

**Okaloosa Walton Homeless Continuum of Care/  
Opportunity, Inc.**

**Executive Director's Report  
October 5, 2009**

***Homeless Prevention Fund***

We the help of many experts, service providers and stakeholders, we have completed the “first final” versions of the written plan; the intake form, the tracking form, and the exit form. We still have work to do on the evaluation forms, and more fine tuning on our first efforts. Still, the efforts were led by a talented group of people: Gloria Battle, MaryAnn Helfrich, Bob and Connie DiAngelis, Maureen and Ginny from the Mental Health Association, and Lydia Bartley. We hashed it out, then I took our first effort over to S4P Synergy and met with the staff over there. I also took the draft forms and handed them out to the service providers in Crestview, and e-mailed copies to potential service providers in Walton County. Not surprisingly, no matter how complete and perfect I thought one version was, someone else came up with obvious bits that had been omitted or unnecessarily added. So although I think these efforts look quite professional now, there is probably still room for improvement. Please look over the documents and see what you think. Even though the funds are likely to be less than first estimated following the first best guess estimates of Florida funding (\$69 million for the state and \$40 million for the most populous counties got changed to \$65 million for the state and \$43 million for the larger counties, leaving the smaller counties \$7 million less than anticipated), the funds are likely to be significant and we will have to be completely transparent, accountable and effective with our use of them.

I sent out the stimulus language bill in the e-mail concerning the prevention fund, and there were several items of note beyond the restricting of funds to near-homeless persons who housing issues were caused by the economic recession. One was the limit of administrative expenses to 5%, which will be split with the state. The other was the limitation of staffing costs to .5 percent. Should the state choose to limit itself to 1%, we would still only get \$30,000 for admin costs, and \$3,750 for staffing costs. Putting it all together would allow for the hiring of one case manager who would also be responsible for many administrative functions, including data entry (all data must be entered into the HMIS system). Perhaps someone else can read the language more cleverly, and come up with something a little more workable.

The Florida Office on Homelessness is holding meetings March 25-6 in Tallahassee to address the funds that come through that office, and the Florida Department of Housing and Urban Development will be having a meeting in Jacksonville March 31-April 2 to discuss the funds coming through them. It is to be hoped that all will be totally clarified at that time, with checks on the way.

***Challenge Grant:***

Challenge Grant reports are due today. Please make sure invoices are complete, documented, and accompanied by cover sheets (available at today's meeting and sent out via e-mail). For those of you who requested and received a \$1,000 advance, invoices will be counted against the initial advance

draw. For those of you not requesting the \$1,000 advance, invoices will be paid upon receipt and verification of documentation.

***Point-in-Time Survey:***

We will be implementing our point-in-time survey the last week of January, 2009, and will need volunteers to help us survey those who are homeless but do not access services on that particular time. I am making a presentation to the December 4 meeting of the veteran's association group that meets at JobsPlus quarterly, and hoping to enlist volunteers there. Please check with your church or non-profit organization and see if you can find additional volunteers. We will be contacting law enforcement for assistance and plans, and holding organizational meetings the first week of January. We also need some assistance from the base. We've been getting calls from women with children living in tents on the base.

***Civic Engagement:***

We continue to get our message out to the community. I was interviewed for a broadcast on Channel 3 news on December 15, spoke to the Parrot Heads on December 12, was on the radio at 7 a.m. December 4, and to the Democratic Hootenanny Club on December 6. Efforts will intensify now that the holidays are over and the shelter is coming together.

***Direct Services:***

Direct spending continued to climb in December, but will be limited from this point forward as we put every available penny toward the shelter. We are looking for agencies and churches that might be able to sponsor one or two families a year. This would allow each family a coordinated response to the various hurdles necessary for stability and self-sufficiency, while not taxing any one agency or facility too severely.

***Travel and holiday plans:***

We tried to close over the holidays, but that didn't actually work out. Many thanks go to Lydia who gave up time with her son and grandchildren in order to keep things running. I do not plan on any travel during January, but have speaking engagements in Orlando Feb. 11-12 and Feb. 18-19 on the topic of homelessness, sexual assault and domestic violence.

Lenore Wilson