

ENDING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS THROUGH
Employment & Housing



A LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE
Oakland Marriott City Center, Oakland, CA
January 25, 2006

CHETA
a job and a home: a working combination

APPRECIATION AND RECOGNITION

CHETA would like to thank the participants in the Leadership Dialogue listed at the end of this document for their time and effort to provide their best thinking on how communities may end chronic homelessness through employment and housing. Thank you to the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) which helped CHETA host the Leadership Dialogue the day before the NAEH Ending Family Homelessness Conference.



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About the Leadership Dialogue

About CHETA

Under a DOL cooperative agreement funded by ODEP and ETA and supported by VETS, the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) and Advocates for Human Potential (AHP) collaborated to form the CHETA Center. CHETA works closely with DOL and HUD and its technical assistance centers to address employment and housing practices and policies and to coordinate technical assistance in these demonstration sites. The CHETA Center offers technical assistance and training to providers and policy recommendations to ODEP, ETA, and VETS regarding serving people who are chronically homeless in employment programs. Through this initiative, CHETA:

- Provides technical assistance support to DOL-HUD grants combining employment and housing services
- Develops best practices and training materials for field staff
- Identifies employment trends and policy concerns related to serving individuals who are chronically homeless
- Develops and maintains a repository of information and resources about employment services and policies for people who are chronically homeless
- Collaborates with other national initiatives providing services and support for persons with disabilities who are chronically homeless

The ultimate goal of the CHETA Center is to help the field increase employment outcomes for people with disabilities who have been chronically homeless while they maintain stable housing. CHETA helps grantees demonstrate the potential of customized employment and other best practice strategies and maximize partnerships with mainstream workforce development systems, including One-Stop Career Centers and with key disability and homeless assistance agencies.

Across the United States, communities are responding to the call to abolish chronic homelessness. Not since it first appeared on the American landscape in the mid-1980s has there been such an outcry to address this national disgrace. In a land of plenty, there are thousands of people living on the streets of our cities every night without housing and without economic means. Under the President's directive, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) and its member agencies in the federal government stirred mayors and governors to make and implement 10-year plans to end chronic homelessness. Federal agencies targeted innovative efforts to learn how best to use resources by moving people directly from the streets and shelters into permanent housing. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) have gone a step further to test strategies not only to offer chronically homeless people housing first, but to also offer the opportunity and support to work. Five workforce investment boards, grantees of the DOL Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) in conjunction with the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and supported by the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), in coordination with local housing grantees of HUD, constitute the demonstration sites for this work. They have taken leadership in their cities to uniquely combine housing, supportive services, employment, and training so that chronically homeless individuals can have homes and jobs.

On January 25, 2006 a unique gathering of government officials and practitioners met to discuss their experiences in joining employment services with housing and other supportive services for people who are chronically homeless. Representatives from DOL, HUD, the U.S. Department of

Veterans Affairs (VA), the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) attended, along with leaders of local programs providing employment and housing to chronically homeless people and national experts in the field. The meeting's purpose was to start a national dialogue about policy and practice challenges that inhibit access to employment and training services by homeless job seekers. We



approached this conversation with the common ground that all Americans, even those who are chronically homeless, have a right to participate in the labor market and benefit from public mainstream workforce programs. The resulting dialogue, its key themes, and suggested next steps are captured in this report. It is the hope of the Chronic Homelessness Employment Technical Assistance (CHETA) staff and our DOL and HUD partners that this dialogue and report can set the stage for continuing development of employment's critical role in meeting the needs of persons who are chronically homeless.

Welcoming Remarks

Carla Javits President and CEO, Corporation for Supportive Housing

Welcome everyone. A key reason we have so much chronic homelessness in this country today is because our mainstream programs, employment, health care, and others have badly served a certain group of people, and since they were so poorly served by mainstream programs they became homeless. We now have a whole system of funding targeted to a category called "homeless people," as though that label is something that characterizes someone's entire life.

What we all want is for the mainstream programs to serve everybody, not excluding and leaving out people with more complicated issues or problems or who can't necessarily meet certain qualifying conditions or requirements of those programs. Mainstream programs should serve all Americans who need those services. Where there are barriers, the programs need to change in order to better serve people now classified as chronically homeless.

A few years ago, there were major changes in the federal employment and training programs. We got excited about the possibilities and opportunities because the new, improved system would include even the most disadvantaged. At best this new system has been uneven in implementing this goal. The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) and others started writing and thinking about them and now there's been a lot of progress made. I think this is great opportunity today to raise level of urgency to make the changes and take advantage of the tremendous opportunities in front of us now.

I want to acknowledge the kind of leadership and commitment that John

Rio and Gary Shaheen of Advocates for Human Potential (AHP), our partners in the Chronic Homeless Employment Technical Assistance (CHETA) Center, have demonstrated around the issue of making employment services accessible and responsive to people who are chronically homeless. I want to thank the National Alliance to End Homelessness which put us all out there on that big limb and said "We can do a lot better than we have in the past, it is not enough to manage this problem." I also want to acknowledge Susan Parker, Director of Policy and Research at the DOL Office of Disability Employment Policy, Ruth Samardick, the Director of Homeless Programs at

**"This is an event to start a serious dialogue about policy issues big and small, in employment for people who have experienced homelessness."
—Carla Javits**

DOL, Mark Johnston, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary at HUD, and many others in the room who have joined us for this Leadership Dialogue. We need terrific people in government in order to make progress forward and I am very appreciative of their work.

This is an event to start a serious dialogue about policy issues big and small, in employment for people who have experienced homelessness. There is a real opportunity here, with the experts assembled in this room, to develop and move a local and national policy agenda. And by policy agenda, we mean

remove barriers for the people we're interested in serving to get access to employment and training programs and to remove barriers for us to collaborate and cooperate better as we try to deliver services to people with disabilities who are chronically homeless.

Charlie Curie, former head of the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), is renowned for his statement that what everyone wants—including people who have experienced homelessness—is a home, a date and a job. Fundamentally that's what it is all about. During our coffee breaks we may work on the date idea; mostly today is about getting a job and how having a home supports efforts to get and keep a job.

We know based on research that supportive housing works in ending homelessness and especially for the people with the biggest barriers: long histories of homelessness, mental illness, substance use, and other health problems. What is less well-known is the impact of combining supportive housing and employment services, the desire of homeless people to work, and their ability to do so.

From CSH's early work in New York, Illinois, and California under a Rockefeller Foundation-funded initiative, and efforts sponsored by DOL, HUD, and other private and public agencies, we know that with coordinated employment and housing services, we can achieve employment rates in supportive housing that exceed 50 percent. We can do better if we partner with mainstream employment programs.

President Bush has stated his goal of ending chronic homelessness by the year 2012. We know that housing alone does

not end homelessness. We know that services alone do not end homelessness. We know that employment can play a key role in permanently ending homelessness giving people dignity and self respect and the resources to help pay for housing and other life's necessities. And when we talk about employment we are not talking about stipend jobs in a treatment setting. We are talking about real jobs, in mainstream settings, at real, living wages.

“We know that employment can play a key role in permanently ending homelessness, giving people dignity and self respect and the resources to help pay for housing and other life's necessities.” —Carla Javits



We know that collaboration is the way to go. We need champions to advance this from all systems. In this unique and important initiative, where DOL and HUD have partnered, we are seeing examples of these linkages, partnerships, and coordinated implementation. We have learned so far that housing and employment services can partner effectively, but it takes courage, conviction, and hard work. Across systems, individuals need to learn each other's techniques, operating requirements, and even challenge our assumptions about what works. We also need to consider how we measure success, so that people with greater barriers can benefit from America's employment programs. Wishing won't make it so. It takes the combination of power, money, habits, skills, and values to break us out of our silos and get us working together to effectively assist people with multiple barriers. You can see evidence of change in nonprofit housing providers working with One-Stop Career Centers, in local workforce investment boards working with their government colleagues that administer housing vouchers, and today in this meeting where SAMHSA, VA, HUD, DOL, and the U.S. Social Security Administration are sitting down to talk across systems with providers, researchers, advocates, and local government representatives.

So, CSH, and I think I can speak for the supportive housing community, looks forward to working with the workforce development system going forward to effect even more change resulting in even greater numbers of homeless individuals and families entering and re-entering the workforce. Thank you.

Susan Parker Director of Policy and Research Office of Disability Employment Policy U.S. Department of Labor

Welcome everyone. It's great to see a rich mix of federal staff, state administrators, advocates, and private providers here in Oakland. I feel like I know most of you, perhaps because we share the same passion of making sure that people with disabilities are included in today's workforce. It is our job to make sure that federal agency partners align with inclusive policies so that together we create solutions to inaccessible employment services and develop opportunities that result in more people with disabilities working in America, including those who are chronically homeless.

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) serves as a catalyst for employment for people with disabilities through policy analysis, technical assistance, outreach and education, and the development of best practices. We cannot do it by ourselves. High on our list of priorities is to collaborate with other government agencies, the disability community, and employers to coordinate our respective policies and programs to enhance employment opportunities for Americans with disabilities. To address the employment and training needs of chronically homeless individuals requires the cooperation of agencies within the Department of Labor (DOL), especially the Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS) and the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) who are represented at this Leadership Dialogue.

ODEP provides national leadership to increase employment opportunities for adults and youth with disabilities while striving to eliminate barriers to employment. Just as there is an extremely high rate of unemployment among the

“At the Office of Disability and Employment Policy, high on our list of priorities is collaboration with other government agencies, the disability community, and employers to coordinate our respective policies and programs to enhance employment opportunities for Americans with disabilities. We applaud CSH and AHP for their leadership to bring public policy issues like employment for people who are chronically homeless to the forefront of public policy discussions.” —Susan Parker

homeless population, a disproportionate number of Americans who are homeless have mental health disabilities and/or have an ongoing history of substance abuse. These are sometimes labeled as the “chronically homeless.”

We applaud CSH and AHP for their leadership to bring public policy issues like employment for people who are chronically homeless to the forefront of public policy discussions. ODEP devotes significant resources toward increasing the capacity of the local workforce system, including the One-Stop Career

Centers, to become more accessible to, and welcoming of, people with disabilities. One group which we feel has been “missing” in DOL's targeting efforts is people who are chronically homeless.

This is why in FY 2003 DOL's ODEP, ETA, and VETS, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) established the Ending Chronic Homelessness through Employment and Housing Demonstration. The demonstration projects are in Boston, Indianapolis, Portland, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

The DOL is also an active participant on the Federal Partners Working Group, and heartily supports the state mental health transformation process, stimulated by the President's Commission on Mental Health. We anticipate that this will be a long-term relationship for mutual benefit. In November 2003, the DOL, under the leadership of ODEP, established a department-wide Work Group on Promoting the Employment of Persons with Psychiatric Disabilities. Seven of the large DOL agencies participate, which span 15 different DOL programs. This work group is charged with reviewing current practices related to the provision of supports and services to this population, and overseeing an action plan for addressing these mental health and employment-related issues.

We, the DOL staff, need to learn as much as we can about homelessness and how our state and local workforce partners can effectively serve this population. We recognize our leadership responsibility in pushing the work—whether that is through demonstration programs, evaluation, policy or planning initiatives, etc.—so that we can all learn how access

to mainstream workforce investment services makes the difference in the lives of chronically homeless people. It is our task to prove whether or not a mainstream job reduces chronic homelessness and that money from earnings will make a difference in their financial and personal lives. I look forward to our conversations today and anticipate leaving here satisfied that we have begun a national leadership dialogue on ending chronic homelessness through employment and housing. Thank you.

“ODEP seeks employment policies that result in practical strategies to increase the participation of people with disabilities in the workforce. In essence ODEP is the rudder for the disability employment policy ship.”

—Susan Parker



John Rio, M.A., C.R.C. Co-Director Chronic Homeless Employment Technical Assistance Center Senior Program Associate, Advocates for Human Potential

My task is to take you on a walk through the current landscape of the workforce and homeless assistance systems and practices, pointing out to you some of the things that form the background for this Leadership Dialogue. The purpose of our walk is to insure that we are on the “same page” as we proceed along this path and that we check our compass, our supplies, and our determination to reach our goal of ending chronic homelessness. Why should we take this walk now? Why raise the question of what role does employment services play in ending chronic homelessness? There are several reasons.

One of the things occurring on the landscape over the last few years is the President’s initiative to end chronic homelessness by 2012. Congress has echoed this goal with its firm commitment to end this American tragedy. Federal agencies have again joined in the President’s U. S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, led by Phillip Mangano, to seek better ways to work within and across their departments in service to this goal. We are four years into this journey, and we have just begun to address the employment and income needs of the chronically homeless. We see the Departments of Labor and Housing and Urban Development planting a seed in the landscape with five pilot projects linking permanent supportive housing and employment services from their One-Stops in Boston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Portland, OR.

Second, Continuums of Care across the county are shifting their use of HUD funding for permanent housing and the

“hard costs” of housing while seeking the necessary services funding from mainstream programs at the federal and local levels. Although HUD continues to provide nearly \$32 million in funding for employment services, from Jacksonville to Philadelphia and New York City to San Francisco, scarce McKinney-Vento dollars are prioritized for housing. Chief among the consequences of such decisions is the local decision by continuums to reduce or eliminate Continuum of Care funding for supportive services-

“The Department [of Labor] must ensure that every available labor pool is tapped, including job seekers with special needs...” —DOL Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2005, Performance and Accountability Report

only projects, especially employment services for homeless people funded through the continuums. A proactive planning response seems timely to avoid elimination of employment assistance to those least likely to access it through mainstream workforce services.

Third, in recent years, threats to long-term cash support benefits from entitlement programs spurred housing providers to encourage movement toward self-sufficiency. Ethnographer Kim Hopper observed, “Shelter neither solves homelessness nor prevents further displacement. Absent an adequate supply of affordable housing—and the jobs and income

supports needed to sustain households once relocated—remedial efforts are doomed to an endless round of musical chairs”.¹ It is in their own best interests that housing providers support ways their residents can earn more so that contributions from individual earned income could contribute to rent payments. Not only does employment potentially strengthen supportive housing and stretch subsidy dollars, it can provide tenants with disposable income to strengthen and achieve their personally important goals.

Fourth, research supports the claim that given the opportunity and support to do so, people with multiple barriers can work, including those who are chronically homeless. Having a worker role supports a feeling of being normal and being a part of what most other people do. When asked, most homeless people say they want to work. Over time, earned income and duration of labor force attachment increases among people with disabilities who have been homeless,² among individuals with substance-use disorders,³ among veterans,⁴ and among homeless families.⁵

Fifth, our communities and economies rely on the people working. It is what we do, how we define our lives and how we meet our physical, emotional, and often our intellectual needs. We live to love and to work. Some professionals on our landscape have the idea that maybe employment is not so healthy for people with serious mental illness, that people could relapse or could be stressed because of working. There really isn’t much in the way of research to support that claim. In fact, it’s the

“As our nation’s economy, industries, and businesses transform to meet the challenges of the 21st century, it is also necessary that our government systems and structures evolve to support our economic growth and job creation. This includes the workforce investment system, which must change its design and service delivery methods to reflect the new economy and meet the changing needs of workers and businesses.

Over the past few years ETA has taken steps to begin this transformation through the creation of a demand-driven system that helps job seekers achieve self-sufficiency and promotes business prosperity....Career Advancement Accounts (CAA) that continue this transformation, and take it a step further. CAAs are self-directed accounts that would enable current and future workers to gain the skills needed to successfully enter, navigate and advance in the 21st century job market.” —DOL Budget, Fiscal Year 2007

other way around. There is an unhealthy, negative health impact from long-term unemployment.

For these reasons it is a good time to explore the role employment plays in ending chronic homelessness and a good time for us to have this conversation.

The Mainstream Workforce Investment System that is prominent on the landscape today has changed significantly over the seasons from its predecessors. There’s been a history of programs at the Department of Labor that targeted employment assistance to disadvantaged job seekers, including the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) and the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 required states and localities to bring together 17 federally funded employment and training services into a single system—the One-Stop system under the stewardship of a state workforce investment board (SWIB). It signaled a major shift in policy and practice. The workforce system is driven by the needs of employers for certain skilled workers in high growth occupations. The decisive shift to a demand driven system under the WIA is a significant feature of the new workforce system.

Today, nearly 2,000 One-Stop Career Centers form the foundation of the local workforce development service delivery

system offering three levels of services: core, intensive, and training services that are overseen by 600 local workforce investment boards (LWIBs).

- **Core services** include self-directed activities including access to labor market information and job listings as well as staff-assisted services such as initial assessment of skill levels, resume preparation workshops, and placement assistance.
- **Intensive services** are available to eligible unemployed individuals who have completed at least one core service, but have not been able to obtain employment, or employed individuals needing additional services to obtain or keep employment that will lead to personal self-sufficiency.
- **Training services** are available to eligible individuals who have met the requirements for intensive services and have not been able to obtain or keep employment. Individual training accounts are established to finance training based upon the individual’s choice of selected training programs.

Comprised mainly of employers, LWIBs govern small and large workforce investment areas. There are 15 One-Stop Career Centers, or WorkSource Centers in Los Angeles, 36 across 13 counties in the Houston/Galveston area, and 3 full-service One-Stops in Indianapolis.



Under the WIA, governors set aside 15% of their Workforce Investment Act dollars and set priorities for use of these funds. In California, for example, the Governor has chosen to make some of those funds available for programs to serve people with barriers to employment. Two homeless assistance agencies, Rubicon in Richmond and Chrysalis in Los Angeles, won awards in a competition for these funds.

Governors in other states may decide the top priorities are to use the WIA set-aside dollars for high-skills employment training in growth industries and not provide funding for people with barriers to employment. I want to make the point that what grows in our landscape is not all green. There are different funding opportunities in states and local communities based upon the locally determined circumstances, priorities and political will.

The homeless assistance system is equally comprehensive, with over 450 Continuums of Care (CoCs) around the country that include partnerships with thousands of government and nonprofit agencies. In most instances CoCs overlap with LWIB jurisdictions. However, we see bare spots and dry patches in our landscape, because the local Continuums of Care and the workforce investment boards often have no formal relationship. It is uncommon for them to plan, fund or deliver services in collaboration.

HUD’s Community Development Block Grant fuels economic development and employment and training services for disadvantaged populations. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Stamp Employment and Training Program also pays for employment and training services for food stamp eligible participants. So, when we talk about the mainstream work force system during our conversation, we’re talking about more than just the WIA dislocated

worker or adult programs—we are including an array of programs.

How many homeless people are served by the mainstream workforce investment system? Data are not yet available on the numbers of homeless people served by the activities funded under WIA. Under its predecessor, the Job Training Partnership Act, about 2.4 percent of the participants were homeless in 1994. Four years later 2 percent of the 151,580 individuals served by the Act’s adult programs were homeless. A June 2005 GAO report estimated that as many as 416,000 WIA participants received training in program year 2003. If the estimated percent of homeless participants in JTPA remained constant in the transition from that program to WIA, then perhaps as many as 8,000 homeless individuals or more should be served under WIA.

Some LWIBs created One-Stop Career Centers such that they are very accessible and likely to serve people who are chronically homeless. The Jackson Employment Center in Tucson, AZ, is located a block away from the largest soup kitchen in Pima County; the West Portland One-Stop funded by WorkSystems Inc. in Portland, OR, is adjacent to the treatment services of its parent organization, Central City Concern; the Houston-Galveston Area Council recently funded SEARCH, a homeless assistance agency, to become its Mid-town WorkSource Center for the LWIB.

The DOL and HUD Initiative to End Chronic Homelessness Through Employment and Housing is an opportunity to learn about policies and practices when bringing the LWIB’s career centers, mental health and substance abuse treatment agencies, and supportive housing agencies together to serve chronically homeless individuals to improve their employment outcomes. The projects, represented

Lessons Learned About Homeless Employment Services

- People enter low-wage jobs frequently without access to job growth or benefits
- People with severe disabilities frequently enter part-time jobs
- A comprehensive approach is needed that includes housing and supportive services
- Connecting with the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency and One-Stop systems requires interventions tailored to homeless
- Homeless people follow their own return to work pathway and it often is not linear
- People remain economically vulnerable
- Rapid placement strategy and access to a standing offer of work is a good starting point
- Wrap-around and continuous support are essential
- Supportive housing can be “vocalized” to create a work-encouraging atmosphere

A Walk Through the Landscape... by John Rio, continued



here today, are founded on the basic assumption that permanent housing linked with employment and supportive services constitutes an effective intervention. Their Housing First-Work First approach can promote not only housing stability, but also entry and stability in the workforce.

Since participants started moving into their housing units in March 2003, 154 individuals, or 47 percent, worked. In addition to those who went to work, there are a number of people engaged in work preparation, school, volunteer jobs, and work experience slots where they're paid. We've seen 131 people engaged in those kinds of activities. Since these projects started leasing up about mid-2004, (about 12 to 18 months depending which project you're looking at) we're seeing housing stability hovering around 80 percent.

The local partnerships created in these sites are important collaboration not only to the delivery of services to participants now, but these are also the key to sustaining the initiatives locally. These partnerships required changes within the agencies themselves and now they are focused on the changes needed in their systems so that a combination of more and different partners can come together around the common goal of ending chronic homelessness. I guess the trophy for the largest interagency collaboration goes to the Boston project where 16 agencies work together on this project.

It is important that the 10-year plans to end homelessness address the income and employment needs of those who are chronically homeless. Planning for flexible services and supportive services, strategies to engage the mainstream workforce system, cross-systems training in employment services, and opportunities for area employers to help should be key elements in community plans. With more than 200 10-year plans across the country, these could be coordinated with the workforce investment planning that is required in the very same communities.

We already learned that services should be designed in such a way that they promote opportunities for workforce participation for people who are chronically homeless; offer choices about types of work people want and can do, help people keep their employment, and encourage people to look not just at the jobs they have today, but to pursue pathways to earn more income and a more satisfying worklife. For some that means maintaining health care coverage under Medicaid and retaining a level of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) while working part time. For others it means becoming self-sufficient and leaving these entitlements. Employment supports should be configured in such a way that they are not an all or nothing scheme. We want to create service and support packages that offer people the dignity to work as much as they can. This strategy will help our efforts to end chronic homelessness.

¹Hopper, Kim. (2003). *Reckoning with Homelessness*. Ithaca, NY: Sage House.

²Cook, J.A., Pickett-Schenk, S.A., Grey D., Banghart, B.S., Rosenheck, R. and Randolph, F. (2001). Vocational Outcomes among Formerly Homeless Persons with Severe Mental Illness in the ACCESS Program. *Psychiatric Services* 52:1075-1080, August.

³Zlotnick, C., Robertson, M.J. and Tam, T. (2002). Substance use and labor force participation among homeless adults. *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, February.

⁴Humphreys, Hugh. Rosenheck, Robert. (1998). Treatment involvement and outcomes for four subtypes of homeless veterans. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. 68(2): 285-294, April.

⁵National Center on Family Homelessness (2003). *Education and Job Training Needs of Low-income Women in Massachusetts*; National Alliance to End Homelessness Sourcebook on Family Homelessness: Problems and Solutions. (2004). Washington, D.C., December.

I. The complex needs of homeless people with disabilities require flexible responses

Across the country, communities are dedicated to finding better ways to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities who have long histories of homelessness. Providing chronically homeless people with the opportunity to work and the support necessary to make that possible is a critical piece of the vision for ending chronic homelessness. Exciting new efforts including the DOL and HUD Initiative to End Chronic Homelessness Through Employment and Housing has taken the field forward and begun to demonstrate the potential to reshape the way employment services are delivered to chronically homeless people.

While these programs have now shown it can be done, most of the workforce system is not currently well-structured to meet the complex but addressable needs of chronically homeless individuals. Most One-Stop Career Centers lack the expertise, resources, or relationships needed to effectively assist this population. For example, we know people who are chronically homeless need intensive case management and the WIA system relies mainly on self-directed employment services that require its customers to be motivated and work ready. Few states are planning how to bridge such differences so that chronically homeless individuals can prepare for obtain and retain employment.

Participants in the Leadership Dialogue pointed to the challenging circumstances of chronically homeless people, and identified a number of ways that the workforce system and its potential partners could modify methods, goals, or attitudes to successfully work with the population. Their observations included the need for greater flexibility and collaboration between systems, the need to center services around clients' needs, the

potential to redefine success in more realistic ways for the population, and the importance of changing current disincentives in the social security disability system that counter efforts to help people with disabilities work. Furthermore, homeless services providers often do not elevate clients' employment needs as a service priority and even more infrequently initiate partnerships with the mainstream workforce system to help their clientele increase self-sufficiency through employment.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Meet needs flexibly and personally, whatever it takes

"We need to provide to others what it takes for each of us to be here, to have our jobs. We have access to reliable transportation, access to affordable health care, personal assets should we lose our jobs temporarily, access to child care when needed. We need to look at those basic services and realize people with low incomes are at disadvantage for those things. How do we provide those basic services everybody needs every day and expand our view to include these as employment-related needs of people who are chronically homeless?"

—Michael Reardon, ODEP, DOL

"What you need is the resources to do whatever it takes. So if that means getting somebody's teeth fixed, you do it. It makes a huge difference, if you have teeth, you look better when you go for a job interview and so on."

—Martha Burt, Urban Institute

"Potentially, a homeless person gets to a One-Stop and the staff there might know who the housing providers are and say, 'Okay, Joe, I see there's a lot going on.

Let me give you referral.' So Joe is referred to the housing person who makes a plan and then he is referred to the mental health provider who makes a plan. And before Joe knows it, he has five different plans with five different professionals. His case managers may call or e-mail one another asking, 'How is your plan going?' but I have to wonder how Joe feels about this fragmented process. I believe we must get the employment, treatment, and housing representatives in the same room at the same time with Joe, have one plan, and truly make it One-Stop." —Rob Richardson, Indianapolis Private Industry Council

"I think it's important to strike a balance between the concepts of hope and being realistic about what is possible. Entering the labor market is a transaction, not a charity event. There have to be mutual benefits. I think it's important that an individual develops a realistic sense of what's possible. Employer expectations, opportunities for growth, what it means to start at one level and rise to another level: all are nuances that exist in workplace." —Gregg Weltz, Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative, Office of Workforce Investment, DOL/ETA

Expand our definitions of successful work outcomes

"We need to make a long-term commitment to our clients and residents so people recognize that it is a journey that will go up and down. Service needs change, but in my experience, as soon as someone gets a job they're checked off a list. If we really want to effectively serve those who have been chronically homeless, we have to have a long-term commitment and recognize success is a range of issues for each person, success is different at different times in life, and we must create continuous opportunities. For some folks it may be

I. The complex needs... continued

their first job in 20 years and two years later it may be the ability to make more money and take more responsibility. But it's about meeting consumers where they're at, and flexibility that works in the long term." —**Betsy Lieberman, AIDS Housing of Washington**

"We need to take another look at the culture of work. Most folks who are homeless are working at something. Within the workforce universe, where does that kind of part-time casual periodic work fit in? We need to take in consideration the type of disabilities that are prevalent within the homeless population. We're generally not talking about somebody who lost a hand and wants to get a prosthetic; we are talking about people with intermittent recurrent challenges. Just because they don't hold steady jobs doesn't mean they don't want to work. They are often interested in intermittent work. The want to work but they can rarely sustain a full time level. In supported employment it's a six month average. But they go back to it.

"We see this with housing too. We think having permanent housing means they've been in the housing all that time. Often they go back in the hospital and somebody holds their apartment for them; the fact that they have the resource enables them to hold on to their housing. That's what employment support needs to look like as well. It needs to build in realistic expectations and system supports for people with mental illness and other disabilities that are prevalent in this homeless population, and the understanding that repeated part-time work is a good result." —**Martha Burt, Urban Institute**

Remove the real and perceived disincentives to work

"We have an odd system setup where, in terms of attempting to get someone qualified for benefits, you're required to

do everything under the sun possible to demonstrate they are completely unable to work but then—once somebody is qualified for benefits—then you have the Ticket to Work program where you're trying to demonstrate they can work part time and receive benefits. There are certainly some significant program interactions we need to look at."

—**Jeremy Rosen, Volunteers of America (VOA)**

"Homeless people often have multiple needs, more severe problems, and fewer resources than other segments of the low-income population. Therefore, they can be a comparatively more expensive and difficult population to serve. States, localities, and service providers who receive federal funds but face resource constraints may therefore be deterred from making the special efforts that are needed to reach out to and serve the homeless population."

—**U.S. General Accounting Office, Homelessness—Barriers to Using Mainstream Programs (GAO/RCED-00-184, 2000)**

"People with histories of mental illness and homelessness, more often than not, act in their own best self-interest. It can take six months to two years to get Social Security benefits for mental illness. I think I'm acting in my best interest if I'm not interested in employment because I think I will lose my benefits. It isn't actually at odds if you know how to use these systems, but most people can't explain the rules in a way the customer understands." —**Bryon MacDonald, World Institute on Disability**

"We need to be able to offer work that pays more than consumers will lose or risk by going to work. If they're in subsidized housing, as their income increases, the rent increases. So people look at what they know they'll lose and what they heard from neighbors or friends who went to work, got confused by the rules, and then got nailed with a big penalty and consequences. There are both the real and perceived risks. But frankly, not a whole lot of us would go to work if the marginal tax rate on earnings was as high as it is for many consumers." —**Carol Wilkins, CSH**

"If we get the message out that it's possible to mix work and benefits that will have a significant impact. I think there are a lot of practitioners who tell consumers you can't work at all, period, or you will lose your benefits. And that's not true. With the Ticket to Work, the national policy is that you can work and receive some benefits for a period of time. We need to encourage people to work, even part-time work will increase their self-esteem and self-sufficiency, and with SSA work incentives, they can maintain the safety net for a period of time while they build their confidence in their ability to sustain work. I think that's the message we need to get out there." —**Dan O'Brien, SSA**

II. Systems change must result in more services coming from mainstream programs for homeless people

From providers in the same community working together, to state departments planning jointly, to federal agencies blending and restructuring their funding, collaboration is the key to bringing together the multiple services and resources needed to end chronic homelessness. We have examples of successful employment projects such as the Job Training for the Homeless Demonstration Program, CSH's Next Step: Jobs initiative, and the current DOL and HUD partnership. Among the features of these demonstrations, collaboration and true partnership, vertical and horizontal, are essential. When these efforts are not aligned, then our efforts are aimed at making changes in the systems so that they can work better. Much of the Leadership Dialogue focused on the importance of collaboration, not only at the local level, but also at the state and federal level. Participants called for the federal partners to support dedicated resources and policy changes that foster systems change and collaboration at every level.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

The demonstration programs have shown collaboration works and it is again underscored in the DOL and HUD Initiative to End Chronic Homelessness Through Employment and Housing

"One thing that has been great [about the DOL and HUD demonstration projects] is staff did not have mandates to meet outcomes specific to their employing organization. Instead, partnering agencies developed common goals for the project that are shared by all staff, regardless of their company of origin." —**Rob Richardson, Indianapolis Private Industry Council**

"No one agency can do it all, whether at the local, state, or federal level. We are learning in the DOL and HUD initiative that in order to reach the goals in housing and jobs and bring those results to scale, we need to make changes in how the homeless assistance, housing, treatment, and workforce systems collaborate. The Boston project is making an impact on employment and housing outcomes not only in the city, but in the state through the Massachusetts State Interagency Council on Homelessness." —**Gary Shaheen, CHETA**

"Recently in our agency, the housing staff co-located with the employment staff. Prior to that, even though housing and employment services had staff meetings every week in which they talked about client progress toward permanent housing, working alongside each other we saw improvement in their placement performance. After nearly two years, their permanent housing placement went up from approximately 35 percent to almost 80 percent. From our experience, co-location of staff can have tremendously positive outcomes." —**Kate Lyons, SEARCH, Houston, Texas**

"The Homeless Veteran's Reintegration Program (HVRP) is an employment-focused program in which DOL HVRP grantees work with its federal, state, and local partners such as the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and many local social service providers to provide a variety of employment and training focused services on behalf of homeless veterans. As a result, 65 percent of the HVRP participants enter into employment at an average hourly wage at placement of \$9.55. Fifty-seven percent of those homeless veterans who

"To meet the goal of ending chronic homelessness in 10 years, another important step for the Administration and the Congress is to alleviate the barriers that homeless people encounter as they seek services from mainstream programs. A number of longstanding and complex issues such as improving the integration and coordination of federal programs, ensuring an appropriate system of incentives for serving homeless people, and holding mainstream programs more accountable for serving homeless people will need to be more fully addressed in order to alleviate the barriers to accessing mainstream programs." —Stanley J. Czerwinski, Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues, U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO-02-485T, March 6, 2002)

II. Systems change...continued

enter employment are still employed six months after expiration of the grant. We credit this success to the collaboration and intensive services including critical follow-up services that are available to support homeless veterans in reintegrating into the 21st century workforce.”

—*Kristine McLaughlin, HVRP, VETS, DOL*

Systems change must mean more services for homeless people coming from mainstream programs

“My concern is we don’t further segregate subpopulations within homeless community but that we accommodate them within the mainstream resource services.” —*Neil Donovan, National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH)*

“I’ve seen a lot of parallel employment systems being developed in the housing, homeless, and mental health systems. In terms of supportive housing, some organizations are creating their own employment services and yet you have Workforce Investment dollars that can be used toward that and Department of Rehabilitation monies that are dedicated to employment services. I don’t think that concurrent systems are going to serve our clients well. We should be leveraging available funding and utilizing it better.” —*Susan Quigley, Workforce Investment Board, City of Los Angeles*

“In Houston they were able to redirect funds from a HUD-funded employment project to create more housing because they were able to secure employment funding through a mainstream source. That’s the ideal model. If we find mainstream resources to get the services done then HUD no longer has to pay for them and HUD can give more money for housing.” —*Mark Johnston, Community Planning and Development, HUD*

Policy change and leadership at the federal level is essential for systems change

“It is very difficult for programs to blend funding streams on the practitioner level when systems don’t allow you to do that. The agencies that have the power and authority need to look at blending funding streams at the federal level rather than having practitioners struggle to do it however best they can on the local level. It is unreasonable to expect those at the lowest levels to put this jigsaw puzzle together.”

—*Jane Fischberg, Rubicon Programs, Inc.*



“Without some additional help at the federal level that pushes folks at the state to really step out of their silos, we’re not going to be anywhere in five years. We’ll continue to do fabulous programs and great partnerships with providers from one agency and another, but we need the help from the folks at federal level to make system change happen.” —*Betsy Lieberman, AIDS Housing of Washington*

“In order for these partnerships to work for people with mental health disabilities, HUD and DOL can’t have requirements where we tell clients you can’t access this service unless you are, for instance, clean or sober. Clients come back and feel defeated. If there are two systems that have different philosophies and policies, at a policy level, how do we work together to benefit clients?”

—*Maria Funk, Mental Health Department, Los Angeles County*

The work of systems change takes time, commitment and resources

“The reason we can’t bottle what the programs here are doing has to do with process. It takes long time and it needs continuous nursing. Somebody has to be trying to do it. It can’t just happen at case work level. It has to happen at case work level, but if it’s going to be sustained, it has to be happening at agency head level and supervisor level as well, because when one team member disappears, the agency has to be committed to the process to put another team member in there. And you can’t bottle it—you have to communicate the fact that it makes a difference to ultimate performance with homeless people, and also that it takes time and resources to make it happen.”

—*Marti Burt, Urban Institute*

“One of things SAMHSA learned through the ACCESS demonstration program is that you have to have both bottom-up and top-down approach to systems change and it doesn’t happen unless you get resources. What does work is putting in place a boundary spanner, a systems integrator. It has to be someone’s role to make connections happen. The systems integrator is one that says this person is missing from the table, that person is missing from the table, and begins and nurtures relationships to get them in the process, and it happens at that local level and state level.” —*Lynn Aronson, SAMHSA*

III. Planning and planning support are important to foster successful collaboration

LWIBs annually plan for Workforce Investment Act funds. Homeless Continuum of Care boards similarly plan annually for the use of HUD’s homeless resources. The two planning processes, while open to collaboration, occur separately in most communities, with no cross-system planning and little awareness of the purposes and objectives of each funding stream and how they potentially relate to achieving similar community objectives. HUD requires tracking of employment outcomes in McKinney-Vento programs, encourages housing providers to consider employment among many issues affecting homeless people, and recommends links to the LWIB. However, the relationship with the mainstream workforce investment system is not emphasized or required. The LWIB’s on the other hand, while reaching out to many community interests, are not required to consider the specific needs of homeless people in their planning and are often unaware of the existence of the Continuum of Care board or do not participate with them. State WIBs also regularly plan for the needs of employers and job seekers, but likewise few consider employment for homeless people in their planning efforts. Furthermore, although these plans from the continuums and the state workforce boards are required to go to HUD and DOL respectively for approval, there is no formal interagency link or expectation at the federal level to insure that these federal agencies consider their common ground in ending chronic homelessness when reviewing these local plans. Other agencies with key roles in the workforce development system for people with disabilities, such as mental health and vocational rehabilitation agencies, should also be included in joint planning efforts to address the employment needs of homeless people with disabilities.

To bring about successful collaboration between the homeless and the

workforce investment systems will require both regular information sharing and resources to support planning. Participants in the Leadership Dialogue recognized the progress that has been made in homeless planning and coordination and encouraged greater efforts be made to link planning processes and to support planning as an important activity for building collaboration. Newly created state interagency councils on homelessness may provide a forum and leadership for cross-system planning in the states.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Cross-system planning is critical and should be better integrated

“We need to do better planning and I don’t mean just writing each other’s existence into our grants—we need to recognize the value of cross-agency and cross-system planning. Right now, we don’t have the mechanisms, the incentives, the staff, or resources to make this a planned process that can adjust and be flexible as we go along. We need to bring back planning as a legitimate function.” —*Dennis Rogers, Boston Private Industry Council*

“I think we’re hearing that HUD’s Continuum of Care was a big step in planning and bringing partners together, and it seems like now we need to collaborate to plan across these systems—we’ve got planning silos. I think the more we integrate planning, the better job we’ll do.” —*Ruth Samardick, Homeless Assistance Programs VETS/ DOL*

“What we [HUD] want is for One-Stops to be at the table, for Continuums of Care to be at the table, for states to be at the table. In the policy academy process, we’ve been trying to encourage conversation at the state level. Many of them [state agencies and other possible partners in the planning process to end

homelessness] never had homelessness on their agenda or radar screen, so conversations have started taking place around homelessness in arenas that didn’t participate before. In many places labor is one of those arenas.”

—*Velma Simpson, Community Planning and Development, HUD*

Workforce services need to be responsive to employers

“Employers don’t want to hear about programs. They don’t hire programs, they hire solutions. Employers want three things from us: they want our programs to be simple to use, they want to minimize the training they are responsible for, and they want to maximize profit. We need an approach and strategy that meets the homeless customers’ needs and the desires of employers. It’s not one priority over the other. It’s the intersection between those two discussions that’s critical.”

—*Gregg Weltz, Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative, Office of Workforce Investment, DOL/ETA*

“The employer needs a job done and it’s our job to convince the employer that this person is the best person for the job. So they need to be able to compete with anyone who applies. We can’t be asking the employer to decrease productivity in order to do good.... That said, I think we should put out to employers why there is a benefit to hiring local community members, of working with local employment service practitioners. We need to talk about the demand side and how on the federal level the system should increase its expectation of employers to look at more diverse population to provide a quality workforce.” —*Jane Fischberg, Rubicon Programs, Inc.*

III. Planning and planning support... *continued*

Good planning requires resources to support it

“Each community that puts together a Continuum of Care board faces the challenge of bringing people together, reaching a common understanding, keeping minutes, and trying to be effective with all entities. You have to go to a lot of meetings to do this and the providers who are doing it are generally strapped. Planning assistance could be helpful. Dedicated planning assistance at that level needed to connect what the local Continuum of Care board does with the workforce investment boards.”

—**Michael Blecker, Swords to Ploughshares**

“Planning is important and it’s how you get results. But the people who are concerned about results have to then say that this is part of what we want communities to do and we need to pay for it.” —**Steve Berg, NAEH**

“You have to build on what’s there, but also take it the next step. To do that well, we need dedicated money to do planning.” —**Susan Quigley, Workforce Investment Board, City of Los Angeles**

Explore including or encouraging planning for homelessness in WIB plans

“I’d like to see homelessness included as one of topics to be addressed in the state workforce plan. Not requiring that any particular answer to be reached, but at least requiring that it be addressed.”

—**Steve Berg, NAEH**

“I’m concerned about mandating different population groups for inclusion. Before you let the local boards know they have to include someone, find out which ones are working with that group right now, track this over time and build competency so that we have a place to send people or look at for models.”

—**Dennis Roger, Boston Private Industry Council**



IV. Meeting homeless needs will require ongoing access to new or redirected money

The primary reason that more chronically homeless individuals are not employed is because of the lack of funding for services and support they need. Some states and localities offer modest funding for employment services targeted to homeless job seekers, often cobbled together from multiple sources and rarely from the WIA adult or dislocated worker funds or other mainstream programs that DOL and other federal agencies sends to the states. While the Job Training for the Homeless Demonstration Project (JTHDP) recommended expanded coordination arrangements between the mainstream workforce program and homeless assistance/housing agencies, we were not successful in making this transition in the face of the Workforce Investment Act.

HUD is a primary funder of supportive services for homeless people, including investing \$32 million annually in several targeted employment services that have been developed over years at the local level. Today, HUD is prioritizing its homeless funds for permanent supportive housing. While this priority fits with HUD’s role as the primary federal agency supporting housing, the potential redirecting of funds from employment services to permanent housing at the local level (which has already impacted some communities) has not been coordinated with any new or redirected resources from the DOL to pick up or incorporate the existing services paid for by HUD. In a number of communities, employment programs specifically targeted to people who are homeless and developed through HUD services-only dollars are closing or are in jeopardy of closing. In addition to the undeniable personal impact participants are likely to feel if this occurs, there is an additional systems impact. The irony is that at just the time that the nation is beginning to realize the importance of employment in ending homelessness, these “program

pioneers” and the experience and expertise they have developed by implementing their employment services may no longer be available upon which to build a stronger and more expansive homeless employment network.

Leadership Dialogue participants identified the need for flexible or targeted resources to provide the range of complementary services to support employment for homeless people with disabilities. They proposed alternatives including new targeted programs and more flexible WIA funding with incentives to serve homeless people. They also called for greater coordination between HUD and DOL to ensure the continuation of successful HUD-funded employment programs.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

This work requires flexible resources

“We [in Pima County] utilize 14 streams of funding; 14 different sources from Emergency Shelter Grants to engage chronically homelessness individuals and families to move off streets, to Social Service Block Grant money which covers classroom activity. We need each and every one of these funding sources in order to provide the kind of high level of services to homeless people who we put on the market to look for work. We also utilize the HUD Supportive Housing Program in order to provide the housing component together with our employment programs—one does not work without the other, period. Without stabilizing people in housing, you cannot possibility go to the next step in providing employment opportunities in the community.” —**Steve Nelson, Pima County Community Services, Jackson Employment Center**

“In the One-Stop system there’s a huge gap between self-help services that are the core services and WIA intensive services. Resource coordination is missing as are those dollars needed to enhance core services. So many agencies out there do so many different things, but there is no client coordinator working on cross-service plan. The issue is money, leadership, and service-delivery mechanisms.”

—**Clover Mow, Worksystems, Inc.**

“I manage a One-Stop in one of the highest needs areas, the Hunters Point-Bayview section of San Francisco. The nature of a One-Stop Career Center is that you have very few operational personnel. It is a system built on customer self-service. So when you talk about adding services, you have to talk about adding staff to be able to deliver services, and when you talk about that you have to talk about funding streams or resources to be able to hire qualified personnel and deliver those services.” —**Cedric Jackson, One-Stop Southeast Career Link Services, San Francisco Department of Human Services**

Don’t take away current funding without identified replacement resources

“It takes a lot of resources to be able to respond in a responsible way and do whatever it takes to work with the folks we work with and help them move successfully into employment. We need HUD, which is working to change its services funding, to be working even more across silos to free up resources for what HUD is, one way or another, getting out of the business of funding, or to work with DOL to create great flexible funding and outcomes on the federal level. It shouldn’t be a matter of having to go about asking for waivers, of having to be an exception—it should be written in as a policy, it should be routine.”

—**Jane Fischberg, Rubicon Programs, Inc.**

IV. Meeting homeless needs...continued

"If history is a good teacher, the services of the demonstration projects will be severely curtailed, if not eliminated, when the demonstration closes. We have learned from earlier demonstrations, particularly the Job Training for the Homeless Demonstration Program, that more often than not, these projects can neither secure the funding to continue the good work they demonstrated nor find an existing service to pick up where they leave off. It requires state and federal government leadership to support the continuation of cutting-edge programs."

—**John Rio, CHETA**

"I'm most intrigued to think through how HUD can better engage with mainstream employment resources, not just for homeless programs, but HUD mainstream programs as well. One of the government result act indicators we have in HUD is employment—employing people that are homeless while in a HUD homeless project." —**Mark Johnston, Community Planning and Development, HUD**

Explore adding incentives and sanctions for serving homeless clients

"At the table we have a few examples of workforce providers that are stepping up. Not at the table we have several hundred workforce boards who, from what I hear, aren't doing very much to serve chronically homeless people. So it seems like we need to get those other workforce boards more interested, and that's going to require something from the federal government." —**Steve Berg, NAEH**

"Without financial incentives in place, it makes it hard for two systems to come together. We need to provide examples of where at a regional level or statewide level they've put together a plan that does integrate two systems, and what it took." —**Katie Hong, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**

"The administration is already invested in a huge federal policy to end chronic homelessness. Maybe one way to do make this work is with incentives—money that goes to this state if it can demonstrate how the state WIB is going to begin to work with the state interagency council on homelessness. The federal government could say to major cities and communities, to Continuum of Care boards, 'You tell us how you'll work together and what you need to do it and here is incentive money.' This would avoid another specific mandate or set aside, by creating an incentive structure to get the attention of the folks that have the resources that HUD hopes will come and pick up responsibility. Right now there's no incentive for them to do that."

—**Carol Wilkins, CSH**

"I'm not convinced that it can happen unless there are financial incentives and sanctions where by workforce boards are basically penalized if they are not serving this population, penalized if they are not serving people with severe barriers, and we know the chronically homeless population falls under that severe barriers category." —**Jeremy Rosen, VOA**

Consider developing new DOL targeted resources or programs

"It seems like we know that the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program is doing well with homeless veterans. And we know, although it's still ongoing, that the five DOL and HUD demonstration projects seem to be achieving successful results. I think that the reason for that is that collaboration between the One-Stops and workforce investment boards and homeless service providers are a requirement of both these programs, and there are resources attached to it. What it suggests to me going forward is that we may need to propose and develop, whether through reauthorization of the WIA or, independently, an additional targeted program that goes beyond simply serving homeless veterans. We may want to look toward this as a longer term solution." —**Jeremy Rosen, VOA**



V. Increased federal leadership is key to taking our efforts to scale

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

More education and dialogue with the field is a critical

"The story needs to be told and it needs to go out there. We need to get it out to the workforce investment boards around the country in order to drive policy and changes." —**Susan Quigley, Workforce Investment Board, City of Los Angeles**

"The Department of Labor, in conjunction perhaps with the National Association of Workforce Boards, could convene a meeting, hear their thoughts and put out the current models. Find out what the local WIBs see as their role in this and if they have had local conversations about that." —**Gary Shaheen, CHETA**

"Part of the solution is education at all levels: At the individual level, it's trying to convince people that work is a good thing and also why it makes sense at organizational level to provide employment and training services. People need to know why homeless providers as well as workforce providers should care and invest in a coordinated system." —**Katie Hong, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**

The steps that DOL, HUD and other federal partners have taken to date are significant for showing it is possible for people who are chronically homeless to go to work, given the employment services to do so. The inclusion of workforce leaders in the federal policy academies, the success of demonstration projects, participation by federal agencies at the ICH, and co-convening meetings such as the Leadership Dialogue are significant steps.

In order to make employment services available to the chronically homeless, increased leadership and action are required to redirect or stimulate new funding, align policies across the workforce investment system that accommodate job seekers with significant and multiple barriers, and to use best practices through cross-training of staff in these systems. Federal agencies, especially the DOL, as the key federal entity responsible for employment policy, can push the envelope using an array of strategies to educate and encourage states and localities to address these issues. In particular there is an unprecedented opportunity in the states to incentivize planning efforts where state interagency councils on homelessness are forming and include labor and workforce leaders. In other sections of this report we have discussed the need for collaboration, increased or redirected resources, and support for systems change. Along with these steps needs to come better information to the field, encouragement and commitment from the highest levels, and flexibility to ensure that current policies and performance measures are not seen as barriers to the kind of change that is needed to ultimately end chronic homelessness.

"Some advocates and service providers are also concerned that WIA's performance accountability system may serve as a disincentive to states, local areas, or individual providers to serve homeless people. The act requires states and local areas to set performance goals and track the performance of job training programs by measuring job placement rates and the earnings of program participants, among other things. While this performance-based approach is beneficial in many respects, it can inadvertently discourage programs and service providers from serving the most challenging populations, such as homeless people, whose outcomes are not likely to be as successful as those of other program participants." —**U.S. General Accounting Office, Homelessness—Barriers to Using Mainstream Programs. (GAO/RCED-00-184, July 2000)**

V. Increased federal leadership... continued

“A very important next step is for the Department of Labor to take on this issue in a more systematic way. What are we going to do to get the workforce boards in general across the country to be on board with this issue of chronic homelessness? It starts with things like gathering information about what the best workforce programs do and distributing it. Having conferences and more meetings like this. Hold local conferences and meet with people at the local level and say here is what you can do. There are 200 cities that have said we want to end chronic homelessness and every one of those cities’ mayors is a little worried whether they’ll be able to do that and they’re counting on people on the workforce side to help them out.”

—Steve Berg, NAEH

There is a need to collect better data about who is being served now and the benefits

“Since the Department of Labor, like all federal departments, has a mandate to work toward ending chronic homelessness, it seems like getting the states and localities to ask the question about how many chronically homeless people they are serving and how many they could be serving is important. Not just those who get jobs, but how many are they seeing year to year?”

—Carla Javits, CSH

“We need to look at data from several systems to show the interrelationship of employment and other issues. How does going to work reduce recidivism of prisoners in jail? To what degree does work help people stay clean and sober? What impact does having a high volume of folks in an affordable housing site go to work have on the finances of the building?”

—Doreen Straka, CHETA

“From a private funder perspective, outcomes are important and cost-benefit analysis of what is the cost and what’s the benefit. We want to have the information so you can argue the benefits are increasing and that’s why we should make investments. It’s an important argument.”

—Katie Hong, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

State workforce systems can serve chronically homeless job seekers under WIA

“States have received guidance from the Department of Labor around setting performance levels for the common measures. They were advised to consider that some workforce solutions might impact levels such as those developed to ensure people requiring more comprehensive services are included in the pipeline of workers. States can request a federal performance adjustment due to changing characteristics of its customers.”

—Randy Cooper, ODEP, DOL

“Once you enroll someone in WIA-funded services, you’re held to placing that person eventually. If a person is not placed in a timely fashion, you’re punished for it in the contract. Contracts are placement-driven so that it compels the operators to take those they know they can place—those are serious barriers.”

—Michael Blecker, Swords to Ploughshares

“One-Stops should be serving all manner of people with disabilities, all disabilities. But the performance measures for One-Stops seem to be diametrically opposed to competently serve people with disabilities. What happens to the performance measures for a One-Stop that provides benefit-planning services because that’s where the customer is identifying a need, or training? Can we have performance measures that are not so outcome-linked to quickly getting the job, that can prepare folks we’re working with such as benefit plans and basic supports other folks may not need but our folks do?”

—Bryon MacDonald, World Institute on Disability

“We talk about performance measures and whether or not they discourage providers from interacting with chronically mentally ill folks. I think there’s another question—does it encourage them? What is clear is that, if you don’t work with people directly in certain ways, which are fairly resource-rich and time consuming, it’s difficult to get them into employment. I don’t think the performance measures themselves make it difficult for people to work with this population, but it doesn’t encourage them to do so.”

—Josh Orlans, VA

V. Increased federal leadership... continued

Consider ways for DOL to encourage states and localities by allowing some performance measure flexibility

“We need to recognize that conditions are really local. And we can’t start applying programs and norms and models at national level. We only need to make regulations in the most broad terms at 30,000 feet to ensure tax payers’ monies are respected and spent appropriately, and then give a lot of flexibility to the local investment board.”

—Neil Donovan, NAEH

“If the Department of Labor would like to do something serious to promote the President’s Initiative to End Chronic Homelessness, the department’s Employment and Training Administration should be explicit with the states about the ways to negotiate lower performance measures so that communities can use WIA funding to reach out to chronic homelessness people. That would be a big step forward that fits squarely with the current approach.”

—Steve Berg, NAEH

“Since the President has given a directive to end the problem by a certain date, could not the Secretary of Labor encourage state workforce boards to come to table with proposals that serve the chronically homelessness at the One-Stops and say, ‘We are ready to take a negotiated position and work with you on measurements’? It needs to happen at that level.”

—Bryon MacDonald, World Institute on Disability

“One solution would be to allow weighting of performance measures. If someone is chronically homeless or has multiple barriers to employment, you weigh that performance differently.”

—Neil Donovan, NAEH



“I think if we want to make headway on the President’s agenda to end chronic homelessness by 2012, our agencies need to issue policy guidance, particularly as it affects performance measures, and adjustments to agency performance measures are worked out with OMB in advance. To avoid agencies that take higher risk cases being punished because they didn’t meet their performance measures we could work to negotiate performance measure adjustments for a couple of years to account for the President’s initiative.”

—Dan O’Brien, SSA

From Dialogue to Action: Where do we go from here?

This report presents many key themes that emerged from the Leadership Dialogue. Those themes include developing a greater understanding of the specific needs of homeless job seekers, the benefits of increased collaboration and cross-system planning, the critical role of dedicated resources and visible leadership, and the importance of incentives and performance measures that encourage (rather than penalize) the workforce investment system serving this population in mainstream workforce programs. The next steps are for agencies and individuals in the workforce investment and homeless services

system to take up some of the challenges posed by this report and further explore how our systems can do a better job at all levels. We hope that this report will be used by federal and state agencies and local level practitioners to address barriers, align public policy, and increase innovation to help more chronically homeless people gain employment and the social and economic benefits that come with it. Ending chronic homelessness will not be possible without commitment and innovation at every level.

We conclude the report with items on our joint “to do” list and ask that you consider

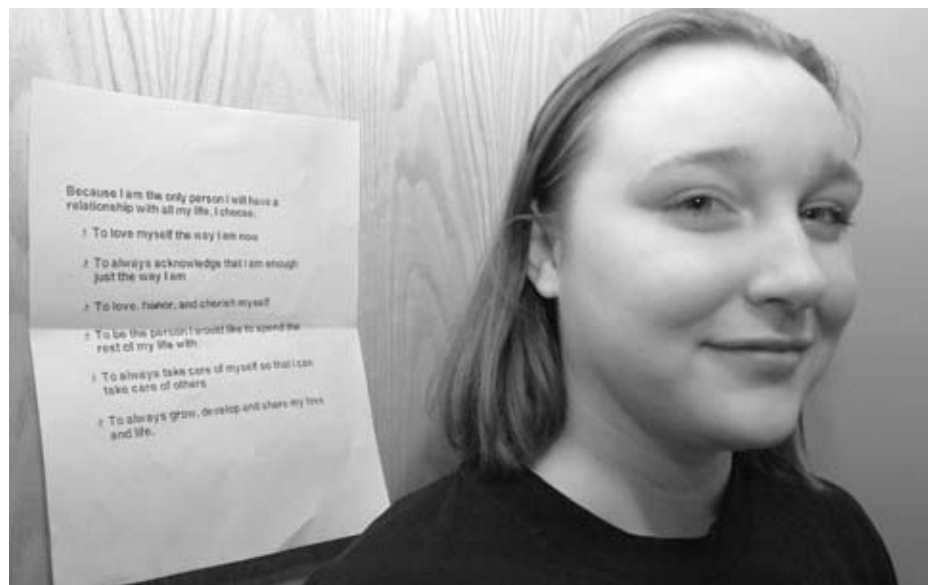
ways you can advance these tasks in your role as provider, government official, advocate, or researcher. These action steps are appropriate to include as work tasks in workforce investment and homeless planning efforts. They can be incorporated into existing state policy activities directed at ending chronic homelessness.

Most importantly, it is the people participating in this Leadership Dialogue along with their colleagues who need to champion employment services and take the action steps necessary to make a difference in the lives of people who are chronically homeless.

TO DO LIST

Learn about and disseminate information about successful programs and how to measure the outcomes of employment of chronically homeless people

- Improve data collection** at local One-Stops about the needs of homeless people in their areas and the numbers that they currently serve
- Count the numbers of homeless job seekers** served under the WIA system as well as those who enter WIA funded training, receive intensive services and retain employment to inform planning and strategies to improve service delivery
- Measure the economic impact of increased employment rates** of tenants on housing subsidies
- Convene employers, LWIBs, and other workforce partners** to learn about successful programs and to hear from employers what they need to support this work



TO DO LIST... continued

Improve planning and coordination between the workforce, disability benefits, and homeless servings systems

- Encourage and support local and state WIA plans** to address their role in ending chronic homelessness through employment
- Provide incentives and/or technical assistance** to state interagency councils on homelessness that focus on cross-systems planning for homeless job seekers
- Ensure that local Continuum of Care plans address their role** in supporting employment services through collaboration with One-Stop Career Centers.
- Consider planning a critical component of our work**, and fund planning activities
- Look at providing support for the creation of “boundary spanners”** (cross-system coordinators) at every level from federal to local to improve coordination
- Initiate a demonstration with SSA, DOL, and HUD** to address the challenges inherent in the processes of applying for SSI and the pursuit of employment
- Simplify and make HUD’s earned-income disregard for people with disabilities uniform** across all federally subsidized housing programs

Develop innovative ways to increase the resources for better serving chronically homeless people

- Explore establishing funding guidance, incentives, set-asides, targeted funds** and other creative mechanisms for encouraging more communities to provide employment services for chronically homeless.
- Ensure that current targeted funds that support employment efforts aren’t reprogrammed** to other homeless needs without efforts to replace them with appropriate workforce resources
- Engage those with power and authority over funding streams to target resources** to pay for employment services for people who are chronically homeless
- Provide SWIBs and LWIBs information about exemplary practices** in financing employment and training services targeting chronically homeless job seekers

Commit to being national leaders for the employment needs of chronically homeless people

- Support the President’s goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2012** and promote employment as a critical homelessness exit strategy
- Work within our agencies, communities and at the state and federal levels** to eliminate programmatic barriers to employment for chronically homeless people
- Hold leaders accountable for the goal to end chronic homelessness**, praising them when they do the right thing and challenging them when they don’t
- Work across agencies at the community, state, and federal levels** to create the systems changes needed to bring housing and employment together to meet chronically homeless people’s needs

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Grantees of the DOL and HUD Initiative to End Chronic Homelessness Through Employment and Housing

Boston, Massachusetts

The Boston Private Industry Council, in partnership with the City of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development, organized a coalition of 13 organizations representing the housing, disability, employment, employer, and veteran communities in a combined effort to coordinate permanent housing services with customized employment services to end the cycle of chronic homelessness. The HomeWork Project targets persons who are chronically homeless served within and outside mental health systems through assertive community outreach and engagement.

It provides 23 units of permanent supportive housing. Through this extensive collaboration, the project creates a blend of housing and employment services integrated with customized employment services. This effort has increased connections and capabilities of the One-Stop Career Centers and of other service systems to serve persons with disabilities who are chronically homeless. The initiative also seeks to change how the housing and workforce investment systems work together to meet the city and state's goal of ending chronic homelessness.

www.bpic.org

Featured Innovation: Leveraging alternative funding sources for employment including Food Stamps, Employment, and Training (FSET) program resources.

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Indianapolis, Indiana

The Indianapolis Private Industry Council, Inc. created a new "system of care" approach that combines and coordinates partners in the mainstream employment, treatment and housing systems. The Threshold Project offers 42 housing units subsidized by HUD Shelter Plus Care funding to people who are chronically homeless. These apartments are located in four small apartment buildings in a campus setting and are integrated with other market-rate units. Resource coordinators providing case management services and One-Stop employment coordinators placed at the housing site staff the housing grant. The project combines a stable housing platform from which tenants may launch their careers into preferred jobs in the area. Using a single-site model with access to One-Stop Career Center services, the Threshold

Project integrates case management, treatment and employment services funded by DOL to support its clientele in mainstream job seeking, placement, and training services. It has developed partnerships and seeks to leverage new resources, including partnerships with the Indiana State Vocational Rehabilitation and HealthNet, a federally qualified health center. Through this coordination of system services and resources, the Threshold Project partners hope to sustain and expand employment and training services as well as employment support systems such as housing to help end chronic homelessness in Indianapolis. Planning for a cross-systems summit is underway and an event is targeted for September 2006.

www.ipic.org/forcommunity/homeless.htm

Featured Innovation: Comprehensive, integrated single-site housing and employment services resulting in an entered employment rate of 70 percent and a 50 percent job retention rate for the period of January through December 2005.

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Los Angeles, California

Under the leadership of the **Workforce Development Division of the Community Development Department, City of Los Angeles**, 10 Los Angeles agencies representing the public and private community-based and faith-based sectors have joined together to better integrate the HUD permanent housing, mental health, and other workforce development programs serving persons with disabilities who are both chronically homeless and mentally ill. Through assertive outreach, "LA's Hope" identifies, engages, and supports a minimum of

76 people who are chronically homeless using a housing first/work first strategy. Customized employment services are provided at the career One-Stop and at the sites of the partner agencies and coordinated with supportive services in order to break the cycle of chronic homelessness.

www.lacity.org/CDD

Featured Innovation: One-Stop Portals are located at the 400-bed New Image Emergency Shelter and the 84-unit St. George Hotel, a supportive housing building on Skid Row. A One-Stop Portal providing self-directed job search, the EmployABILITY Center provides beginning computer and internet training, resume writing, and a variety of other workshops to assist the homeless in

employment-search activities. Approximately 163 individuals have found full or part-time employment.

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San Francisco, California

Under the leadership of the **Private Industry Council of San Francisco, Inc.**, the PIC of SF and its community partners provide housing first/work first services using scattered-site HUD supportive housing to offer "vocalized" housing to a minimum of 70 people who are chronically homeless in the Bayview community of San Francisco. The project, known as Hope House, is led by United Council of Human Services which brought together partners from the HUD supportive housing, SSA/TANF, Vocational Rehabilitation, and community-based homeless service providers to deliver vocalized housing in an effort to utilize the

area's workforce development system, including the area One-Stop Career Centers. Currently there are 67 people housed and 113 have been interviewed, with 15 job training placements and 78 employment placements. Services are provided to all project participants by an integrated service team, that consists of employment staff, housing case managers, vocational rehabilitation staff, a PAES/CAAP (general assistance) worker, and One-Stop Career Center staff.

www.picsf.org, www.sfgov.org/site/frame.asp?u=http://www.sfhsa.org/

Featured Innovation: Use of career readiness/life skills curriculum to help people who are chronically homeless access general assistance and employment supports.

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Portland, Oregon

Worksystems, Inc. leads a collaborative effort across five service organizations to coordinate permanent housing services through HUD and employment resources with customized employment services through DOL/ODEP in an effort to end the cycle of chronic homelessness within the Portland community. The Worksystems project includes 89 Shelter Plus Care subsidies supporting scattered-site apartments funded through its partner, the Housing Authority of Portland. Tenants are supported in this permanent housing by an assertive community treatment team approach managed by the lead service agency, Central City Concern (CCC), linked with the resources of the

West Portland One-Stop also operated by CCC. Another homeless assistance agency, JOIN, provides supportive services also linked to the One-Stop to some of the tenants in these housing units. The major program components are direct outreach and engagement into employment and housing using intensive case management practices, providing permanent housing, job development, placement, and supporting the principles and practices of Customized employment such as job carving, micro-enterprise development, individual development accounts, and peer mentors.

www.worksystems.org

Featured Innovation: Using a career mapping process for person-centered planning as a WIA core service at the West Portland One-

Stop Career Center. This model is also being implemented at SE Works, another Region 2 One-Stop.

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The Departments of Labor and Housing and Urban Development have made available technical assistance and training to assist these projects through agreements with the Corporation for Supportive Housing and Advocates for Human Potential.

Visit www.csh.org/cheta.

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