin County.

B. The Six Plan Goals

SERVICE DELIVERY

- 1 Coordinate Services and Improve Access to Services**
- 2 Educate, Outreach and Mentor**
- 3 Identify and Respond to Needs of Non-English Speakers and Immigrant Populations**
- 4 View Health Care and Mental Health Screening as Essential Prevention Strategies**

HOUSING

- 5 Increase Housing Stock**

INFRASTRUCTURE

- 6 Establish Governance/Oversight Structure and Implement Plan**

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*Don't ask yourself what the world needs... ask yourself what makes you
alive because what the world needs are people who have come alive.*

– *Ranier Maria Rilke*

2. The Plan Background: the County Beyond the Rainbow

A. The County Populace

There are eleven incorporated cities and towns in Marin County - Sausalito, Tiburon, Belvedere, Corte Madera, Larkspur, Mill Valley, San Rafael, San Anselmo, Ross, Fairfax and Novato. Communities adjacent to Highway 101 are suburban. Marin's County Seat, San Rafael, has the most urbanized downtown area, but is a small urban center when compared to the neighboring cities of Oakland and San Francisco. There are also numerous unincorporated areas in Marin County, many of which are rural, outlying communities. Each has its own unique flavor, yet the commonality between them all is close access to open space, to beautiful bay vistas, to miles of biking and hiking trails and close proximity to the thriving metropolis of San Francisco. The county is 606 square miles and borders the Pacific Ocean.

The Association of Bay Area Government (ABAG) population projections for Marin County in 2005 were 254,500. Of this number, approximately 1,600 people are estimated to be without shelter on any given day¹. In 2005, there were 834 beds available from emergency shelter, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing sources. This leaves an estimated 50% of the homeless population without a safe place to sleep on an average night in Marin County. The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data for the last six months of 2005 shows 1,702 unduplicated people receiving some form of homeless assistance.²

Families with children are estimated at 10% of the homeless population in Marin. It is estimated that approximately 18 percent of children in Marin live in poverty.³ In the North Bay, one in six working families do not earn enough money to pay for basic needs, and more than one-third of workers in the region do not earn enough to enable two parents working full-time to support two children.⁴

¹ This number is an estimate from the Marin Continuum of Housing Services. A one-day count conducted in January of 2004 counted 1100 people. However, the Continuum feels this number is very low and does not accurately represent the number of homeless people in Marin County. Because people regularly enter and exit homelessness, the number over the course of a year is significantly greater than over the course of one day.

² This data does not include all the homeless service providers in Marin County, as some do not yet contribute data to the HMIS.

³ "The Limits of Prosperity: Growth, Inequality and Poverty in the North Bay" (2005) a study sponsored by the nonprofit New Economy, Working Solutions (NEWS).

⁴ North Bay Biz, New Economy, February 2006

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As significant are the large numbers of residents at-risk of becoming homeless. At-risk is defined as a person or household paying more than 30% of their household income on housing and housing related expenses. At-risk persons are estimated at 10% of Marin County residents or approximately 25,000 people. In Marin, poverty has increased 80% faster among working families than among the population at large since 1990.⁵

B. Marin County's Allure and Resulting Housing Costs

Marin County is coveted for its extensive natural beauty and abundant natural resources. It is home to some of the nation's most visited tourist attractions, including Muir Woods, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Mount Tamalpais, Tennessee Valley, the bayside towns of Sausalito and Tiburon, Stinson Beach, Point Reyes, Mission San Rafael and Muir Beach. In fact, 85% of land in Marin is dedicated open space. For visitors, Marin is a site of natural beauty and tranquility. This natural beauty also attracts many of the people who come to live in Marin County. The natural beauty, open space and short commuting distance to San Francisco results in very high land and housing costs for people who want to live in Marin.

Many areas in Marin County are dotted with extremely large luxury homes. Smaller houses still remain in older neighborhoods but they are being replaced with larger more expensive houses. The median priced conventional single-family home in Marin County sold for \$599,000 in 2000. An income above \$150,000 annually would be needed to purchase a typical single-family dwelling.⁶ In 2006, Marin County's median home price is approaching \$1million. With housing costs rising, the obvious result is that Marin is becoming a county where only the affluent can afford to purchase a home. Based on a 2001 Profile of Marin done by the Marin Economic Commission, Marin's per capita income is the highest in the Bay Area and in California.⁷

C. The People of Marin

Racial diversity in Marin is growing slowly as compared to other Bay Area counties. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that 84% of the population in Marin identify as Caucasian, 11.1% as Hispanic origin, 4.7% as Asian or Pacific islanders and 2.9% African Americans. This differs significantly from the Bay Area population as a whole where Caucasians make up 58%. Marin has the highest per-capita income in the Bay Area and California, including a high percentage of residents who earn their income from dividends, interest and rents, as opposed to wages.⁸ In 2000, 61% of the population in Marin had a moderate to above moderate income.⁹ Fewer Marin residents are dependent

⁵ North Bay Biz, New Economy, February 2006.

⁶ Marin Profile 2003, Marin Economic Commission, October 2003, page 3.

⁷ Marin Profile 2003, Marin Economic Commission, October 2003, page 11.

⁸ North Bay Biz, New Economy, February 2006.

⁹ Marin Profile 2003, Marin Economic Commission, October 2003, page 3.

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on governmental assistance and unemployment when compared to the Bay Area or California percentages.

Marin has a large immigrant population, many of whom reside in the Canal neighborhood of San Rafael, Marin's county seat. There are approximately 12,000 residents in the Canal neighborhood, 75% of whom speak Spanish as a first language. A majority of these immigrants come from Mexico and from various countries of Central America. Many of these residents are part of Marin's working poor. Local businesses employ immigrants from Asia as well as Mexico and Central America.

African American persons have historically created the community of Marin City, which is located in southern Marin near the town of Sausalito. Originally the community was developed to accommodate individuals and their families who worked at the local shipyards. It has remained a primarily African American community. The area, concentrated with HUD subsidized housing, a relatively new shopping center, and newly built homes, has a concentration of poverty and challenges that often accompany poverty such as drug activity and petty crime. Many individuals living in Marin City have health related factors (such as high blood pressure and diabetes) which complicate their lives. Residents find that it is often difficult to access culturally appropriate services which would assist in providing the support to maintain their housing resulting in many living with the constant risk of becoming homeless. Additionally, as the Marin County housing shortage continues to grow the Marin City community fears gentrification of their community will occur.

The Marin Economic Profile concludes:

Change is gradually occurring in the ethnic makeup of Marin's population. While the population is becoming more diverse, Marin County is diversifying at a much slower rate than the Bay Area or California. A combination of factors may be influencing this, including housing costs and disparity in education levels, which in turn affects employment potential.¹⁰

In the 1960s and 1970s Marin was known and continues to be known, in part, for its counter culture tendencies, its bohemian consciousness and thriving arts community. The question challenging the community is how to maintain and attract diversity in an area that is becoming increasingly unaffordable. The need for affordable housing and the quest to answer this question prompted the development of "Finding Marin: Stories of Home", a compilation of stories and poems developed by local artists, residents, and community leaders, to create a snapshot of Marin with the concept of home and its

¹⁰ Marin Economic Report, February 2002, page 2-4.

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relationship to the ever-present issue of affordable housing as the backdrop. As one life-long Marin resident explains in [Finding Marin](#),

Marin County is a hard place to live economically. We own a little place here but I don't know if it would ever be possible for us to have a regular house. Say you have two kids; it's hard to live in a small little place. We may end up leaving and going somewhere else. Somewhere, maybe in California, but outside of the Bay Area potentially which would be sad, because I've grown up here my whole life.

While working artists make up one distinct group concerned about available affordable housing, the skilled workforce of schoolteachers, firefighters, police officers, social workers, and other working class persons are also in need of affordable housing. A large portion of the workforce earns salaries at or close to minimum wage, thus satisfying the demand for retail, food service, childcare, construction, landscaping, and housecleaning positions throughout the county, but at wages insufficient to sustain realistic living expenses. A large segment of this latter group is made up of immigrant workers, whose first language is either Spanish or Mayan, many of whom do not speak English. As the Marin Housing Workbook concluded, "Workforce housing" is a critical need throughout Marin as housing costs are relatively high compared to salaries for many local jobs."¹¹

This worker profile does not include the unemployed homeless, the employed homeless and chronically homeless who live in Marin and are in need of subsidized and/or supportive housing; this is discussed below in "Housing & Intervention Services."

D. Perception of Homelessness in Marin

In Marin County persons who are homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless are not usually visible to the most of the residents of the County. In Marin, men, women, and children who are homeless are often careful to remain invisible to the general public. Police patrols including mental health experts, have resulted in downtown and rural areas being relatively free of the traditional images of persons who are homeless with shopping carts or panhandling. Men and women who are homeless in Marin County do not generally sleep in doorways or transit stops as in urban cities. Most homeless persons live along the canal, under the freeway, in two bedroom apartments with ten people, couch surf on friend's sofas, while others camp in open space areas. Some live in their cars and spend the nighttime hours looking

¹¹ Marin Economic Report, February 2002, page 2-4.

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for places to park where they won't get ticketed. While many individuals who are homeless are employed, they do not earn enough to cover basic monthly expenses. As such, one can falsely believe that homelessness is not a major problem in the County.

With the very high cost of living, natural beauty, and extremely high housing costs people who can afford to live in Marin identify the county as an affluent community without the problems of a larger, more urban community. Many are simply not in social or professional contact with the segment of people in the county who are at risk of being homeless or who are homeless. With close proximity to other urban cities in the Bay Area residents commute to work outside of the county, returning here to relax and enjoy the beauty and tranquility of Marin. As the cost of living is high, those of lesser means, those who are at –risk of becoming homeless, can quickly become and remain homeless.

Marin County's non-profit organizations, the County of Marin, and faith based organizations provide a range of services for persons who are homeless or at-risk or becoming homeless. The services are considered to be relatively comprehensive especially when compared to other like sized counties. Services and housing are integrated throughout the county, with the majority concentrated in the County's' two largest cities of San Rafael and Novato. This places additional financial responsibility on the two cities and the county and makes it harder to engage other cities and towns in Marin to financially support efforts to address homelessness. Marin County is also home to the Marin Community Foundation, a philanthropic organization that provides critical support to housing and special needs service providers.

While the community of Marin is affluent, the existing system of quality care for homeless and at-risk does not provide a comprehensive safety net for this population. Providers of homeless services struggle with the challenge to raise funds for ongoing activities due to the concentration of services in the cities, the lack of a visible community issue, and because other philanthropic organizations often decline support because of the Marin Community Foundation is one of the largest philanthropic organizations in the country. Marin has been forced to focus less on housing and more on service and prevention solutions as an effective way to address homeless problems due to the high land and housing costs. Services enrich and save lives, but also support people to function within the community so that they may be unidentifiable as a homeless person. This is a problem.

E. The Face of Homelessness: Who Are They?

We know that the men, women, and families who are homeless in Marin County are not lazy, substance users who don't want to change their lifestyle. It is true that many persons are mentally ill and/or use substances to cope with day to day survival, but for many it is strictly a financial issue. They can not earn enough money to pay for basic living expenses in Marin.

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The majority of residents in all of Homeward Bound’s programs (one of the primary providers of services and housing) are employed or receiving income from SSI or other entitlement sources. Many of the individuals who use the services of Ritter Center or Novato Human Needs Center (two leading providers of day services) are housed and employed, but need support services such as food, clothing and emergency financial assistance in order to prevent homelessness. Many individuals and families have grown up in Marin, some have traveled here to join friends or families, and others have lived here or in other parts of the Bay Area for many years.

Characteristics of Marin’s homeless men, women, and children are:

Age	%	gender	%	ethnicity	%
Infants less than one year	1	Male Adult	61	Caucasian	48
1-5 years	5	Female Adult	28	African American	19
6-12 years	6				
13-17 years	4	Male Youth	6	Latino/a	20
18-30 years	17				
31-40 years	26	Female Youth	5	Asian / Pacific Islander	2
41-50 years	17				
51-60 years	13			Native American / Alaskan	2
61- and over	11				
				Mixed / Other	9

Today’s homes are individuals, families, and youth struggling to overcome a personal challenge and to find the security of a home. Included are:

- A 42 year-old social worker, professor, father of two who faces life-threatening medical conditions
- A mother of four young children addressing her substance abuse issues
- A 56 year-old veteran who lives “on the land”

A father who was released from prison just over a year ago recently concluded that “life can’t get any better than it is right now.” A lifetime Bay Area resident, he first came to Mill Street Center in San Rafael, the entry point for Homeward Bound adult services. The staff at Mill Street helped him create an action plan and he soon moved to New Beginnings Center, a model residential employment and training center in Novato.

Emphasizing that the changes in his life did not happen overnight, he describes this process as taking “slow steps.” After six months and a day at New Beginnings Center (NBC), he moved into shared housing. He is currently employed as a care provider – a job that he loves and says that he was “destined to do.”

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Now self-sufficient and enjoying life, he likes his career and spends most of his free time with his two-year-old daughter – “my pride and joy.” He is currently enrolled in parenting classes and is working with Child Protective Services to gain more time with his daughter. He returns to the New Beginnings Center daily to help others who are developing action plans and taking their own steps to end homelessness. He uses his van to transport residents who don’t know how to access the essential services they need. He helps residents open bank accounts, takes them to their doctor appointments, moves them when they leave NBC, and ensures that they attend their meetings and counseling sessions. This man’s success is living proof that lives do change, people can regain their dignity, and hope can be restored.

F. Income & Jobs

Marin County has the highest per-capita income in the Bay Area and California, including a high percentage of residents who earn their income from dividends, interest and rents, as opposed to wages.¹² In 2000, 61% of the population in Marin had a moderate to above moderate income.¹³ Fewer Marin residents are dependent on governmental assistance and unemployment when compared to the Bay Area or California. The income of the top one-fifth income earners in Marin County has grown by 38% while that of the bottom one-fifth has fallen by 2% since 1990.¹⁴ The gap between rich and poor continues to grow in Marin County. New jobs being created are concentrated in professional and service sectors, which are at opposite ends of the wage scale. Two-thirds of the new jobs projected through 2008 do not require any post-secondary education or vocational training.

Marin County is expected to have about 16,500 fewer jobs than employed residents in the year 2020.¹⁵ Over 57% of the jobs over the next 20 years projected to be created in Marin County will be in the relatively low-paying services sector.¹⁶ As set forth in the Marin Housing Workbook:

The construction, manufacturing and wholesale sector will comprise 14% of the new jobs, retail will be 14% and the remaining 15% will include a variety of professional and other jobs. The lack of housing, particularly affordable housing, consistent with the projected lower paid jobs in the services

¹² Marin Cities/Towns and the County of Marin’s “Marin Housing Workbook” February 2002, page 2-3.

¹³ Id. at 2-7.

¹⁴ Marin Profile 2003, Marin Economic Commission, October 2003, page 11.

¹⁵ Marin Profile 2003, Marin Economic Commission, October 2003, page 11.

¹⁶ Marin Profile 2003, Marin Economic Commission, October 2003, page 11.

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sector, will continue to exacerbate the mismatch of jobs salaries and housing costs.¹⁷

G. Transportation: Automobiles Are a Necessity in Marin County

Marin County is unique in various ways when compared to its closest Bay Area neighboring counties. First and foremost, unlike San Francisco and Alameda Counties, Marin does not have a rapid railway system. At a very basic level, this means that having a car in Marin County is much more of a necessity and, correspondingly, an additional financial burden to those who are struggling to survive. It is unknown how many homeless persons live in their vehicles in Marin County but for those who do, their vehicles becomes even more important. With the freedom that owning a car provides comes the challenge of the financial responsibilities of maintenance, gasoline, unexpected repairs and automobile insurance. The average yearly cost of car ownership is estimated at over \$4,000.¹⁸ This amount includes costs of insurance, license fees, taxes, maintenance and fuel. AAA calculated the average cost of driving a new passenger car in 2005 at \$8,410.¹⁹ This amount includes estimates for depreciation, insurance, fuel and maintenance. These costs are burdensome for those struggling to remain in Marin County.²⁰

The alternative to vehicle ownership is public transportation, which in Marin County is provided by the Golden Gate Transportation District. While this system is extensive, getting from place to place in an area with many two-lane roads and out of the way places can take a very long time. Buses run in many areas of the county, yet many people live miles away from the nearest bus stop. The system is designed for commuters to get to work and school children to get to the campus. It offers limited flexibility. Many buses run on an hourly basis and require transfer in Marin City or San Rafael. This creates extra travel time. For example, the route to travel south to Marin City from Mill Valley (a city adjacent to the north of Marin City) requires a transfer in order to travel a distance less than 15 miles. Looking for a job or housing using public transportation is therefore extremely cumbersome, inefficient and time consuming. To arrive at a designated time for an interview, appointment or job is also extremely stressful and time consuming if one is dependent on public transit. This is especially true for families with small children traveling to school or daycare within the specified times.

¹⁷ Id at 2-7

¹⁸ "Costs of Car ownership" from livableplaces.org Estimates are based on Southern California rates.

¹⁹ "AAA Says Average Driving Cost is 56.1 cents per mile for 2005" www.csaa.com/global/articledetail/

²⁰ These estimates do not include the cost of buying the car outright – something typically impossible for a person living at or below the poverty line.

Using the bus system can be quite costly. For example, the adult cash fare for a one-way ticket from San Rafael to San Francisco is \$3.95. A basic ticket costs \$3.00 for a senior disabled person traveling only in Marin County. On a monthly basis this averages \$130.00 per month.

H. Health Care: The Great “Unequalizer”

When analyzing a typical scenario for a low-income Marin County resident, the picture that emerges includes very high housing costs and standard of living, cars as necessities and the need for basic health and dental care. In California, an estimated 6.5 million people, about 18.2% of the population, lacked health insurance at some point during 2003.²¹ Lack of health care is frequently incorrectly linked to unemployment.

“In fact, nationally, four out of five (82%) of the uninsured are in working families and 70% live in households with a full time worker. A large majority of employed persons who are not insured are neither offered nor eligible for health insurance from their employer.”²²

For those at risk of homelessness, the issue of health care costs can be the determinant of whether or not one can afford to pay rent or basic necessities. Health care costs are skyrocketing and, while health care clinics play an indispensable role in providing ongoing and preventative quality care to the uninsured and underinsured, they can not provide emergency services, dialysis, chemotherapy, surgery, life support, casts for broken bones, or the other services that may unexpectedly be required. Even with the federal safeguards of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA), one has to be able to afford the monthly premiums that, for many, are not affordable.

There are also concerns of “underemployment”. The underemployed includes people who have temporary/extra hire employment, who are frequently ineligible for benefits. Many employees are locked into part-time jobs held below the 30 hours a week usually required to minimally qualify for health care insurance (a practice insurance companies encourage among employers). Working two part time jobs even if employed 50 hours a week or more, a person does not earn enough to acquire coverage and is still not eligible for insurance. Employees in this situation are often ineligible for state MediCal as their income is slightly above the eligibility criterion. MediCal is focused on families with children. Women between 45 and 54, being

²¹ The Institute for Policy Studies and Cities for Progress, www.citiesforprogress.org, Health Care in Marin County, CA (Fact Sheet last updated 3/30/05)

²² Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard School of Public Health, “Health Poll Report”, April 2004, http://www.medicoverage.com/more/A35_0_1_0_M/. Taken from The Institute for Policy Studies and Cities for Progress www.citiesforprogress.org “Health Care in Marin County, CA”

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considered beyond their childbearing years, and adult males and females not in a family with children are excluded. The effect of these so-called “categorical” exclusions is that the lack of health care contributes to many women and some men in that age range being pushed into or further into poverty. State health programs for children of poverty who have working parents cover minor children but not parents or children who turn age 18. Undocumented persons avoid preventative and urgent medical treatment for fear of deportation or arrest and face additional barriers such as language and culturally unfamiliar medical practices.

A portion of the insured population has insufficient coverage. More employers are providing minimal coverage that may result in uncovered care that leaves workers open and vulnerable to a large expense. An example of that can be from one emergency room visit. The practice of underinsuring employees also transfers unpaid medical bills to the health care system and other customers’ insurance premiums to recover costs.

Health problems or large medical bills are at the root of nearly half of all personal bankruptcies filed in the U.S.²³ For those trying to avoid homelessness; the issue of adequate health care coverage thus becomes another “necessity” for both physical and mental stability. For those who are homeless or at-risk, emergency rooms become the only health care provider out of necessity, at an extremely high personal and societal cost.²⁴

I. Housing and Services: What is Currently Available?

In the early 1990’s the Marin County Blue Ribbon Homeless Working Group issued the Phase II Homeless Working Plan Final Report. Service and housing gaps were identified, objectives developed and comprehensive plans designed. The focus was on how the community could best meet the needs of the families and individuals who were homeless in Marin. The concept of ending homelessness grew slowly and steadily following the release of the Homeless Working Plan Final Report. Over the years we have become more responsive service providers and many have worked to develop additional affordable housing and services.

It was Marin County’s good fortune to be home of the decommissioned Hamilton Air Field in Novato because under the terms of the McKinney legislation, land on decommissioned military bases must be offered for homeless housing and services. Ten years ago, in a major first step towards ending homelessness in Marin, the community’s attention focused on the replacement of the inadequate winter shelter with the development of the model Homeward Bound New Beginnings Center, an 80 bed residential employment and training center and 60 units of transitional housing scattered

²³ David U. Himmelstein and all, “Market Watch: Illness and Injury as Contributors to Bankruptcy” in the Journal of Health Affairs, February 2, 2005. Online at <http://contnet.healthaffairs.org/cgi/content/full/hlthaff.w5.63/DC1>.

²⁴ See, for example “Costs of Serving Homeless Individuals in Nine Cities” The Lewin Group, November 19, 2004.

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throughout a newly built affordable sub-division. With the support of the Board of Supervisors, other government officials, the Marin Community Foundation, the State of California, and numerous concerned citizens, \$3 million was raised and the Center opened in April 2000 .

Beginning with the opening of the New Beginnings Center, Marin County has developed and implemented many innovative housing and service options for individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Many organizations and programs have long-standing partnerships and established collaboratives to maximize resources and services. A large residential hotel was purchased and used for permanent supportive housing for formerly homeless men and woman. Affordable housing was developed in West Marin, Central Marin, and a multi-family affordable housing facility is now underway in South Marin.

Comprehensive day services are available in both Central Marin at Ritter Center and in North Marin at the Novato Human Needs Center. Housing and services for the mentally ill are provided by the County of Marin's Health and Human Services Division and local non-profits, including Buckelew Programs.

While Marin County is known for its innovative and effective social service programs and services, we have not successfully ended homelessness in our community. Although our land is expensive and building costs very high, this community remains committed to providing services and affordable housing to all.

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3. THE PLAN

The Visioning and Drafting Committees through public comment and survey created this plan. Marin County's Ten-Year Homeless Plan is structured into three categories; including service delivery, housing and infrastructure. It identifies six goals with objectives, priorities, time line and budget.



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A. The Six Plan Goals

I. SERVICE DELIVERY

GOAL I - Coordinate Services & Improve Access to Services

GOAL II - Educate, Outreach & Mentor

GOAL III - Identify & Respond to Needs of Non-English Speakers and Immigrant Populations

GOAL IV - View Health Care and Mental Health Screening as Essential Prevention Strategies

II. HOUSING

GOAL V - Increase Housing Stock and Options

III. INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPLEMENTATION

GOAL VI – Establish Governance/Oversight Structure and Implement Plan

I. SERVICE DELIVERY

GOAL I - Coordinate Services & Improve Access to Services

Based on the challenges of keeping people housed in a county where there is a lack of affordable and supportive housing, the need for effective, coordinated, responsive, culturally competent homeless prevention services is of great importance. As many other Ten-Year Plans have articulated and documented, helping someone stay in their home is far more economical and humane than providing services to someone after they become homeless. Also, studies have indicated that once someone is homeless for more than 6 months, the physical and emotional stresses combined make it much harder for that person to regain housing and thrive independently. The impact on children can be even more devastating when the supports and the place they call home are gone.

For these reasons, the Visionary Committee, based on their own organizations' experience and public input, identified strategies aimed at increasing the coordination, expanding the accessibility, of services, enhancing the service providers' thorough knowledge of all housing and prevention services available in the County, increasing the amount of funds available to help people stay in their homes, providing on-going training to service providers, coordinating discharge planning and striving for an on-demand treatment model.

OBJECTIVE A: Coordination, Centralization and 24/7 Access to Services & Resources Information

Integrate and coordinate services and resources in Marin County so that people can access “one stop shopping.”

ACTION ITEM 1: Coordinate & Maintain Updated Information on Services and Resources

There are a wide array of service providers who provide excellent housing and services in Marin County to assist the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless. These services include financial assistance for emergency bills, legal counseling on eviction defense and mediation services, and specialized assistance for persons with physical and mental health disabilities, seniors, battered women, and immigrant populations. Services are located throughout the county and have differing eligibility criteria based on funding sources and operate with varying rules and schedules of operation. Accessing these services requires agency staff and the public to have thorough knowledge of all the services, which can be challenging. It may require numerous phone calls, appointments and trips to identify the correct source for help. Finally, most of the services are limited to serving English-speaking persons, and have no, or very limited, ability to assist monolingual Spanish or other language speakers or people with limited English language ability.

There is strong consensus among the Visionary Committee members that services for homeless people need to be coordinated. The Visionaries adopted the philosophy that no one should be turned away because they did not come through a “homeless program” or were not referred by a “homeless case manager”. Most housing and service providers generally know what services are offered in the community, but don’t know the detailed eligibility requirements for each program or the hours of operation. One first step is to gather updated service information into a central resource point. It should include all current eligibility criteria, goals of the services, hours of operation, directions to the service location and direct contact information. The second step is to identify a way to keep the resource information current on an ongoing basis, as providers sometimes change locations, reduce or eliminate services and/or open and close waiting lists. The third issue is how to make this resource accessible to both the providers and the public in a user-friendly, efficient way.

There was discussion between the committee members of the benefits of a central point of contact for accessing all homeless related services and information. Centralization might involve the establishment of a Homeless Services Coordinator or may “live” in one of the existing nonprofit or county agencies already serving the homeless. There was also discussion about the

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need for the various neighborhood and community centers throughout Marin County to act as “the right door” for allowing people to seek and access services. Since the county covers a large geographic area and each neighborhood or local community tends to serve a large area, accessible locations throughout each community (i.e. churches, health clinics) are envisioned as potential places to outreach to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. These sites should all have access to the most up-to-date resource, or at a minimum, have direct 24-hour access to someone who does.

Action Item #1	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
Coordinate and distribute all homeless services information with detailed, updated information about eligibility, program goals and hours into one centralized resource	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = Health & Human Services Division of Social Services</i> County, Marin jurisdictions, Continuum Partners, other Service Providers, Faith Based Community and consumers

ACTION ITEM 2: Provide Emergency Services On-Demand 24/7

Another concern raised both by the Visionaries, and echoed by the public, was the need for services and information to be accessible after hours, on weekends, and holidays. This gap in services makes it very difficult, in particular, for law enforcement and the criminal justice system discharge planners to access services for people who seek assistance outside the typical business hours of 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Many expressed a desire for services to be accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. A system available after hours and on weekends would also respond to the needs of the working poor who may not able to take time off from work to access prevention services.

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Action Item #2	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Restructure housing and related services to provide emergency services on-demand	Long Term (7 – 10 years)	\$\$\$	Lead = Oversight Committee <i>All service and housing providers and consumers</i>
B. Work towards the goal of on-demand access to mental health, substance use services including detoxification and domestic violence services and shelter to adequately meet the needs so that there is no waiting time to enter treatment programs	Long Term (7 – 10 years)	\$\$\$	Lead = Oversight Committee <i>Helen Vine, Marin Abused Women Services (MAWS), Marin Services for Women, Community Mental Health and, other Service Providers and consumers</i>

ACTION ITEM 3: County-wide Standard of Case Management

In order to use resources efficiently and measure their effectiveness it was agreed that standards would be developed to define what services “case management” includes. The present delivery of case management services for homeless services and prevention services varies from agency to agency. There are federal and state guidelines that fund services, along with agency guidelines depending on what population the agency serves, its mission and goals, and how it envisions and counts case management units of service. A part of the definition process might also include examining “best practices”. Ultimately, the goal is to find a realistic standard that meets the needs and is cost efficient. The standard needs to include ways to address:

Measurement, Accountability, Outcomes and Affordability

The service system is not seamless and those in need can fall through the cracks. Persons with less serious disabilities and people who are experiencing a life crisis, but who are not chronically in need (i.e. someone who has lost their job and has outdated skills) routinely are not eligible for some special need housing and services; yet many could benefit from case management to maintain existing housing or keep from becoming homeless. This conundrum should be avoided as a necessary prevention strategy by enlarging the definition of who may qualify for and receive case management services in Marin County.

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Another aspect recommended for examination is the extent to which life skills should be included in the standards of care in case management. The Visionaries strongly felt that life skills are important foundations for those who are transitioning into supportive and/or independent living and for those at risk of homelessness.

Treatment models for substance use vary whether for alcohol, prescribed or illegal drugs or a combination. The reality for most substance users is that they don't enter treatment until they are ready or "hit bottom". Having services available to capitalize on that opportunity is prerequisite for any meaningful and effective transition, but until that readiness, homeless persons need to be safe and offered services and housing. Services include shelter, benefits counseling, food, transportation, medical care, mental health care and basic life skills. A thorough and well-researched discussion of how harm reduction should enter into the provision of services in Marin County would improve consistency and, ideally, client accessibility to a full range of services.

A countywide "meeting of the minds" and subsequent standard of service would ideally reduce duplication of services, improve efficiency of service provision, improve data gathering and, most importantly, ensure that homeless persons receive consistent assistance from housing and service providers.

Action Item #3	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Define a realistic standard of service for "case management" applicable to all homeless service and housing providers	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = County Continuum, Marin Community Foundation, other Service providers and consumers</i>
B. Evaluate whether life skills should be provided as part of the standard of care in case management services	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = County Continuum, Marin Community Foundation, other Service providers and consumers</i>
C. Evaluate how a harm reduction philosophy should be included in the standard of care for case management services	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = County Continuum, Marin Community Foundation, other Service providers and consumers</i>
D. Implement standardized case management services on a county-wide basis for all homeless service providers	Mid Term (4 – 6 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = County Continuum, Marin Community Foundation, other Service providers and consumers</i>

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Action Item #3	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
E. Evaluate case management services on a regular basis	Mid Term (4 – 6 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = County Continuum, Marin Community Foundation, other Service providers and consumers</i>

ACTION ITEM 4: Tracking Services – Data Collection

Marin County’s Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), “Sparrow” became fully operational and HUD compliant on April 1, 2004. There are twelve agencies actively using Sparrow; including all emergency shelter and transitional housing providers, all drop in centers, multi-service centers and meal programs that serve people who are homeless. All McKinney-Vento permanent supportive housing providers also participate. Several homeless service providers’ organizations that are not HUD grantees also participate in Sparrow data collection.

There are however, many homeless service providers not reporting information into the data collection system. This lack of centralized information creates a knowledge gap of how many people are accessing homeless housing and services, making it difficult to accurately and adequately budget for the needs of persons who are homeless. In order for all homeless service providers to support data collection efforts, organizations need to integrate Sparrow’s intake form into their system or develop computer capacity to export data directly into Sparrow. The system also currently needs to be enhanced to comply with HUD’s anticipated updates to the program data elements and enable richer, more frequent reports.

To reach the longer-term goal of coordinating and centralizing services, new computers, increased staff time to assist with data input and collection and extensive training in how to use the system will be required.

Action Item #4	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Engage all service providers to participate in HMIS data gathering	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Continuum All Housing and service providers, County, Marin jurisdictions and consumers</i>
B. To accurately track and report the number of people accessing services through HMIS data	Mid Term (4 – 6 years)	\$ - \$\$	<i>Lead = Continuum All Housing and service providers, County, Marin jurisdictions and consumers</i>

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Action Item #4	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
C. To develop interactive web based client data base accessed by all providers to centralize and coordinate service provision	Mid Term (4 – 6 years)	\$ - \$\$	<i>Lead = Continuum</i> All housing and service providers, County, Marin jurisdictions and consumers

ACTION ITEM 5: Discharge Planning: Funding & Coordination

Fund transition-planning services to assist people from becoming homeless (i.e. case management services) as they are discharged from public institutions including the foster care system, criminal justice system, mental health institutions, treatment facilities and public hospitals. Such discharge planning should be coordinated with the other available services.

This issue is also being worked on at the regional level, as ABAG’s (Association of Bay Area Governments) Regional Homeless Planning Group recommends that one of the priorities in their Action Plan be to remove statutory and/or other regulatory barriers to ending homelessness through public policy formation and changes. They support legislation to improve re-entry planning from prisons, foster care and mental health institutions.

Action Item #5	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Identify all points of discharge in the community and invite them to gather data and analyze the needs and gaps in discharge planning and identify related improvements	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Dept. of Health and Human Services</i> County, Helen Vine, mental health institutions, County jail, <i>San Quentin</i> prison, foster care, police departments, Continuum, Centerforce, Center Point, Ambassadors of Hope and Opportunity, ABAG ²⁵ and consumers
B. Work with discharge planners at the jails and prisons to have discharge times taken into consideration in order to maximize opportunities for those released to locate housing and services.	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = County Jail</i> ²⁶ Courts, STAR Program, <i>San Quentin</i> Prison, Centerforce, County and consumers

²⁵ Supervisor Susan Adams, a member of the Visionary Committee, is also a member of ABAG.

²⁶ There is one jail in the County, but Marin residents who are incarcerated in other counties are released to

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Action Item #5	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
C. Create available housing options for clients leaving residential programs (detox, treatment programs, transitional housing, battered women's shelters) (See also, Housing Goal V)	Mid Term to Long Term (4 – 10 years)	\$\$\$- \$\$\$\$	Lead = Continuum Helen Vine, Marin Abused Women Services, Center Point, Marin Services for Women, Marin Housing Authority and consumers

ACTION ITEM 6: Develop a Diversion Program

Diversion programs are designed for people charged with a crime, awaiting trial. Many people awaiting trial or arraignment remain incarcerated and can't afford to post bail. As a consequence they lose their entitlement benefits (such as SSI or CalWorks). In a diversion program, a charged defendant would not lose his or her benefits. This would prevent the cycle of revolving in and out of jail, and prevent homelessness which often occurs as the result of someone being in jail and losing his or her benefits. Diversion programs offer treatment that may address the main reason for the arrest. This service is essential to help prevent the dynamic of the criminal justice system becoming a primary residence for low income defendants who don't have access to the financial resources that might otherwise aid them in navigating the justice system more effectively.

Action Item #6	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
Evaluate STAR Program for applicability to other service delivery systems	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$	Lead = County

OBJECTIVE B. Expand Amount and Accessibility of Financial Assistance to those in Need

The Visionary Committee identified financial support as a clear priority to people housed. Again, it was emphasized that providing assistance to those at risk of losing their housing is a far more cost effective and humane approach to preventing homelessness than allowing someone to become homeless and then beginning the process of seeking services that may or may not be immediately available. The committee identified two distinct, but related areas of financial assistance; those directly related to staying housed or securing housing and those related to other unexpected expenses that results in moving a person from being at risk to becoming homelessness.

Marin upon discharge. As such, discussion should involve all relevant discharge institutions.

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Financial Assistance – Housing Related

The Visionaries identified the need to make additional funds available through assistance with mortgage payments/rent, evictions, foreclosures, and security deposits. Agencies providing assistance are Canal Alliance, Community Action Marin, Marin Housing Authority, Novato Human Needs, and Ritter Center. These agencies provide financial assistance for short-term financial crises, usually one time only. The Low Income Housing Emergency Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides energy bill assistance one time a year. It is recognized that funds available for these programs are not currently adequate to address the needs and that additional funding must be identified to expand the service.

While these programs are an invaluable resource for the Marin community, the Visionary Committee expressed concern that many people at risk of homelessness need more than one-time emergency funds to become stable in housing. For this portion of the at-risk population who need more than a one time, emergency award, there will need to be additional funds raised to assist them to regain self-sufficiency. Centralized information regarding access to these financial assistance programs must be widely available.

Where possible, and over time eligibility criterion needs to shift to allow families access to services based on their ability to show financial need and not require that eligibility be tied to very low income status. A change in eligibility criteria should be determined instead by the self-sufficiency standard for living in Marin County. This widening of the housing safety eligibility net will embrace many people in Marin who are considered at-risk of becoming homeless.

Financial Assistance for Other Situations Facing At-Risk Families/People

Homeless and formerly homeless persons report that they have become homeless as a result of unanticipated/uncontrollable situations that far exceeded their incomes. These situations include:

- The need for attendant care
- Automobile expenses such as gas, repairs, and insurance
- Lack of American with Disabilities Act required accommodations
- Health/dental care bills
- Prescription drug expenses
- Eyeglasses expenses
- Necessary housing repairs
- Child care/school costs
- Storage of items
- Pet care
- Poor credit history, criminal and eviction background search costs
- Identification issues
- Requirements for special diet

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- Loss of a job
- Family/relationship break up
- Escalation of cost of living

The Emergency Family Needs Fund is available to assist with expenses of this nature that are emergencies requiring immediate and short-term assistance. As with housing related assistance, many people at risk of homelessness require more support to move them from crisis. Understanding this, the Visionaries recommend that funds be available for longer-term periods and for applicants who would otherwise become homeless. The present eligibility guidelines may need to be revised to embrace a larger segment of the at-risk population than is presently encompassed in the eligibility requirements.

Action Item #7	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
Prevent evictions by increasing the available funds & expanding the eligibility criteria for financial assistance for people at risk of becoming homeless	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = Marin Community Foundation</i> County, Marin jurisdictions, Marin Housing Authority, Faith-Based organizations, donors, local newspapers and consumers

Goal II - Educate, Outreach & Mentor

In a privileged community where the issue of homelessness remains invisible to many residents, there is a significant need for community education. To really end homelessness in Marin, residents need to learn about the problem and become involved in the solution. With their participation, we will be one step closer to our goals, and will have created a realistic community picture of homelessness and expanded the County's volunteer base. Community education and outreach is a way to break the silence and create a greater community consciousness about homeless issues.

Due to the large number of rural and outlying areas in the county, there is also an isolation that occurs for those in need and at risk of homelessness. Those without support feel alone in their struggle to remain housed. Determining how and where to access services, especially without reliable transportation, can be very difficult. For these reasons, a second goal regarding services is to develop a community outreach program using volunteer mentors to reach out and provide support to people in need. Volunteers would also be used to provide public school education around issues of homelessness to increase awareness, concern and involvement by residents of all ages in Marin County.

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OBJECTIVE C: Develop Community Outreach and Prevention Tools

ACTION ITEM 8: Outreach: Project Homeless Connect

To improve the coordination of services the committee recommends development of a pilot program modeled after San Francisco's "Project Homeless Connect" to provide homeless services outreach on a countywide basis. The event(s) would be free to the public and would connect homeless persons and those at risk of becoming homeless to available services that could benefit them.

The model also provides a forum for volunteers to get involved in the issue of homelessness. Free transportation would be arranged to the event from various locations. The pilot would be evaluated by both consumers and providers to assess its effectiveness and, based on the results, could be implemented on a permanent basis.

The community outreach forum of Project Homeless Connect is seen as one way to provide a variety of educational forums (classes, speakers, videos, educational materials) and services (advice and referral, intake, program application materials, support groups, 12-Step programs, mentor programs, local community resources) for participants to gain support that can assist them in avoiding or escaping homelessness. Issues of domestic violence, substance abuse and minor mental health conditions (e.g. mild depression) can lead to homelessness if not addressed and confronted with early intervention and responsive services.

Life skills are another important area for prevention. These skills include:²⁷

- Daily Living Skills
- Housing, Transportation & Community Resources
- Money Management and Credit Counseling
- Self-Care
- Health Education and Prevention
- Mental Health
- Symptom Management
- Understanding and Supporting Someone With a Mental Illness
- Relationships and Sexuality
- Social Development
- Work and Study Skills
- Parenting Education and Training

Each of the above categories includes various topics such as nutrition, menu planning, grocery shopping, meal preparation, clean up and storage, home cleaning and clothing care, home and safety repairs, effective communication, parenting skills, health care during pregnancy and job

²⁷ As an example of a thorough basic life skills outline see, Ready, Set, Fly! A Parents Guide to Teaching Life Skills (2001 Casey Family Program) www.caseylifeskills.org

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seeking. One of the resources available at Project Homeless Connect would be to let people know where they can take classes in Life Skills.

In addition to providing centralized access to “one stop shopping”, the model will help providers learn more about one another and will provide general community education on homeless prevention. One of the biggest potential benefits of Project Homeless Connect is the opportunity to expand awareness and educate the public and mobilize public participation in ending homelessness. Ideally, it will also serve as a place to recruit volunteers and donors for related projects on homeless prevention.

Action Item #8	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Pilot a “ <i>Project Homeless Connect</i> ” in Marin County five times in the first year to serve 500 homeless or at-risk people with services	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Continuum partners</i> County, Marin jurisdictions, faith-based communities, private sector and consumers
B. Evaluate pilot project and, if successful, implement on permanent basis	Mid Term (4 – 6 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = Continuum partners</i> County, Marin jurisdictions, faith-based communities, private sector and consumers

ACTION ITEM 9: Develop A Financial Tool Kit

Project Homeless Connect (above) has the potential to be a valuable forum to address homeless prevention from a wide variety of sources. It is an opportunity to create an educational forum highlighting skills and/or services that may assist to prevent homelessness. Many of the skills needed to prevent homelessness are directly related to financial issues.

Of all the life skills, financial literacy and money management were identified as important areas to master for people at risk of homelessness or those transitioning to independent living from jail, prison, an institution or those aging out of foster care. Useful skills include how to open a checking account, how to balance a checkbook, how to create a budget, and how to save with very limited funds. Another useful service would be credit counseling to assist those with bad credit records.

Since many nonprofits currently offer a variety of information and training on financial issues, it is envisioned that a partnership with local banks could provide information about low cost checking accounts and savings plans and that Chambers of Commerce and local employers could help craft programs that provide a package of financial literacy services. Finally, the College of

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Marin is seen as a prospective partner in assisting in Continuing Education classes on financial literacy and basic life skills.

Action Item #9	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. In partnership with lending institutions, launch a “Financial Tool Kit” program to assist people in developing skills to strengthen their ability to stay housed. This could include financial literacy workshops, savings programs, EAP packages, educational materials and/or continuing education classes.	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = County Health & Human Services (E.A.R.N program)</i> Banks, local nonprofits, Chambers of Commerce, local employers, College of Marin and consumers
B. Evaluate “Financial Tool Kit” program and re-design according to consumer and sponsor feedback	Mid Term (4 – 6 years)	\$	<i>Lead = County Health & Human Services (E.A.R.N program)</i> Banks local nonprofits, Chambers of Commerce, local employers, College of Marin and consumers
C. Evaluate whether life skills should be provided as part of the standard of care in case management services (See above, Action Item # 3)	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = Continuum</i> Other service providers, Marin Community Foundation, County and consumers

OBJECTIVE D: Create A Community Connectedness Program Using Mentors

Create programs to reduce alienation of individuals and families at risk of becoming homeless. The idea is to create a Mentorship Program, modeled, for example, after Big Brother/Big Sister Program. Families and individuals will be matched with youth being discharged from the foster care system and people being discharged from the criminal justice system. The volunteer will provide support and help them stay connected to the community and to services.

Another model is to provide peer-based mentorship that encourages people who have been homeless or at-risk to provide support to those in present

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need and act as a living example and an inspiration of someone who has overcome barriers. Each approach has its strengths and both should be considered for inclusion into the Project Homeless Connect model.

Project Connect is also seen as a forum for recruiting potential mentors and for providing a site where potential mentors can match and meet and “interview” one another.

ACTION ITEM 10: Develop A Mentor Program

Action Item #10	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
In connection with “Project Homeless Connect” develop a mentor program for homeless/at-risk people	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$\$	Lead = Stephen Goldiamond Faith Based community, Ambassadors of Hope & Opportunity, Peer Outreach programs, County and consumers

OBJECTIVE E: Education for Children and Outreach to Youth at Risk

Both the Visionaries and the public expressed strong interest in educating school aged children about homelessness, both as a way to challenge the stereotypical image of who becomes homeless, to build empathy within our young children and adolescents and to decrease the harassment of people who are homeless. While various programs in Marin County do this type of education, it is not clear how many current programs there are or exactly what type of curriculum they use²⁸. As such, it is recommended that a thorough inventory of these programs be created and then to seek funding to expand the good programs and/or build a model program.

Another, related concern was for specific outreach to target youth at risk of becoming homeless. One target audience would be the high schools and a second would be those being discharged from the foster care system and adolescent treatment programs. It was felt that targeted outreach to connect these youth to service and housing resource mentors is a critical way to prevent another generation of homeless people.

²⁸ At the public input meeting, one participant mentioned an “excellent lesson plan” called “Ending Homelessness” that is available and being used in Marin County.

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Action Item #11	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
To identify all of homeless prevention work being done with children & youth and create a model program and/or expand on effective models	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$	Lead = Continuum <i>Ambassadors of Hope, Marin School districts, Marin Community Foundation, McKinney-Vento recipients and consumers</i>

OBJECTIVE F: Cultural Competency – Working with the Homeless

Consumers at the public meetings raised issues regarding the way that they are treated by some providers. As one person put it when discussing the substandard treatment he received at a shelter, “*I’d rather sleep in the streets!*” Several other consumers at the public meeting echoed this sentiment. They indicated that they were adults and responsible for themselves and wished to be treated respectfully. As one way to address this, the Visionaries recommend a Cultural Competency training for all housing and service providers specifically in working with people who are homeless and those at risk of homelessness.

Action Item #12 A	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
Develop on-going, roving, County wide training for all homeless service providers on cultural competency in working with homeless or at-risk populations.	Mid Term (4 – 6 years)	\$\$	Lead = Dept. of Health and Human Services(Cultural Competency Committee) Marin Community Foundation, Continuum Partners, other housing and service providers, Marin jurisdictions and consumers

Goal III - Identify & Respond to the Needs of Non-English Speakers and Immigrant Populations

There is a large immigrant population and a large non-English speaking population in Marin County. The majority of these residents are from Mexico and Central America countries and reside in the Canal area of San Rafael, Marin’s county seat. There are approximately 12,000 residents in the Canal area, 75% of whom speak Spanish as a first language. Of this group, many speak some English, while others are monolingual Spanish speakers. There is also a new wave of immigration to the Bay Area of indigenous people from

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Mexico and Central America. For example, it is estimated that there are 18,000 Mayan in the Bay Area - approximately 10,000 residing in Marin County.²⁹

To date, there has been no official census of the numbers of these indigenous groups. Due to their lack of documentation and fear of government authorities, this population avoids contact with social service agencies and other official services that they fear could lead to deportation and/or arrest. As such, the unique needs and experiences of these indigenous immigrants have not been explicitly identified and examined in the County, nor have they been looked at in the context of homelessness.

Immigrants share small, crowded apartments and bedrooms in order to make ends meet and to maximize the amount of money they can send home to help support family members. Most often they reside in someone else's apartment where they have an "in". They are not qualified tenant applicants for an apartment as they lack money for a security deposit, local references, credit history and California identification. While this group might not meet a technical definition of "homeless", many are at risk of homelessness due to threat of eviction for overcrowding, inconsistent wages and lack of legal redress from eviction by the landlord or leaseholder.

Other immigrants have resorted to renting a bed on an 8-hour basis simply for a place to sleep. While this population would likely be considered homeless, they are typically not counted in the census data. Mainstream service providers who often don't speak their language and are not co-located where the population lives or works do not count them. There is a general lack of trust and informal communication about housing and service providers is spread via word of mouth.

OBJECTIVE G: Cultural Competency – Working with Non-English Speakers & Immigrants

Consistent, and in conjunction, with **OBJECTIVE F, Action Item #12A** (above)

²⁹ "The Invisible Indians of California" by David Escobar, Marin Independent Journal, February 1, 2006.

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Action Item #12B	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
Develop on-going, roving, County wide training for all homeless service providers on cultural competency in working with immigrant and non-English speaking clients who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness	Mid Term (4 – 6 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = Dept. of Health and Human Services (Cultural Competency Committee)</i> Marin Community Foundation, City of Novato, City of San Rafael, all housing and service providers, Novato Human Needs Center, Canal Welcome Center, Canal Alliance, other Marin jurisdictions and consumers

OBJECTIVE H: Get Input from Monolingual Spanish Speakers & Immigrants on Service Needs for the Homeless and At-Risk

Action Item #13	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Outreach to people who are non-English speakers and immigrants to provide input into what services/strategies for the homeless and at-risk they need developed; partner with organizations already working with these populations in the County; gather data on the need	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Canal Alliance & Canal Welcome Center</i> City of San Rafael, City of Novato, Novato Human Needs Center, Other service providers who serve non-English speaking clients, Faith-based organizations, County, other Marin jurisdictions and consumers
B. Hold public input meetings in places accessible to non-English speakers and immigrants (community centers and/or in cities easily accessible to monolingual Spanish, non-English Speakers, immigrants).	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$	<i>Lead: Canal Alliance & Canal Welcome Center</i> City of San Rafael, City of Novato, Novato Human Needs Center, Other service providers who serve non-English speaking clients, Faith-based organizations, County, other Marin jurisdictions and consumers

OBJECTIVE I: Increase number of culturally competent, bilingual

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English/Spanish service providers

The Visionaries voiced a concern regarding lack of bilingual English/Spanish staff at many of the service centers that might otherwise assist monolingual Spanish speakers. In order to provide services to these communities, a priority has to be made to have bilingual staffing and culturally competent services available. A pay differential is usually given over the base salary for bilingual workers. This is something to consider in attracting bi-lingual staff.

Action Item #14	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
Increase number of homeless provider staff who are bilingual in English/Spanish, including substance use treatment and health care clinics, to adequately assist monolingual Spanish and limited English speaking clients	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = Continuum</i> Dept. of Health and Human Services (Cultural Competency Committee) Marin Community Foundation, City of Novato, City of San Rafael, all housing and service providers, Novato Human Needs Center, Canal Welcome Center, Canal Alliance, other Marin jurisdictions and consumers

OBJECTIVE J: Establish Day Laborer Centers

Action Item #15	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Get input from the affected communities about what kind of Job Center/Day Laborer Center they want to see created. Hold public input meetings in places accessible to non-English speakers and immigrants (i.e. San Rafael and Novato)	Short Term (1–3 years)	\$	<i>Lead =</i> Canal Alliance, Canal Welcome Center, City of San Rafael and City of Novato; Marin business community and consumers
B. Establish Job Center/Day Laborer Centers based on input from affected communities	Long Term (7- 10 years)	\$\$\$	<i>Lead = Oversight Committee</i> Marin business community; County; City of San Rafael and City of Novato; Service Providers and consumers

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Goal IV - View Health Care and Mental Health Screening as Essential Prevention Strategies

The Visionaries repeatedly identified health care as a crucial gap in services and a focal point for prevention services. It is estimated that one in five Californians is uninsured. For the uninsured, extremely high health care bills can put someone into debt immediately, create high stress levels and easily push someone into homelessness. Universal health care for Marin County residents is supported by a majority of county residents and is an issue on both federal and state policy agendas. Since the larger issue of universal health care will be part of an ongoing debate – advocacy at the local level to seek health care coverage for all Marin County residents is recommended as an ongoing strategy.

It is known that various health care clinics in Marin provide general care for the uninsured³⁰. Community clinics are not equipped to provide emergency care, extensive lab work or procedures requiring surgery. As such, the uninsured turn to emergency rooms for their urgent care. This stopgap measure is extremely costly. The cost estimates, for example, in San Francisco for attending to a homeless person in the hospital is \$2,030.82/day.³¹

Medi-Cal routinely drops women between ages of 45-65 on the basis that they are past childbearing years and therefore no longer in need of services. This is contributing to aging women falling into poverty and homelessness.

OBJECTIVE K: Hold A Health Care Forum

The issue of adequate health care as a vital component of well-being raised the question of how Marin County provides services for its uninsured. Marin County will begin by assessing what type of health care services are available for the uninsured and where the gaps lie. The first step in identifying the gaps is to create a Health Care Forum bringing together representatives from the clinics and the hospital emergency rooms that serve the uninsured of Marin County. Once these gaps are identified, strategies will be developed to begin addressing the problem on a countywide basis.

One of the expected outcomes of this Forum is consideration of a plan for universal health care in Marin County.

³⁰ These clinics include the Marin Community Clinic (Greenbrae and Novato), The Point Reyes Clinic, the Bolinas Clinic

³¹ The Lewin Group, "Costs of Serving Homeless Individuals in Nine Cities" CSH Chart Book, November 19, 2004. Since San Francisco is the closest city to Marin that was documented in this study, we use this number as close estimate of Bay Area costs.

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Action Item #16	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
Coordinate a Health Care Forum of key health care providers to low and very low income populations to evaluate gaps and discuss strategies for meeting health care needs of low income/uninsured Marin residents	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Marin Community Foundation & County Coastal Health Alliance, Marin General, Marin Community Clinic, Kaiser, Sutter, Ritter Health Center, RotaCare, Emergency rooms and consumers</i>

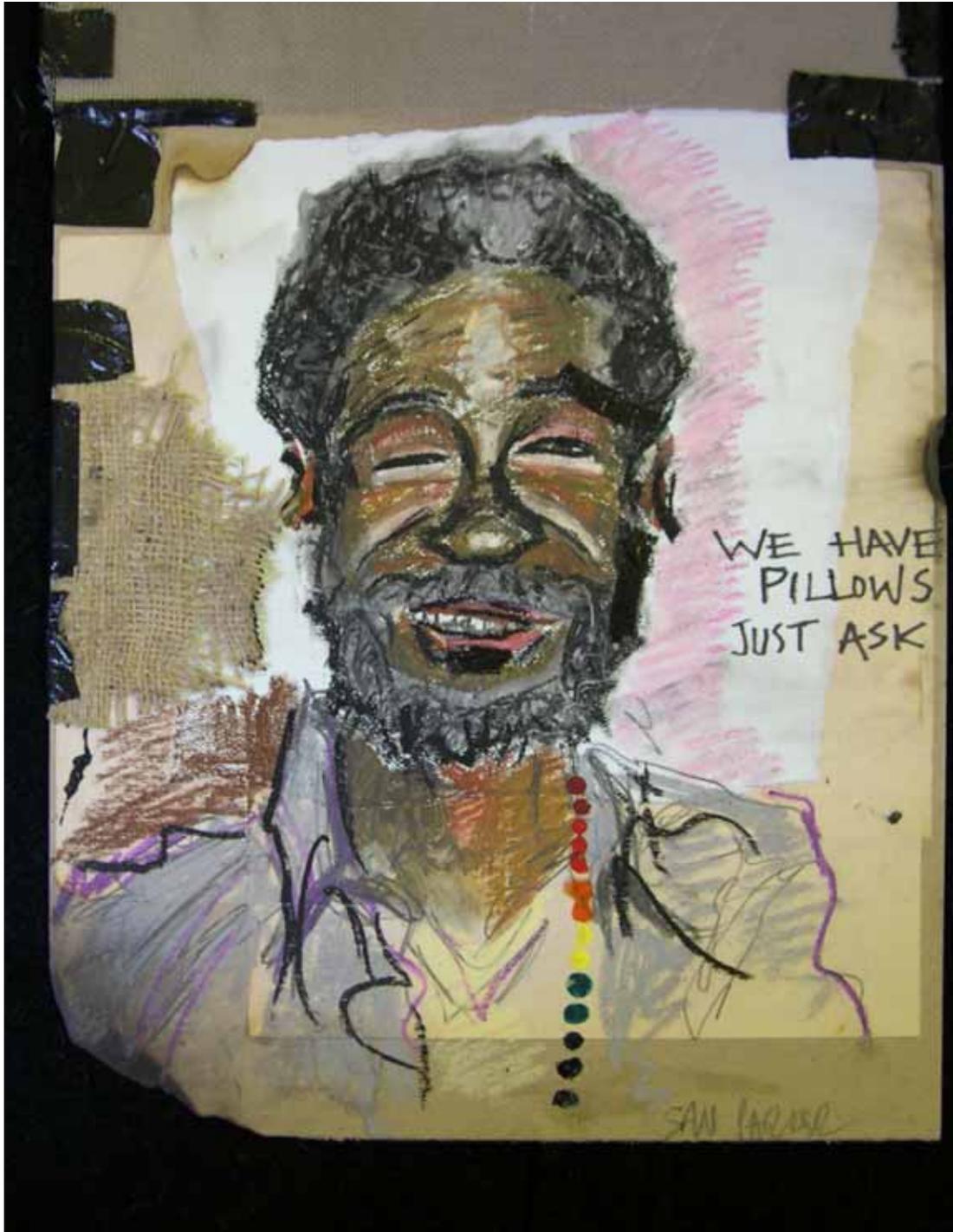
OBJECTIVE L: Improve Screening & Data

The medical assessment methods currently used in Marin County result in individuals receiving fragmented medical and psychological treatment often lasting over many months or years. Often service providers operating with limited resources, must limit their assessments to their particular field of expertise. A more comprehensive and holistic approach to health care for men, women, and children who are homeless would improve their health and well being dramatically and should ultimately result in cost reductions.

Action Item #17	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
Require screening and referrals by health practitioners for holistic health issues (i.e. mental health, substance use, domestic violence, STDs, HIV, TB, Hepatitis C)	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = County Marin Community Foundation, Coastal Health Alliance, Marin General, Marin Community Clinic, Kaiser, Sutter, Ritter Health Center, RotaCare, Emergency rooms and consumers</i>

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II. HOUSING



St. Vincent de Paul Society of Marin

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Housing

GOAL V - Increase Housing Stock and Options

The lack of affordable and supportive housing in Marin County, combined with it being one of the most expensive places to live in the country, make it a very challenging place for low-to-moderate income people, the working poor, and those on government benefits to sustain themselves. In addition, a rent control ordinance exists only for mobile home parks in San Rafael, leaving the rental market subject to the flux of supply and demand. For low income people, this fluctuation can mean the difference between housing and homelessness.

There is a premium on open space in Marin County. When taking into account 14% water area, 27% parks, 6% watershed, 26% agricultural and open space contract land, 3% tidelands and 3% open space district – there is only 21% remaining land – and on that land 91,065 taxable assessor parcels are already developed.³² This 79% of land and water that constitutes our open space make for a beautiful county and, one where supply of land for development is low. When builders propose a new project – many forces are at play to require some of their new units to be set aside for affordable housing. Yet, as these units come on the market there are waiting lists of demand that far exceed the supply.

While it is recognized by all who participated in this effort that the “housing first” model (bypasses the traditional model of shelter and/or transitional housing before permanent housing for persons who are homeless) would be the preferred approach; it poses a disconnect with the reality of the number of units needed, the funding, the available housing stock and available land to create new housing units. Additionally, the process to create new affordable housing is 7-10 years from conception to occupancy and the Visioning Committee believes that investing to keep persons housed in the short and mid term is critical to the outcome of reducing homelessness. This is not to in any way reduce the impetus to create new affordable housing in Marin County.

Need for a Wet Shelter

One of the priorities identified by the Visionaries was the need for a wet

shelter. The concept of a wet shelter in Marin is for it to fill the gap that presently exists. What is needed is a place that holds a harm reduction philosophy and that welcomes people who are homeless any day of the week without requiring them to make a commitment to stop using alcohol and drugs. At the public meeting, various consumers expressed the desire for a

³² County of Marin Assessor – Recorder’s Office – Marin County Acreage Summary – prepared by Assessor’s Mapping Division, January 2, 2001. www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/AR/main/Acerage.cfm Note: as of February 2006 the actual amount of open space acreage is 14,600, making it closer to 4%.

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place to sleep without being forced into a treatment program. While the shelter itself would be a drug and alcohol free zone, residents' choices would be accepted and worked with using a philosophy that acknowledges that people choose to stop using drugs when they are ready and, before that point, it is important to keep them safe and using in the most responsible manner, with the least amount of harm to themselves and others.

Without a wet shelter, many people end up sleeping outdoors or in their cars, often putting themselves in great danger. This past winter season in Marin, for example, there was at least one death related to someone sleeping out in the elements. Also, people who are using alcohol often have compromised health situations that worsen when they are outdoors and in the cold.

One of the concerns voiced by consumers of homeless services at the public input meeting was the substandard treatment they received by some staff at the present shelters in Marin. This treatment was described as judgmental and as rude behavior. As the public emphasized, residents of the shelter system must be treated with respect because if not, they will stay away, risking their health and safety in the outdoors to avoid being made to feel "less than". As such, this input should be taken into account in staffing the new wet shelter – attempting to find staff that are knowledgeable in harm reduction and who have a proven track record of working successfully with homeless and/or low income substance using populations. Cultural Competency training in working with low income populations and with people who are homeless is also recommended for all service providers on a County wide basis.

OBJECTIVE M: Create 3000 additional housing units – that offer housing options including a mix of affordable, supportive and shelter options

The Visionaries are encouraging the evaluation, monitoring and development of more specific outcomes to increase housing for homeless people. This includes affordable housing for the low and very low-income households and housing for the homeless.

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Action Item #18	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Advocate for zoning ordinance to facilitate building of Single Room Occupancy units (SROs); in-law units; rooming houses; small units; dormitory housing, manufactured housing and/or boarding homes for agricultural workers	Mid Term (4 – 6 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = Countywide Planning Committee</i> Marin jurisdictions, County, housing advocates, ABAG, HCD, Housing Council, Marin Environmental Housing Collective (MEHC) and consumers
B. Create an ordinance for building of SROs; in-law units; rooming houses; small units; dormitory housing, manufactured housing and/or boarding homes for agricultural workers	Mid Term (4 – 6 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = Countywide Planning Committee</i> Marin jurisdictions, County, housing advocates, ABAG, HCD, Housing Council, Marin Environmental Housing Collective (MEHC) and consumers
C. To facilitate the building of innovative housing options (i.e. trailers; movable homes; 250 sq. ft spaces)	Mid-Term (4 – 6 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = Housing developers</i> Countywide Planning Committee, Marin jurisdictions, County, housing advocates, ABAG, HCD Marin Environmental Housing Collective (MEHC) and consumers

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Action Item #18	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
D. Identify places in the County where affordable housing projects could be located and work with jurisdictions to include in their Housing Elements; identify land for mobile homes; identify areas for migrant worker housing	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Housing developers</i> Countywide Planning Committee, Marin jurisdictions, County, Housing advocates, Resource Conservation District, Agricultural Commission and consumers
E. Hold each jurisdictions accountable for their Housing Element – specifically in creating housing options for people who are homeless	Short Term ³³ (1-3 years)	\$\$ ³⁴	<i>Lead = Housing Council</i> Housing advocates, Continuum, Marin jurisdictions, County, ABAG, HCD and consumers
F. Create a Wet Shelter for emergency housing	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = County</i> Marin jurisdictions, homeless service providers, faith based organizations and consumers

OBJECTIVE N: Have centralized place to find information about housing services and have access to this information available 24/7

The Visionaries re-emphasized the need for centralized information about housing access and guidelines, along with other services to the homeless and those at-risk of homelessness, to be centralized and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is understood that information about available housing, open or closed waiting lists, news on Section 8 vouchers and shelter bed availability change so frequently that people should be able to access the most updated information without having to make multiple phone calls. Because of this, the centralization, coordination and constant updating of useful information is seen as a primary step in working to streamline services and create ease of access to information and homeless services.

³³ Housing Elements have to be updated by 2009. Housing Element is a state-required component of a jurisdiction's "General Plan" that defines a strategy for meeting the housing needs of low-income and special needs populations.

³⁴ Costs for each jurisdiction would depend on how far along they are in creating housing options for homeless people.

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(Action Item # 1)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
Coordinate and distribute all Homeless Services data information with detailed, updated info about eligibility and hours into one centralized resource	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = Health & Human Services Division of Social Services</i> County, Marin jurisdictions, Continuum Partners, other Service Providers, Faith Based Community and consumers

III . INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPLEMENTATION



St. Vincent de Paul Society of Marin

GOAL VI - Establish Governance/Oversight Structure and Implement Plan

Effective and timely implementation and oversight of the Ten-Year Plan is required as the foundation for ensuring success. The Visionaries agreed that a public-private partnership is a valued collaboration, recognizing that implementing change will take many partners at many levels with varied talents and resources. The team of key players includes the County of Marin, the Marin Community Foundation, the jurisdictions of Marin (cities and towns), current and past consumers of homeless services and the Marin Continuum of Housing and Services.

The County is seen as playing an important role in creating and influencing policy on homelessness and in ensuring accountability for success. Two members of the Board of Supervisors participated on the Visionary Committee and contributed their time to the planning process. Similarly, the

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Marin Community Foundation donated meeting space and staff time to the process and is seen as an important source of support and guidance on funding, community needs and coordination. It was agreed that implementing the plan requires buy-in and commitment of resources from each city and town in the County. The mayor of San Rafael has voiced his support for the planning process and the Visionaries imagine that each of the cities in the County will also actively embrace the goals of securing housing and services for all children and adults in need.

The Marin Continuum, the membership organization of 36 organizations that work to insure that families and individuals become housed, plays a key role in service provision, fundraising, data collection (HMIS), the McKinney Vento HUD Continuum of Care application process and advocacy. In addition to the member organizations, the Visionaries expressed the desire to have consumers of homeless services involved in the implementation and oversight to keep the process directly in touch with those in need. Recognizing that there is a wide spectrum of people who are homeless in the County, it is important to involve representatives of monolingual Spanish speaking clients and other marginalized groups whose voices may get lost including children, youth, young adults, people being discharged from institutions, veterans and seniors.

Everyone agreed that having the business community join the team was vital. Knowing that in order to be successful, we must attract savvy business leaders who want to find ways to invest in their communities, and meet other like-minded investors who also want to lead and support this effort. It is envisioned that this group will act as “champions” for the plan, as influential collaborators, without whom the plan cannot get the full backing and attention it deserves. The Visionaries emphasized that any proposal to the business community should be well laid out and specific as to what is being requested, as business people will want to be able to clearly and easily evaluate what is being asked of them from a financial perspective.

Everyone agreed that having high profile local residents and leaders supporting the Plan would help generate community interest and enthusiasm. A strong consensus among the Visionaries was that the Plan cannot take hold and be successful unless the Marin community gets behind it and supports it at every step of the way. A Public Outreach Campaign is recommended as one of the ways to generate this level of interest and support, and it would be set up for success if one or more celebrities were involved in helping launch and support that effort.

On a logistical note, the Visionaries agreed that there is no need to create a separate non-profit entity to implement the Plan. This was seen as unnecessarily time consuming and inefficient. The group agreed that if a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization is needed for funding purposes, an existing non-profit entity can and should be used.

Objective O: Establish Governance and Oversight Structure

A serious discussion of homelessness produces a list of challenges and goals involving all areas of society: housing, social services, health care, mental health, wages, job training, public perception, advocacy and legislative platforms. Tackling such a complex problem involves current services providers, and county, regional, state and federal governments. Obtaining and sustaining the public and political will require carefully prepared plans and requires “**disciplined people, disciplined thought and disciplined action**” (as stated in the United States Council on Homelessness’ *Innovations in 10-Year Plans to End Chronic Homelessness in Your Community*).

Based on principals and concepts identified by the Visionaries, the following plan governance strategy was developed:

Several members from the Original Visionary Group (Government representatives including Supervisor Adams, Supervisor Kinsey, Barbara Collins, and three representatives from the cities and towns, Marc Rand, of the Marin Community Foundation, and Jennifer Puff, of the Marin Continuum) plus three other members from the Visionary Group come together to:

1. Establish the Partnership to End Homelessness in Marin County. This will include an official group of representatives from government, nonprofit providers, housing developers, funders, business, faith-based communities, consumers, law enforcement, education, health care, veterans organizations, Chambers of Commerce, and more.
2. Name of the Project: “*Housing for Everyone: Marin County’s Ten Year Homeless Plan from the Partnership to End Homelessness*”
3. The Partnership will establish teams/task forces/committees. These will be small groups of community representatives working on a specific task. They may include individuals not in the Partnership. Suggested groups include:
 - Steering Committee of the Partnership
 - Transition Team of the Partnership – small group of members of the Partnership that will put the “legs” on the Ten Year Plan – gather additional information regarding Marin’s current services; determine and define Teams of the Partnership; seek funding; prepare brief descriptions of responsibilities, level of commitment, time frames and more
 - Marin Cities & Towns Mayors’ Team – Mayor Al Boro of San Rafael to establish and lead
 - Community “champions” – to provide visible leadership
 - Program Team – includes consumers. Tasks of this team would be to conduct focus groups, develop surveys, establish advisory groups and provide services of ombudspersons.
 - Public Relations Team – develop three to six brief, positive media statements so that everyone in the Partnership is providing a consistent message.

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- Project Implementation, Project Evaluation and Fund Development Teams – by specific project (Project Connect, statistics, case management standards, housing, etc.)
4. The Continuum coordinates and directs this effort.

Objective P: Gather Relevant Data

Marin County's Ten-Year Homeless Plan is a beginning. Like any beginning there is much that is not presently known or accurately measured. As such, the Plan requires data collection. One of the issues that arises in data collection assessment is being aware of the phenomena of "*creaming*" whereby a program selects only those participants who have a high likelihood of success. To the extent this selection process is acknowledged, it is defended as setting participants up for a high likelihood of success. While success is certainly important for all human beings, the reality of any change cycle is that it necessarily encompasses adversity with moments of success and moments of defeat. There is as much to be learned in the process of not reaching a goal as there is in reaching a benchmark. This applies to homeless and at-risk people in a significant way in that it could prevent them from being accepted into training programs, housing programs, detox programs, rehabilitation programs and the like due to an objective evaluation of their potential for success based on pre-determined criteria. While programs do not have malicious intentions, some do make the number they need for successful reporting and favorable funder review more important than the human process of making slow, small wins in the process of breaking an addiction, learning to live independently, learning a new skill, breaking the cycle of violence, learning how to parent positively or how to do financial planning for the first time.

The Visionaries want to be aware of the creaming potential in programs and be vigilant to look at the various ways in which programs make decisions about participation and eligibility. Consumer feedback is also an important vehicle for assessing how effectively programs are at working to support clients in responding to the many challenges that make up the reality of their lives.

Shorter Term Data needs:

All of the data being sought in the Plan was included after much discussion and evaluation. As such, it is assumed that every piece of data gathering in the Plan is significant. In asking the Visionaries to provide some guidance on priorities the group ranking revealed shorter-term data priorities and mid-term data priorities. What follows is the prioritization of the shorter term data needs:

- Coordinate Health Care Forum of key health care service providers for the low income population (including emergency room and low cost/free

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health clinics) to evaluate gaps and discuss strategies for meeting health care needs of low income/uninsured Marin residents (6 votes)

- Engage all service providers to participate in HMIS data gathering using Sparrow to be able to get accurate service data (4 votes)
- To identify all homeless prevention work being done with children & youth and create a model program and/or expand effective programs (3 votes)
- Get input from the affected communities about what kind of Job Center/Day Laborer Center they want to see created (3 votes)
- Outreach to people who are non-English speakers and immigrants to solicit their input into what services/strategies for the homeless and at-risk that they would like to see developed (3 votes)
- Identify all points of discharge in the community and invite them to gather data and analyze the needs and gaps in discharge planning and identify related improvements (3 votes)
- Identify places in the County where affordable housing projects could be located; identify land for trailer housing; identify areas for migrant worker housing (2 votes)
- Determine funding sources for existing housing and evaluate cost of housing (1 vote)
- Determine funding sources for existing services and evaluate cost of services (1 vote)

Prevention Services and Employment Services Data – Mid-Term Data Needs

One of the issues that became clear in analyzing services was the belief that many residents in Marin County are at risk of homelessness and in need of effective prevention services. There are, however, no clear numbers of how many people are using prevention services. Once all service and housing providers are connected to HMIS data gathering and after Project Homeless Connect is launched, there will be more data to gauge how much demand exists countywide for prevention. Based on this information, strategies should be developed and/or revised accordingly.

On a related note, there is no clear picture of what gaps exist in the area of employment and job training. Having a place to live is, at minimum, an important factor in effectively holding steady employment. While the group acknowledged that there are homeless persons who are employed – the logistics of needing adequate sleep, a shower, nourishment and meeting any dress or uniform requirements certainly lend themselves to having stable

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housing. There are job training programs in the county, but no clear sense of whether these programs are meeting the needs of homeless people or what the needs are. As such, the Visionaries want to have a clearer sense of these issues and recommend bringing the employment and job training service providers together to assess this issue and develop needed strategies to work with homeless and at-risk people.

Action Item #19	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. To accurately track the number of people accessing prevention services through HMIS data	Mid Term (4 – 6 years)	\$ - \$\$	<i>Lead = All Service providers</i> Continuum Partners, County, Marin Community Foundation, School Districts and consumers
B. Coordinate an employment/job training Forum of key employment and training providers to evaluate gaps and discuss strategies for meeting the need of homeless and at-risk persons	4 – 6 years	\$	<i>Lead – County (Marin Jobs and Career Services)</i> Marin Employment Connection, Cal Works Employment Services, Continuum Partners who provide employment assistance/employment and consumers

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Objective Q: Advocate for Public Policy Changes

Action Item # 20	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Support legislation to provide immunity for faith-based/nonprofit housing for homeless – “Good Samaritan” legislation; spot bill.	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = County</i> ABAG, State Legislature, Continuum, interested faith based and nonprofit organizations and consumers
B. Create a state-wide Housing Trust Fund for affordable housing – get on County’s legislative platform	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = County</i> Housing advocates, Marin jurisdictions, Housing Council, Marin Community Foundation, ABAG, NPH, HCD and consumers
C. Advocate for health care for all Marin County residents	Long-term (7 – 10 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Oversight Committee</i> Marin Community Foundation, health care providers, Marin jurisdictions, County, health care advocates and consumers
D. Advocate for statewide improvement in data updates and accuracy in computer information on health care eligibility to build more accessible services	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Marin Community Foundation & County</i> Coastal Health Alliance, Marin General, Marin Community Clinic, Kaiser, Sutter, Ritter Health Center, RotaCare, Emergency rooms and consumers
E. Advocate for a living wage/self sufficiency for Marin County residents	Mid-Term (4 – 6 years)	\$	<i>Lead =Marin Economic Commission</i> Continuum partners, Business community, WIB (Work Force Investment Board), Chambers of Commerce and consumers

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Objective R: Develop Strategies to Secure Needed Funding

Action Item # 21	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Devise a Public Outreach Campaign linked to funding	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Marin Community Foundation & County Continuum</i> partners, CDBG and consumers
B. Identify funding sources of existing housing and evaluate cost of developing housing	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = Bolinas Community Land Trust</i> NPH, HUD, Corp. for Supportive Housing, Housing Council and consumers
C. Identify funding sources of existing services and evaluate cost of providing homeless and prevention services	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = County CDBG, Marin Community Foundation, Marin Housing Authority</i> and consumers

Objective S: Support, Coordinate, and Work with Local, Regional, and State Continuum of Care and HUD Representatives

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD, issued in the 2006 SuperNOFA, HUD's local action steps and measurable achievements for attaining each of the five national HUD objectives listed as part of the goal to end chronic homelessness and help to move families and individuals to permanent housing. Specific local action steps are required on the following:

Action Item # 22	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Support HUD's and State of California's Objectives to End Chronic Homelessness and Move Families and Individuals to Permanent Housing	Short-Term (1-3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Marin Continuum</i> County, Marin Community Foundation, CDBG HUD, HomeBase

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Objective T: Monitor Implementation and Evaluate Plan Success

As with any living document, Marin County’s Ten-Year Plan will be kept alive through active planning and implementation efforts. In order to track how the process is going, independent evaluation should be conducted that engages consumers and evaluates both quantitatively and qualitatively how change is making a difference in the lives of people struggling to live in Marin County.

Action Item # 23	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Feedback Mechanisms – oversight of evaluation to determine if we are spending funds efficiently	Mid term (4-7years)	\$	Lead = County CDBG, Marin Community Foundation, HUD, other funders and consumers

4. PLAN PRIORITIES

The Visioning and Drafting Committees prioritized short-term goals in the plan in order that the impetus of effort was not lost in the next phase of developing a more formalized infrastructure partnership to guide and implement the plan. Their vision was heavily influenced by public input and knowledge of gaps in services and housing. It is envisioned that the five top ranked activities will begin to be addressed immediately and those that follow will be directed by the newly developed partnership representing members from government, non-profit housing and services providers including the Continuum of Housing and Services, the faith based community, the private sector, and organizations that fund housing and services. Each action item may contain multiple actions so the number may appear in the ranking more than one time.

PRIORITIZATION OF SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

Action Item #1 (9 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
Coordinate and distribute all Homeless Services information with detailed, updated info about eligibility, program goals and hours into one centralized resource	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$\$	Lead = Health & Human Services Division of Social Services County, Marin jurisdictions, Continuum Partners, other Service Providers, Faith Based

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			Community and consumers
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Action Item #18 (9 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
F. Create a Wet Shelter for emergency housing	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = County Marin jurisdictions, Homeless service providers, Faith-based organizations and consumers</i>

Action Item #16 (6 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
Coordinate a Health Care Forum of key health care providers to low and very low income populations to evaluate gaps and discuss strategies for meeting health care needs of low income/uninsured Marin residents	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Marin Community Foundation & County Coastal Health Alliance, Marin General, Marin Community Clinic, Kaiser, Sutter, Ritter Health Center, RotaCare, Emergency rooms and consumers</i>

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Action Item #5 B (5 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
B. Work with discharge planners at the jails and prisons to have discharge times taken into consideration in order to maximize opportunities for those released to locate housing and services.	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = County Jail</i> ³⁵ Courts, STAR Program, <i>San Quentin</i> Prison, Centerforce, County and consumers

Action Item #8 A (5 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Pilot a “ <i>Project Homeless Connect</i> ” in Marin County five times in the first year to serve 500 homeless or at-risk people with services	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Continuum</i> County, Marin jurisdictions, faith-based communities, private sector and consumers

Action Item #7 (4 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
Prevent evictions by increasing the available funds & expanding the eligibility criteria for financial assistance to people at risk of becoming homeless	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = Marin Community Foundation</i> County, Marin jurisdictions, Marin Housing Authority, Faith-Based organizations, donors, local newspapers and consumers

Action Item #3 A (4 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Define a realistic standard of service for “case management” applicable to all homeless service and housing providers	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = County</i> Continuum, Marin Community Foundation, other Service providers and consumers

³⁵ There is one jail in the County, but Marin residents who are incarcerated in other counties are released to Marin upon discharge. As such, discussion should involve all relevant discharge institutions.

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Action Item #4A (4 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Engage all service providers to participate in HMIS data gathering	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Continuum</i> All Housing and service providers, County, Marin jurisdictions and consumers

Action Item #13B (4 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
B. Hold public input meetings in places accessible to non-English speakers and immigrants (community centers and/or in cities easily accessible to monolingual Spanish, non-English Speakers, immigrants).	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$	<i>Lead: Canal Alliance & Canal Welcome Center</i> City of San Rafael, City of Novato, Novato Human Needs Center, Other service providers who serve non-English speaking clients, Faith-based organizations, County, other Marin jurisdictions and consumers

Action Item #13A (3 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Outreach to people who are non-English speakers and immigrants to provide input into what services/strategies for the homeless and at-risk they need developed; partner with organizations already working with these populations in the County; gather data on the need	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Canal Alliance & Canal Welcome Center</i> City of San Rafael, City of Novato, Novato Human Needs Center, Other service providers who serve non-English speaking clients, Faith-based organizations, County, other Marin jurisdictions and consumers

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Action Item #15A (3 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Get input from the affected communities about what kind of Job Center/Day Laborer Center they want to see created. Hold public input meetings in places accessible to non-English speakers and immigrants (i.e. San Rafael and Novato)	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Canal Alliance & Canal Welcome Center</i> City of San Rafael and City of Novato; Novato Human Needs Center, other interested service providers, Marin business community and consumers

Action Item #5 A (3 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Identify all points of discharge in the community and invite them to gather data and analyze the needs and gaps in discharge planning and identify related improvements	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Dept. of Health and Human Services</i> County, Helen Vine, mental health institutions, County jail, <i>San Quentin</i> prison, foster care, police departments, Continuum, Centerforce, Center Point, Ambassadors of Hope & Opportunity, ABAG ³⁶ and consumers

Action Item #11 (3 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
To identify all homeless prevention work being done with children & youth and create a model program and/or expand on effective models	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Continuum</i> County, Ambassadors of Hope & Opportunity, Marin School districts, Marin Community Foundation, McKinney-Vento recipients and consumers

³⁶ Supervisor Susan Adams, a member of the Visionary Committee, is also a member of ABAG.

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Action Item #3B (3 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
B. Evaluate whether life skills should be provided as part of the standard of care in case management services	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = County Continuum, Marin Community Foundation, other Service providers and consumers</i>

Action Item #10 (2 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
In connection with “Project Connect” develop a mentor program for homeless/at-risk people	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = Stephen Goldiamond Faith Based community, Ambassadors of Hope, Peer Outreach programs, County</i>

Action Item #20 D (2 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
D. Advocate for statewide improvement in data updates and accuracy in computer information on health care eligibility to build more accessible services	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Marin Community Foundation & County Coastal Health Alliance, Marin General, Marin Community Clinic, Kaiser, Sutter, Ritter Health Center, RotaCare, Emergency rooms and consumers</i>

Action Item #18 D (2 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
D. Identify places in the County where affordable housing projects could be located and work with jurisdictions to include in their housing elements; identify land for mobile homes; identify areas for migrant worker housing	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Housing developers Countywide Planning Committee, Marin jurisdictions, County, Housing advocates, Resource Conservation District, Agricultural Commission and consumers</i>

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Action Item #18 E (2 VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
E. Hold each jurisdictions accountable for their Housing Element – specifically in creating housing options for homeless people	Short Term ³⁷ (1-3 years)	\$\$ ³⁸	<i>Lead = Housing Council</i> Housing advocates, Continuum, Marin jurisdictions, County, ABAG, HCD and consumers

Action Item #9 A (1 VOTE)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. In partnership with lending institutions, launch a “Financial Tool Kit” program to assist people in developing skills to strengthen their ability to stay housed. This could include financial literacy workshops, savings programs, EAP packages, educational materials and/or continuing ed classes.	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = County Health & Human Services (E.A.R.N program)</i> Banks, local nonprofits, Chambers of Commerce, local employers, College of Marin and consumers

Action Item #14 (1 VOTE)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
Increase number of homeless provider staff who are bilingual in English/Spanish, including substance use treatment and health care clinics, to adequately assist monolingual Spanish and limited English speaking clients	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = Continuum</i> Dept. of Health and Human Services (Cultural Competency Committee) Marin Community Foundation, City of Novato, City of San Rafael, all housing and service providers, Novato Human Needs Center, Canal Welcome Center, Canal Alliance, Marin jurisdictions and consumers

³⁷ Housing Elements have to be updated by 2009.

³⁸ Cost for each jurisdiction would depend on how far along they are in creating housing options for homeless people.

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Action Item # 20 A (1 VOTE)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Support legislation to provide immunity for faith-based/nonprofit housing for homeless – “Good Samaritan” legislation; spot bill.	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = County ABAG, State Legislature, Continuum, interested faith based and nonprofit organizations and consumers</i>

Action Item # 21 A (1 VOTE)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
A. Devise a Public Outreach Campaign linked to funding	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Marin Community Foundation & County Continuum partners, CDBG and consumers</i>

Action Item # 21 B & 21 C (1 VOTE)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
B. Identify funding sources of existing housing and evaluate cost of developing housing	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = Bolinas Community Land Trust NPH, HUD, Corp. for Supportive Housing, Housing Council and consumers</i>
C. Identify funding sources of existing services and evaluate cost of providing homeless and prevention services	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = County CDBG, Marin Community Foundation, Marin Housing Authority and consumers</i>

Action Item # 9 C (No VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
C. Evaluate whether life skills should be provided as part of the standard of care in case management services	Short Term (1 – 3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = Continuum Other service providers, Marin Community Foundation, County and consumers</i>

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Action Item #17 (No VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
Require screening and referrals by health practitioners for holistic health issues (i.e. mental health, substance use, domestic violence, STDs, HIV, TB, Hepatitis C)	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$\$	<i>Lead = County</i> Marin Community Foundation, Coastal Health Alliance, Marin General, Marin Community Clinic, Kaiser, Sutter, Ritter Health Center, RotaCare, Emergency rooms and consumers

Action Item #20 B (No VOTES)	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
B. Create a state-wide Housing Trust Fund for affordable housing – get on County’s legislative platform	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = County</i> Housing advocates, Marin jurisdictions, Housing Council, Marin Community Foundation, ABAG, NPH, HCD and consumers

Action Item #6³⁹	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
Evaluate STAR Program for applicability to other service delivery systems	Short Term (1-3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = County</i>

Action Item # 22	Timeline	Budget	Proposed Partners
Support HUD’s and the State of California’s Objectives to End Chronic Homelessness and Move Families and Individuals to Permanent Housing	Short-Term (1-3 years)	\$	<i>Lead = Marin Continuum</i> County, Marin Community Foundation, CDBG HUD, HomeBase

³⁹ The Visionary group did not prioritize this short-term Action Item since it was added as an Action Item after the Group voted.

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5. End of the Beginning and the Beginning of the End

In an ideal world, the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness would be adopted with uniform levels of enthusiasm, an abundance of political will and budgets adequate to the task. We are aware that in attempting to make improvements to current levels of service towards the goal of ending homelessness that the structures already exist, that there is already a high level of dedication and enthusiasm at work, and that if improvements are to be made and more people helped, more dollars and more political will need to be found. We are optimistic that this is an achievable goal.

At the end of this written plan, we invite all readers to view this Ten-Year Plan as the *beginning* of a new found concern and dedication to every child, youth and adult in Marin County - working to ensure that no one goes hungry, no one is cold and everyone has a place to call home in this County of tremendous natural and financial abundance.

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6. Acknowledgements

Thank you to the people and organizations who provided community leadership, vision, information, perspective, funding, services and housing, and to those who assisted with the development and writing of the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. They include:

Homeless persons, formerly homeless persons, and their families

Service and Housing Providers of Marin County California

Maria Ramos-Chertok for facilitation and drafting the plan

David Escobar for insight regarding immigrant populations in Marin County

Sasha Jetton – Intern for Community Development Agency

Marin Community Foundation for use of the meeting space

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Marin, California

The City of San Rafael, California

7. How to Help

- Volunteer at a nonprofit working with homeless populations or other populations in need
- Volunteer at a literacy program to help a child, teen or adult learn to read
- Become a mentor
- Encourage your school district and/or teacher to include a project educating children and/or teens about homelessness in Marin County
- Donate money to your favorite local nonprofit or foundation that works to help people that are homeless or at-risk of homelessness
- Read and learn more about homelessness
- As you become more and more informed about issues of poverty, homelessness and housing challenges in Marin County teach others about what you have learned – promoting the philosophy of “each one teach one”
- Volunteer to sit on a Board of a nonprofit in Marin County that works with low-income people and others in need.
- Donate your used car to a local nonprofit
- Volunteer at a food kitchen to assist with serving meals to those in need
- Volunteer food to the Marin Food Bank
- Read your children books about homelessness
- Encourage your local library to order books about homelessness
- Raise money for a local nonprofit helping those in need
- Support political candidates who advocate for low income and affordable housing and services
- Write your government officials to support affordable and low income housing
- Volunteer to help implement this Plan
- Adopt a Family
- Employ homeless and at-risk of becoming homeless persons
- Donate clothes for job interviews, cold weather and for school aged children
- Seek and maintain eye contact with homeless persons
- Work with your faith-based organization to help the homeless

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8. Glossary

ABAG – the acronym standing for *Association of Bay Area Governments*. ABAG is one of more than 560 regional planning agencies across the nation working to help solve problems in areas such as land use, housing, environmental quality, and economic development.

Case management – there are many definitions of case management.⁴⁰ One such example is the Medical definition, which, in California, is “the responsibility for referral, consultation, ordering of therapy, admission to hospitals, follow-up care, and prepayment approval of referred services. It includes responsibility for relocating, coordinating, and monitoring all medical care on behalf of a member...” California Contract, page 3.

Day laborer - defined as an unskilled worker paid by the day. Quite often, day laborers are *skilled workers* who are in the United States without documentation, thereby having fewer employment options available and, as such, resort to day laborer jobs.

Day Laborer Center - places where people can go to see daily work. Day laborers are often required to show a form of identification and fill out an I-9 form.

Drafting Committee – a sub-group of the larger Visionary Committee that worked on drafting and editing Marin County’s 10-Year Plan. There were six members on the Drafting Committee who met regularly to read each draft of the Plan and to comment on it in detail.

Good Samaritan Legislation – legislation that provide exemption from fine or prosecution for specifically defined groups of people or organizations that are doing something good that benefits their community. In the context of homelessness, the good faith legislation would allow faith-based and/or nonprofit organizations to provide shelter to those in need without having to meet the vigorous code and zoning requirements and relieve them of some risk liability of litigation.

Harm reduction - is a philosophy of public health intended to be a progressive alternative to the prohibition of certain lifestyle choices. The central idea of harm reduction is the recognition that some people always have and always will engage in behaviours which carry risks, such as casual sex and substance abuse. Harm reduction seeks to mitigate the potential harm associated with these behaviours without attempting to prohibit the behaviors. Harm reductionists contend that no one should be denied services such as healthcare and benefits merely because they take risks. Further, harm reduction seeks a social justice response to substance abuse, as opposed to a criminalizing one.

⁴⁰ For a detailed analysis, see “A Review of Case Management for People Who are Homeless: Implications for Practice, Policy and Research” by Gary Morse, Ph.D.

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Life Skills – strengths that help individuals and families succeed in leading productive and satisfying lives. The scope of life skills is broad, ranging from general skills like decision-making and conflict management to more specific abilities such as managing financial resources and preparing nutritious meals. The audience for life skills education is also broad, encompassing both youth and families.

Living Wage - a living wage is defined as a salary that allows low-wage laborers to pay their basic bills and live decent lives without recourse to welfare. Many cities, counties, and school boards around America have living wage laws that apply to their employees.

McKinney – Vento Homeless Assistance Act – in July of 1987, Congress passed the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (Public Law 100-77). This act included several provisions to help homeless individuals. The McKinney Act originally consisted of fifteen programs providing a range of services to homeless people, including the Continuum of Care Programs: the Supportive Housing Program, the Shelter Plus Care Program, and the Single Room Occupancy Program, as well as the Emergency Shelter Grant Program. These programs are all contained within Title IV.

Project Homeless Connect – a model designed and implemented in San Francisco County that brings together all homeless service providers and related services (clothing, food, eye care, pet care) onto one site on a monthly (or regular) basis to provide holistic services, support, advice and referral to residents of SF county in need. A majority of the people who staff the Project each month are volunteers from the community.

Visionary Committee – the term used to refer to the 22-member group that met regularly over a period of six months to contribute to the drafting of Marin County's 10-Year Plan. For a list of these members, please see the Plan.

Wet Shelter- a place that holds a harm reduction philosophy and that welcomes homeless people any day of the week without requiring them to make a commitment to stop using alcohol and drugs. While the shelter itself is a drug and alcohol free zone, residents' choices are accepted and worked with using a philosophy that acknowledges that people choose to stop using drugs when they are ready and, before that point, it is important to keep them safe and using in the most responsible manner, with the least amount of harm to themselves and others.

Winter Shelter – a place for homeless individuals and families to live temporarily during the season of inclement weather, typically open anywhere from 4 to 6 months, depending on the region. At a pre-determined date, the shelter is closed until the next season and people who were staying there are either placed in other sites or return to the streets.

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