



Homeless Services Coalition of Greater Kansas City Works with Regional Leaders to Devise Homelessness Community Action Plan

Homelessness Planning & Research Task Force Membership

City of Kansas City ~
Mayor's Office

Downtown Council

Grand Avenue Temple

Independence, Missouri
Police Department

Jackson County Tax
Levy

KCCC

Kansas City Missouri
Police Department

Kansas City Kansas
Police Department

Kansas City Municipal
Court

Municipal Corrections
Institute

reStart

Truman Medical Center

United Way

*HSC is ending
homelessness by
leading metro-wide
advocacy,
collaboration, funding
and training initiatives.*

As it takes an entire village to raise a child, it takes at least that much effort to shelter a community's homeless population, and even more to construct the capacity to prevent homelessness.

A recently formed Task Force, has accepted the challenge of pulling together a briefing packet of regional statistics, best practices and national solutions to be presented to a Blue Ribbon Commission. The Commission will then be charged with the development of an Action Plan to impact, if not eliminate, homelessness in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area.

Addressing homelessness continues to be a vital community need. The Task Force consists of representatives from across the metropolitan area and continues to grow. Members include: the faith and business communities, the Homeless Services Coalition, neighborhood associations, city advocates, the United Way and other agencies, the City and County Managers' offices, citizens at large, and will include formerly homeless individuals.

This broad-based community effort is the result of numerous people coming together in order to discuss homelessness and ways to develop a compassionate community response that will solve underlying problems rather than shuffle populations. HSC is working on a report on homelessness, "*Living in the Shadows*" which has a Summer publication deadline and will be used as a foundation research document by the Task Force.

The Homeless Services Coalition of Greater Kansas City report is a comprehensive study assessing the growing problem of homelessness and its impact on neighborhoods, business corridors, and the community at large. "*Living in the Shadows*" will chronicle the size and characteristics of the homeless population, illuminate factors that contribute to homelessness, examine existing programs and services available to this struggling population, and the financial resources currently devoted to the problem, and "best practices" from other cities.

The Task Force recognizes that the critical challenges we face as a community are:

- to STOP homelessness before it begins
- provide adequate supportive services
- break through the logjam created when there are not enough emergency, transitional, supportive or permanent affordable housing available

People end up on the streets because breakdowns occur at all points of the social safety net, this group is coming together in order to devise a plan to stop the gap.

2005 Five County Data Special points of interest:

A common myth is that the typical homeless person is a single individual living on the streets. The reality is quite different.

At any single point in time you could expect to find in the Metro area:

- 4,259 homeless people
- 1,637 Homeless Children
- 694 Homeless Families.
- Of the total point in time homeless population:
 - 56% are families with children
 - 40% are Children under the age of 18
 - 38% are Children in Families

The Task Force will work on five technical committees addressing specific issue areas and developing recommendations.

The five issue areas are:

- Community Awareness and Relations
- Crime and Safety
- Housing Continuum
- Prevention
- Programs and Services.

In addition to the Task Force, private citizens, service providers and others will be coming together to form a Blue Ribbon Commission. This planning effort will bring community stakeholders together for the first time to:

1. Articulate and take a stand on a vision and philosophy of how we, as a community, want to address homelessness in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area.
2. Identify priority strategies to:
 - a. Improve community awareness and understanding of homelessness;
 - b. Prevent people from becoming homeless and/or repeating the cycle of homelessness;
 - c. Address gaps and needs in the continuum of services and housing for the homeless and at-risk homeless population;
 - d. Deal with concerns of neighborhood and business corridor groups and others affected by the increasing number of homeless and other "street people" who frequent their areas; and
 - e. Ensure greater system-wide accountability for long-term, sustainable results from the investment of resources.
3. Develop an implementation strategy that identifies:
 - a. Implementation priorities;
 - b. Funding strategies;
 - c. An organizational structure for ongoing implementation and planning;
 - d. Implementation accountabilities;
 - e. Timeframe for implementation; and
 - f. A system for monitoring and measuring outcomes and results of the plan's implementation over time.

The final plan will incorporate changes and additions made as a result of elected official and citizen reviews.

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR THE BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION

The Taskforce recognizes that while homelessness is not bound by political jurisdictions, solutions often are inhibited by them. Therefore, in order to undertake such a large regional effort the Commission will meet as a regional body, however they will work as distinct political work teams comprised of 15 – 20 people.

Jackson County
Mayor of KC, MO
(+3 appointments)
Chief of Police
KC, MO
Independence
Sherriff
Providers
County Executive
(+3 appointments)

Wyandotte County
Mayor/County Executive
(+4 appointments)
Chief of Police
Sherriff
Providers

Johnson County
County Executive
(+4 appointments)
Chief of Police
Sherriff
Providers
Olathe
Overland Park