

Beyond Shelter



The Skid Row Families Demonstration Project

Year One Report

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The Skid Row Families Demonstration Project

Overview: This report covers Year One of the collaboration between Beyond Shelter, a California nonprofit agency, and the L.A. County Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Public Social Services (DPSS), Mental Health (DMH), Health Services (DHS), Public Health (DPH), and the Chief Executive Office (CEO), to operate the Skid Row Families Demonstration Project.

For the purposes of the Demonstration Project, Skid Row has been defined as having the following geographic boundary: Third Street (3rd St.) to the North, Alameda Street to the East, Main Street to the West, and Seventh (7th) Street to the South.

The Demonstration Project is intended to illustrate the social and economic benefits of coordinating existing services and systems in innovative ways to end family homelessness, particularly for a subgroup of families who cycle in and out of homelessness, who often have multiple unmet special needs, and who tend to be isolated and alienated from social service systems and family support. The majority of families who are participating in the Demonstration Project sought shelter in Skid Row as a “last resort,” after utilizing emergency shelter services in other parts of L.A. City or County, or being denied access to services and resources because the homeless services system has reached capacity, or after exhausting CalWORKs homeless assistance and other L.A. County programs without a resolution to their homeless state. Key to the success of the Demonstration Project is the forging of new ways of working together between public and private sector initiatives focused on ending and preventing family homelessness in L.A. County. It is expected that “lessons learned” from the Demonstration Project will help to impact both public policy and practice in Skid Row and L.A. County at-large.

This report is divided into five parts: A Statement of the Problem; Description of Families Served; Program Implementation and Outcomes; Challenges in Working with the Target Population; and Lessons Learned/Recommendations for New Program Design and Implementation.

Background: The basic program design for the Skid Row Families Demonstration Project was adapted from Beyond Shelter’s core program, “Housing First” for Homeless Families. Founded in 1988 by Tanya Tull, Beyond Shelter introduced an innovation in the field at the time: moving homeless families into permanent housing *as quickly as possible*, with the provision of the services traditionally provided in transitional housing provided instead *after the family has moved into their own housing*. Since inception, the basic program methodology has helped to transform both public policy and practice on a national scale. The Housing First program model reduces family trauma and increases family stability by focusing on permanent housing. The “housing first” methodology provides a means for high-risk, multi-problem homeless families to move into permanent housing and continue to receive individualized, home-based case management support as

they regain stable living patterns or gain them for the first time. Once families are in permanent housing, they are connected to mainstream systems and services in the community at-large, to address their longer-term needs. Although many homeless families require intensive support for a longer period of time after moving to permanent housing, others are able to function independently with very little support after the program assists them through the first few months. The home-visitation model utilized by Beyond Shelter offers an individualized and structured plan of action for often alienated, multi-problem and troubled families, while providing at the same time a responsive and caring support system. The program model has been adapted for this collaboration with L.A. County.

The original goal of the Demonstration Project was to relocate five hundred (500) homeless families from Los Angeles' Skid Row to emergency and short-term housing (Phase I), with four hundred and fifty (450) families subsequently moving into and stabilizing in permanent housing (Phase II). Once families were in permanent housing, Beyond Shelter would provide home-based case management for six months to help each family rebuild their lives. To facilitate the move into permanent housing, the Project received an allocation of 300 Section 8 vouchers from the Housing Authority, City of Los Angeles (HACLA) and 50 Section 8 vouchers from the Housing Authority, County of Los Angeles (HACoLA).

As a Demonstration Project, it was anticipated that modifications would be made to the program design during implementation, as challenges and new issues were identified. One major program modification occurred in the Third Quarter in response to major challenges that emerged during the first six months. These challenges included (1) difficulty accessing vital documents for many participant families, causing delays in Section 8 applications, (2) long delays in Section 8 processing and issuance by HACLA, and (3) the fact that 200 of 500 families to be served were unable to get into the overcrowded system of emergency shelters and transitional housing while waiting for Section 8 vouchers and the move into permanent housing. As a result of these challenges and their impact on the project budget, enrollment was limited to 300 families rather than 500 families.

In designing this program, Beyond Shelter anticipated that many of the families in the target population would be hard-to-serve. Such families would include those experiencing extended homelessness and who had been terminated from or voluntarily left other homeless programs, those who would exhibit service needs of an intensity and nature that might normally make them ineligible for other programs, and those who refused to participate in other programs. The agency envisioned the Demonstration Project, therefore, as a litmus test of how to structure and coordinate interagency partnerships and overall services delivery to effectively respond to the crisis intervention, short-term housing and permanent housing needs of a hard-to-serve population. Lessons learned from this endeavor would be disseminated to relevant stakeholders in order to shape the future of program and policy design for a subgroup of homeless families in L.A. County, those who seek emergency services in Skid Row when they cannot access services and shelter in other parts of the City and County of Los Angeles.

SECTION I:

A STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Over the past few years, Los Angeles County has experienced an increase in family homelessness. Comprised primarily of single female-headed households with dependent children, the vast majority of adults in homeless families are also CalWORKs clients whose primary source of income is cash aid and Food Stamps. Although job loss, domestic violence, substance abuse or other crisis may precipitate a homeless episode, the primary cause is the lack of affordable housing. Without access to affordable housing or rent subsidies, many CalWORKs families are at high risk for homelessness.

Once homeless, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for many families to move back into permanent housing on their own. The problem has been exacerbated over the past few years by Welfare Reform (time limits and sanctions) and difficulty accessing Section 8 rent subsidies. As a result, a subgroup of families who lose their housing are remaining homeless for extended periods of time or are experiencing multiple episodes of homelessness and ongoing housing instability.

According to service providers, homeless families today appear more overwhelmed and depressed than homeless families in previous years, with many refusing services that are offered or isolating themselves from services. It has become increasingly difficult to intervene and to engage them, in order to take the steps necessary to help resolve their current homeless crisis. Further demoralizing families are crisis intervention and emergency shelter services that often recycle them through the system without positive outcomes, i.e. without movement into permanent housing, in the end. Without rental subsidies, many families continue to recycle through the existing “continuum of care” for months and often years at a time, an experience that contributes to their feelings of hopelessness and despair.

The primarily female heads-of-household in homeless families often suffer from general depression and many have histories of domestic violence and/or drug or alcohol abuse. Family dynamics are often unstable or stressful, money management and household management skills may be weak, and extended family support or other social support systems have been exhausted or are non-existent. Additionally, agencies working with homeless families for many years believe that many homeless mothers suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, occurring in conjunction with related disorders such as depression, substance abuse, problems of memory and cognition, and other problems of physical and mental health. (The disorder is also associated with impairment of the person's ability to function in social or family life, including occupational instability, marital problems and divorces, family discord, and difficulties in parenting.)

The multiple needs of homeless families necessitate service integration and improved coordination both within the homeless services delivery system and also between that system and related systems. However, the homeless services delivery system in Los Angeles County can be best characterized as fragmented. Because public and private agencies do not coordinate their services, families are often cycled from one provider to another, with some homeless families eventually becoming “chronically homeless.”

With the numbers of homeless families in Los Angeles County increasing, as new families lose their housing and currently homeless families fail to move back into permanent housing, there has been a corresponding increase in families who could be termed “chronically homeless.” Most visible in the Skid Row/downtown L.A. area, they may also be found in significant numbers in areas of South L.A., the San Gabriel Valley, the San Fernando Valley and the City of Long Beach. These families are often very transient, moving from one region of L.A. to the other in search of emergency shelter services, or pay for a few days at a time in transient hotels and motels until their money runs out, or stay short-term with family or friends. It is not unusual for families to participate in a variety of emergency shelter programs during the year, with no resolution of their homelessness. Many highly-utilized programs provide emergency shelter without a plan for, nor assistance in, obtaining permanent housing.

The increase in homeless families seeking shelter at Skid Row missions can be attributed primarily to the fact that emergency shelters and transitional housing programs throughout L.A. County cannot accommodate the numbers of families in need. With many shelters allowing families to remain for longer periods of time, long waiting lists for entry, and increasingly stringent entry requirements, thousands of homeless families cannot get into shelter. Additionally, programs providing shelter through hotel vouchers to specific target populations, are also overloaded and often run out of vouchers during the year.

Families encountered in the Skid Row area have often experienced multiple episodes of homelessness over a period of years. They appear to exhibit greater signs of emotional distress than homeless families served in other regions of L.A. County. Parents display symptoms of depression, substance abuse, problems of memory and cognition, and other problems of physical and mental health.

Many parents are abusing drugs or have histories of substance abuse. Others are experiencing current domestic violence and/or current child maltreatment or have histories of domestic violence or child maltreatment. It is suspected that a significant number of parents have undiagnosed or untreated mental health problems, including undiagnosed or untreated dual disorders. Family dynamics are often unstable and support from extended family or other social support systems has been exhausted. Children display physical and developmental disabilities and/or delays, and mental and emotional problems, all closely intertwined with their parents’ circumstances and deeply affecting their current and future health and well-being.

SECTION II:

DESCRIPTION OF FAMILIES IN THE DEMONSTRATION

The target demographic for the Skid Row Families Demonstration Project was homeless families with children under 18 years of age (including one adult and one child), who met one of the following criteria: the household was living temporarily in a shelter in Skid Row; was originally encountered in Skid Row and provided a hotel voucher by an agency in Skid Row; or was encountered in Skid Row and could demonstrate that they had no safe shelter for that night. Families walking directly into Beyond Shelter’s offices *from Skid Row* were also eligible for enrollment. All families enrolled in the Demonstration Project were screened and assessed by the Skid Row Assessment Team (SRAT – comprised of DPSS, DCFS, DMH, and DPH), either prior to referral to Beyond Shelter for enrollment or, among “walk-ins,” after referral to the SRAT from Beyond Shelter.

Once referred to Beyond Shelter, families underwent an extensive intake, screening, and assessment process. This process yielded a wealth of information on the histories and needs of these families.

Note to the reader: *In describing the families, this section of the report lists the total number of cases, as indicated by N=..., for each observed variable for which Beyond Shelter collected demographic and historical information on the families. Even though the total number of families enrolled in the Demonstration Project is 300, in most cases, the reported findings are for fewer families, due a combination of factors. These factors include: family refusal to answer particular questions; staff inability to administer program forms to families who dropped out of the program or who missed appointments to complete the forms; and staff failure to thoroughly complete forms.*

TABLE 1. Select Characteristics of Families at Intake and Enrollment

Characteristic	Percent	Number
Race/Ethnicity (N=293)		
African-American	69.6	204
Hispanic/Latino	20.5	60
Caucasian	4.1	12
Biracial	2.4	7
Native American	1.7	5
Other	1.0	3
Asian Pacific Islander	0.7	2
Family Type (N=252)		
Single-Parent	85.7	216
Single Fathers (N=268)		
With children under 12	6.7	18
With teenage children	1.5	4
Average (Mean) Age, Head of Household (N=254)		34.71 years (sd=9.27)
Average (Mean) Number of Children (N=287)		2.06 (sd=1.22)
On CalWORKs (N=295)	76.6	226

The Demonstration Project is serving households that share many of the same demographic characteristics as homeless families generally. Enrolled families are predominantly single-parent, female-headed households, the majority of whom are dependent on CalWORKs. The typical family has two children in the parent’s custody, with a third child either not in the custody or independent of the parent. Racial minorities are most prevalent, with over 90% of families being African American or Latino and just 4% Caucasian.

TABLE 2. Length of Current Homelessness Reported at Intake (N=290)

Time	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Month	16.55	48
1 to 3 Months	31.72	92
More than 3 But Less than 6 Months	11.72	34
6 to 12 Months	26.21	76
More than 12 But Less than 24 Months	5.17	15
24 Months or More	8.62	25
TOTAL: 100%		290

At the time they were enrolled in the Demonstration Project, approximately 60% of families had been homeless less than 6 months, with 48% of all households reporting episodes lasting 3 months or less. Over a quarter of families were homeless anywhere from 6 months up to one year. Almost 15% of families had experienced homelessness for more than 1 year.

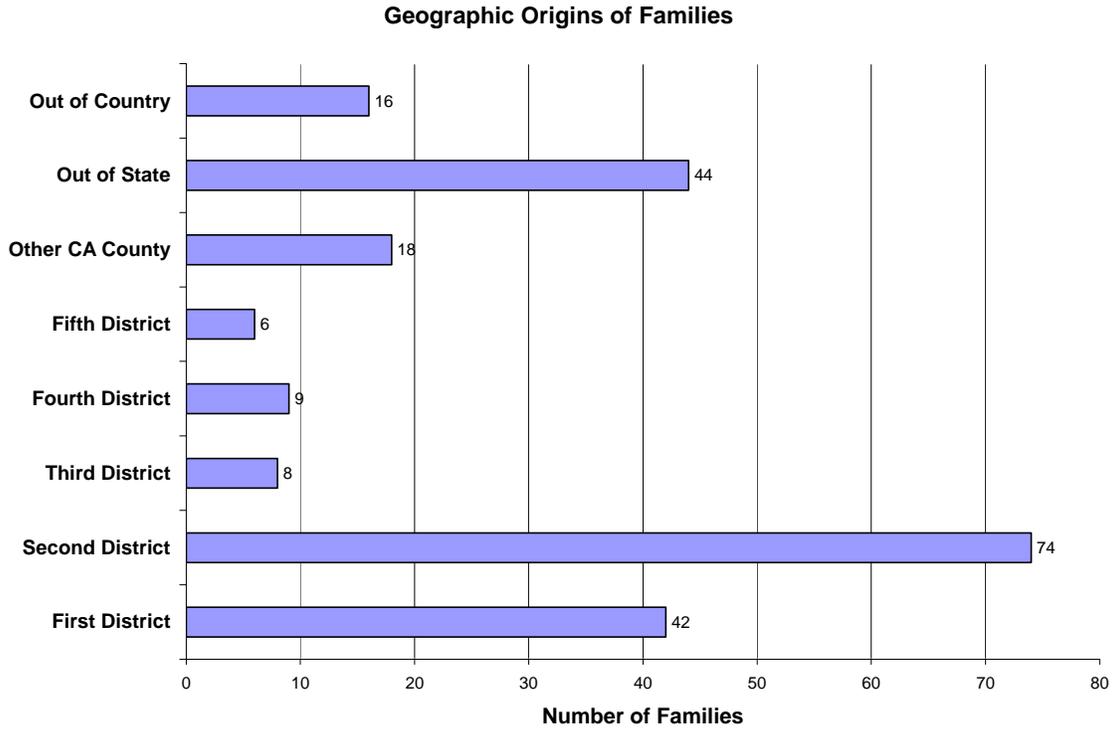
The average (mean) length of homelessness for all families was 8.32 months. While this average is greater than the average of 5.7 months as reported for families by the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ 2007 Report, “Status Report on Hunger & Homelessness,” the longer period of homelessness for families in the Demonstration Project is not surprising given the high cost of permanent housing in the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area relative to other localities.¹ If these families had not been referred to Beyond Shelter for permanent housing assistance, it is likely that many, if not most, of them would have experienced prolonged homelessness due to exorbitant housing costs and the dearth of affordable housing locally.

Where Participating Families Came From

In order to better understand where families enrolled in the Demonstration Project had been living before coming into the Skid Row area, a review was made of previous residency. Data was collected from the files of 218 of 300 families, which indicated the most recent stable addresses for families before coming to Skid Row to seek services.

The addresses were obtained primarily from self-reported information provided by the families during their application process for Section 8. During the application process, families are required to provide a five-year history of previous residences/addresses. Below is a visual representation of the data collected:

Figure 1.



The origins of the sampled families are quite similar to the findings reported in the 2005 Homeless CalWORKs report.ⁱⁱ In the Demonstration Project sample, which includes both CalWORKs recipients and non-recipients, unlike the 2005 report, 19% of families originated from the First District, 34% from the Second District, 4% from the Third and Fourth Districts, and 3% from the Fifth District. In addition, 8% of families came from a California city outside of Los Angeles County, 20% came from a city outside of the state, and 7% were from another country.

The 2005 DPSS report revealed that 22% of homeless CalWORKs recipients lived in the First District, 44% in the Second District, 8% in the Third District, 12% in the Fourth District, and 14% in the Fifth District.

The Demonstration Project data are consistent with the 2005 data and suggest that while some homeless families may sooner or later migrate to the Skid Row area for assistance, those families become homeless in and originate from other parts of Los Angeles County or parts outside of the County. Among families who resided in and became homeless in Los Angeles County, the majority of those cases were concentrated in the First and Second Supervisorial Districts.

TABLE 3. County Residency and Time in Skid Row

Characteristic	Length of Time or Percent
Average Length of Residency in L.A. County (N=290)	
Mean	17.74 years (sd=14.735)
Median*	20 years
Average Time Spent in Skid Row (N=279)	
Mean	165.33 days (sd=447.708)
Median	30 days

*Note: Median values are reported in the table along with means owing to the presence of extreme values that positively skew the data, particularly for time spent in Skid Row. In such cases, the median is a more useful measure of central tendency to describe what is “typical” of participating families.

The majority of families are long-time residents of Los Angeles County. One half of families have lived in the County for over 20 years, while just one quarter have lived in the area for less than 2 years. Thirty-eight families or 13% had moved to the area within 6 months of their date of Intake.

Half of families had spent less than 30 days in Skid Row before enrollment in the Demonstration Project. The half that had spent more time in Skid Row included 25% that had been homeless in that neighborhood for more than five months. There was a positive relationship (though somewhat weak) between length of homelessness and time spent (homeless) in Skid Row. Generally speaking, the longer a family was homeless, the more time they had spent in Skid Row. ($r=.333$, $p<.001$).

Families’ Housing Histories Are Highly Unstable

The thorough Intake and Assessment process each family underwent upon enrollment into the Demonstration Project clearly revealed that the lives of these families leading up to and at the time of referral could be best described as highly unstable. Based on a review of the narrative provided on each Intake Form, this instability manifested itself prior to contact with Beyond Shelter in numerous ways, including frequent moves, recurrent homelessness, and relationship difficulties with friends and relatives.

Table 4 illustrates the residential instability that was common for many families prior to contact with Beyond Shelter.

TABLE 4. Longest You Have Lived in One Apartment or House As An Adult With Your Children (N=244)

Time	Percent	Number
Less than 6 Months	12.70	31
6-12 Months	15.57	38
More than 12 But Less than 24 Months	13.93	34
More than 24 Months	57.79	141

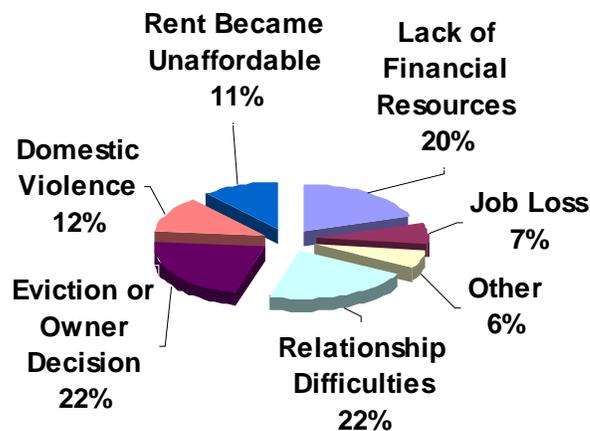
Less than 60% of families had lived in any one apartment or house for more than 2 years. More than one quarter of families had never lived at the same address for more than 12 months, with about 15% of families never having lived at one address continuously beyond 6 months. The majority of parents experienced much, if not all, of their housing instability as adults with their children in Los Angeles County. The mean length of residency for all families at time of enrollment was about 18 years.

Given the prevalence of housing disruptions in the lives of these families, it is not surprising that 47% of parents (n=139) reported one or more prior episodes of homelessness with their children. Of these multiply homeless families, 61% had one previous homeless episode, while 24% had 2-3 prior episodes.

While one might expect the length of continuous residence to be associated with prior homelessness, bivariate analysis revealed no relationship between these two variables. An association may still exist, however, and might become apparent if the analysis were to make finer distinctions between subgroups of families as far as housing tenure.

Figure 2.

Causes of Homelessness (N=264)



Families cited a range of factors that led them to become homeless, but the principal causes were economic in nature. Eighteen percent of families experienced financial crises, including rent increases, job loss, and unexpected reductions in household income (e.g., public benefits cut or reduced; roommate moved out) that led to their housing loss.

Twenty percent of families reported reasons related to being asked to leave their residences, including evictions or lease terminations, buildings being sold or converted to condominiums, or the friend or relative with whom they were staying was evicted or asked to leave. Another 20% could not locate affordable housing and cited a lack of financial resources as the cause of their homelessness.

Relationship difficulties accounted for 22% of homelessness, as families wore out their welcome with friends, relatives, and roommates due most often to interpersonal conflicts but also due to the financial strain that they posed to the leaseholder or homeowner. A thorough review of Intake records revealed that it was common for these families to “hop” from one relative’s or friend’s place to another until they finally ran out of options and ended up literally homeless.

Domestic violence caused 12% of families to become homeless. Reviews of Intake records, however, showed that a significant yet unknown number of heads-of-household who cited another reason for their current episode of homelessness had experienced past domestic violence, which precipitated and often caused prior homeless episodes. Nearly 4 in 10 heads-of-household (n=115) reported past victimization.

Substance abuse by the head-of-household or a significant other appeared to be a cause of homelessness for only 6 families, based on self-reported data, but this is likely an undercount. Poverty and the lack of affordable housing are often inter-related with behavioral healthcare issues, including drug and alcohol misuse.

The reasons given for homelessness are similar to the causes cited in national and local research. Shelter Partnership’s recent study, for instance, of the emergency shelter and transitional housing system in L.A. County found that 33% of family service users became homeless due to eviction, 27% due to a lack of financial resources, 15% due to housing instability/family discord, and 11% due to domestic violence.ⁱⁱⁱ

A Significant Number of Families Possess Characteristics That Often Make It Difficult To Access Emergency Shelter Services

In the last year, Beyond Shelter and other service providers have noted an increase in the number of families who cannot access emergency shelter services due to presenting needs, family makeup, or a lack of program space. Initial efforts by Beyond Shelter to place families enrolled in the Demonstration Project into emergency shelter programs were thwarted for these very reasons. Recent research sheds some light on this phenomenon.

A 2006 study of the homeless services system in Los Angeles County indicated that emergency shelter and transitional housing programs can accommodate only 24% of the nightly homeless family population. More than 8 out of 10 programs reported having to regularly turn away families.^{iv} The Los Angeles study also revealed that programs commonly deny entry to families with special needs. Nearly one quarter of programs surveyed would not serve parents who had a psychiatric disability or who were taking psychotropic medications. Over 40% required abstinence for a specific period of time, averaging 7 months for such programs. The study also found that 40% of programs had instituted tighter admission criteria over a three-year period from 2002 to 2005, making it harder for families with special needs to access short-term housing programs.

Experience and research have also demonstrated that family makeup influences program admission. Families with teenage boys, for instance, are routinely denied access to shelter. The 2006 U.S. Conference of Mayors report found that in 55% of the cities surveyed families were forced to split up in order to find shelter.^v Pregnant women and women with newborn babies are also routinely denied entrance into emergency shelters and transitional housing programs. The same is true for large families, two-parent households, single fathers with children, and undocumented families.

A significant number of families in the Demonstration Project have special needs and/or family compositions that are typical of families who commonly are denied access to short-term housing programs, including emergency shelter facilities and transitional housing programs.

TABLE 5. Distribution of Family Makeup and Select Special Needs by Percent and Number Among Enrolled Families

Characteristic	Percent	Number
Four or More Children (N=288)	29.20	84
Two-Parent Household (N=252)	13.89	35
One or More Undocumented Members (N=242)	12.39	30
Single-Father (N=283)	6.40	18
Mother with Newborn Baby (N=283)	6.00	17
Third Trimester Pregnancy (N=283)	3.53	10
One or More Teenage Boys (N=300) (Defined as age 12 years or older)	19.00	58
Chronic Health Condition (N=295)	24.75	73
Mental or Physical Disability (N=295) (Parent)	23.05	68
Disability: Physical, Mental, Developmental (Child) (N=283)	8.48	24
Current Domestic Violence (N=295) (i.e., less than 90 days)	5.76	17
Active S.A. or Short-Term Recovery (N=295) (i.e., less than 6 months)	4.07	12

As the data and prior research suggest, a significant number of families enrolled in the Demonstration Project might not have had alternative emergency shelter options if not for the intervention of the Skid Row Assessment Team and their referral of the families to Beyond Shelter for immediate relocation out of Skid Row and into temporary housing, including motels.

Information collected at Intake lends support to this position. When asked whether they had tried in the 30 days leading up to contact with Beyond Shelter to access emergency shelter or transitional housing but were turned away, nearly one in five families (n=55, 18.6%) reported being turned away by an emergency shelter program, while almost 10% of families (n=23, 7.8%) were turned away by a transitional housing program.

Though an analysis of the reasons given for being turned away was not conducted for this report, admission denials due to family makeup or presenting needs likely explain why a substantial number of families were turned away by programs. Lack of program space would also explain some of the findings. After being denied access or turned away by programs at full capacity, it's probable that a significant number of families went to Skid Row because they had no other alternative.

The Demonstration Project, therefore, appears to be serving a significant number of families that are typically underserved or are considered hard-to-serve by the homeless services system.

Family Profiles Include Common Barriers to Permanent Housing

Most families in the Demonstration Project possess one or more barriers to permanent housing placement and retention. The barriers are presented in the following table.

TABLE 6. Barriers to Permanent Housing Placement and Retention

Characteristic	Percent	Number
Evictions (N=268)		
One	21.6	58
Two or More	2.6	7
Family Size (4 or more children) (N=288)	29.2	84
Worked in last 2 years (N=295)		
Yes	49.2	145
No	50.8	150
Felony Record (N=270)	9.3	25
Average (mean) income, inclusive of cash aid, income, and food stamps		
All Families (N=283)		\$754 (sd=\$488)
Those on CalWORKs (N=204)		\$743 (sd=\$414)
Those Not on CalWORKs (N=58)*		\$804 (sd=\$688)

*While the total number of families who answered the question about total monthly income during Intake was 283, the total number of households who gave an answer to that question and one about CalWORKs receipt was only 262.

Families in the Demonstration Project possess barriers to permanent housing that are common to low-income and homeless families generally.

Nearly one quarter of enrolled families have been evicted from a prior rental unit. Eviction notices adversely impact their credit record and serve as a “black eye” on that record for a minimum of seven years.

Even if a family does not have an eviction on their credit record, the unstable housing histories of many of these families, as illustrated in Table 4, is another deterrent to permanent housing. Landlords do not look favorably upon prospective tenants who do not possess a demonstrated ability to maintain a lease. Spotty rental resumes, therefore, pose another barrier for families to permanent housing.

Almost 30% of families have four or more children. Larger families with limited incomes typically have greater difficulty locating housing that is both sufficient for their needs and affordable, because larger rental units generally are more expensive.

Nearly one in ten heads-of-household has a felony record. Felony convictions disqualify low-income families from most Section 8 programs, due to HUD’s “One Strike and You’re Out” policy. Moreover, private landlords, who usually conduct criminal background checks, are hesitant to rent to ex-offenders. Depending on the nature of the crime, the same is true of many nonprofit landlords who operate subsidized housing projects. A 2005 survey (non-random) of 15 affordable housing providers in Los Angeles County revealed that 47% of nonprofit landlords did not accept ex-offenders whose felony convictions stemmed from violent crimes. Thirty-three percent of agencies did not accept ex-offenders on probation or parole.^{vi}

The greatest barrier affecting all families enrolled in the Demonstration Project is their meager monthly incomes. The average income (combined earned and unearned income, cash aid, and food stamps, where applicable) for all families was just over \$750 at Intake, while the average income of families on welfare was \$743. Given that these totals are inclusive of food stamp allocations, at least for households that receive that public benefit, the actual disposable income which most families have available to them to pay for housing (and other non-food related items) is even lower than the observed average.

These income findings must be viewed with caution, however, due to the relatively large variation among reported family income (e.g., $sd=\$414$ for CalWORKs families). Among CalWORKs families, for instance, 24% of households (48 out of 204) reported monthly income of less than \$500. The average income for these families was just \$327.

Similarly, 23% of families on welfare reported monthly income that was greater than \$950, with an average income for these 46 households of \$1381. Family size and sanction

status are some of the likely reasons for the wide distribution of incomes among all families on CalWORKs.

Regardless of the total income a family reported at Intake, all households clearly cannot afford permanent housing in Los Angeles County. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition's latest "Out of Reach" report, the Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Los Angeles County in 2007 was \$1269. A Minimum wage earner in the County would have to labor 145 hours per week in order to pay no more than 30% of their income for this size unit.^{vii}

Employment, or, more accurately, the lack of employment, poses another barrier to permanent housing. At the time of Intake, one in two heads-of-household had not worked in the last 2 years.

Given the very limited incomes of families and the high cost of living in this region, even for families who have subsidized housing (e.g., Section 8), supplementing household income through employment or other means (e.g., SSI or SSDI for those unable to work) becomes very important if families are to maintain permanent housing once Beyond Shelter has assisted them in obtaining a rental unit. This is particularly true for CalWORKs families who face time limits on welfare receipt.

Among families participating in the program, parents who graduated from high school appear to have better employment prospects, assuming recent work history is a predictor of future employment, and, in that sense, possess fewer barriers to permanent housing retention. High school graduates were significantly more likely to have held a job during the 24 months leading up to enrollment in the Demonstration Project than non-graduates ($\chi^2=5.634$; $p<.018$). Approximately 47% of heads-of-household or 138 parents out of 295 graduated from high school (5 parents did not answer the Intake question about high school graduation).

Individually and collectively, these barriers place participating families at a competitive disadvantage in the rental housing market. Given the low vacancy rates that prevail throughout Los Angeles County (generally 3-5%), participating families must compete for limited housing opportunities with other low-income and moderate-income households who have better credit, rental, and/or legal records. These barriers would also seem to explain why many families have experienced multiple episodes of housing instability and homelessness prior to coming into contact with Beyond Shelter.

SECTION III:

YEAR ONE - PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION & OUTCOMES

Intake, Screening & Enrollment Into the Demonstration Project

Three hundred (300) homeless families were referred to and enrolled in the Demonstration Project from Skid Row during Year One. These included 216 families referred directly by the Skid Row Assessment Team, 59 families referred from the Beyond Shelter backlog of Skid Row families provided emergency services in the Fall of 2006¹, and 25 families who came to Beyond Shelter’s offices directly from Skid Row. The initial screening by the Skid Row Assessment Team, including the Department of Mental Health, Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Public Social Services, and Department of Public Health, provided Beyond Shelter with a basic overview of the specific details pertinent to each referred family. Each Departmental agency representative entered their findings on the family into the PHASE database. PHASE then became the common resource to identify the history of public social services for each family.

The following table breaks down the frequency of entrance for clients per category (SRAT Referral vs. Walk Ins vs. Backlog) by month:

Month	SRAT	Walk In	Backlog	Totals by Month
January	26	0	1	27
February	15	2	11	28
March	33	3	28	64
April	16	2	11	29
May	35	11	5	51
June	49	3	0	52
July	28	2	1	31
August	7	2	1	10
September	2	0	0	2
October	7	0	0	7
November	0	0	0	0
December	0	0	0	0
Totals by Category	216	25	59	300

The majority of homeless families referred to the Demonstration Project were relocated outside the Skid Row area into short-term housing the same day or within 24 hours, unless they chose to remain at the Union Rescue Mission or other temporary housing program until relocation to permanent housing.

¹ Refer to page 19 for a description of the Skid Row Families Pilot Project.

Screening by Beyond Shelter Led to the Identification of Previously Undetected Special Needs

During screening and assessments at Beyond Shelter, major effort was made to corroborate the information collected by the SRAT. In addition to reviewing L.A. County DPSS PHASE information, personal information about families was verified through social security numbers, birth certificates, marriage certificates or death certificates (when applicable), proof of source of income, school enrollment verifications, and child immunization records.

Upon intake at Beyond Shelter, staff focused not only on assessing the specific needs presented by the PHASE reporting, but also on identifying other special needs that were not readily apparent. As a result, deeper issues were often uncovered, some related and some unrelated to the results of the SRAT report on the family. In many cases, immediate referrals for specialized services were made at the time of intake for services and resources that Beyond Shelter was unable to provide directly. These included referrals for domestic violence intervention and counseling, health care, DCFS intervention, immigration issues, and children’s issues. All referrals to outside agencies made at intake were carefully documented so that the assigned Crisis Case Manager could then follow through.

During the initial intake, a motel voucher was processed for each family and staff assisted the families in relocating to a motel outside the Skid Row area. The majority of families were relocated from Skid Row that same day or within 24 hours.

Reporting Categories	SRAT Referral	Walk In	BEYOND SHELTER Backlog	TOTALS
Number of Clients	216	25	59	300
Families relocated to a hotel outside the Skid Row area within 24 hours of program entrance	182	23	23	228
Families relocated into emergency shelter	1	0	30	31
Families who were already in emergency shelter (i.e. 120-day)	13	2	2	17
Families who refused relocation out of SKID ROW area	15	0	1	16
Families where head-of-household was placed in treatment program	0	0	3	3
Families who failed to show up for intake	4	0	0	4
Families who showed up for intake but failed to show up at the hotel and are Missing In Action (MIA)	2	0	0	2

Assessment As an Ongoing Process of Engagement and Disclosure

Self-reporting by the head-of-household is a crucial part of the assessment process. At intake the special needs of the family began to materialize. Ongoing case management, as trust developed, provided the safe forum for the apprehensive families to begin revealing their issues, which resulted ultimately in their current or historical homelessness. Apprehension, fear of authority, and fear of consequences for disclosure of problems or issues were addressed over time, as the relationship to the case manager and Beyond Shelter as a whole developed.

Beyond Shelter's approach to case management has historically operated on the fundamental tenet that housing is a basic human right. With this in mind, participants in Beyond Shelter programs do not have to explain or disguise their situation in order to obtain permanent housing. As a result, their special needs and personal problems can be identified and meaningful interventions can be applied. For some families, movement towards improved social and/or economic well-being is a slow process, particularly as new problems or issues are identified that were not previously disclosed or apparent.

“High Tolerance” Program with Two Distinct Yet Flexible Components

The Skid Row Families Demonstration Project is comprised of two distinct yet overlapping program components: (1) *the Crisis Intervention Program – Phase I*, which includes emergency and crisis intervention services and temporary housing, and (2) *the Housing First Program – Phase II*, which includes movement into permanent housing and the provision of individualized case management both *before and after* the move into permanent housing, to help families stabilize.

Due to the diversity of special needs and strengths among the target population, it was anticipated that families participating in the Demonstration Project would progress through the various program components in an individualized manner. Although efforts were made in the original program design to process families through the two program components as quickly as possible, a variety of outside factors and extenuating circumstances prevented the majority of families from moving quickly through the various steps required for a successful move into permanent, affordable housing.

Additionally, as a “high tolerance” demonstration project targeting families who are typically refused services by other homeless programs, or themselves refuse to participate in services when they are offered, dysfunctional behavior and/or noncompliance with program requirements does not necessarily result in immediate termination of services.

PHASE I

THE CRISIS INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Upon enrollment into the Demonstration Project, families were immediately referred to the *Crisis Intervention Program*, which provided immediate and temporary short-term housing through hotel vouchers, placement in emergency shelters in the community at-large, or other temporary housing options (including master-leased apartments²). Within 48 hours of enrollment, each family was assigned a Crisis Case Manager who was responsible for the family's health and well-being for approximately 30-60 days. In the majority of cases, the Crisis Case Manager met with each family within the first week of enrollment for further screening and assessment. At those meetings, each family was assessed for High, Medium or Low Intensity Service Needs. The meetings occurred either at the motel in which the family had been placed or at Beyond Shelter's offices at 207 S. Broadway.

In addressing the immediate needs of each family, Crisis Case Managers provided participants with food vouchers, bus tokens, clothing, strollers for their children, diapers, baby supplies, household cleaning products, shampoo, and other hygiene items. Families were often provided suitcases to replace plastic garbage bags in which they had carried their belongings. Parents were transported to appointments when public transportation was difficult or to ensure that they followed through on a referral. To ensure child welfare and safety, families with substance abuse histories, psychiatric disabilities, DCFS histories, or in which children had special needs, were also referred to Beyond Shelter's Children's Services Specialists for interventions and referrals.

Crisis Case Managers attempted to have contact with high-intensity clients on a weekly basis, either by phone or in person. For moderate or low-intensity clients, the case manager attempted to have contact every two weeks. Often parents would not follow through on referrals or scheduled appointments with the case manager and contact would not occur. Because so many families had active crises in need of immediate attention, many families were seen on a weekly basis regardless of the level of need identified in the initial assessment. Meetings with heads-of-household occurred either at their temporary place of residence or at Beyond Shelter's offices until a particular situation had been stabilized.

² A master-leased apartment is one in which a third party, in this case Beyond Shelter, is the leaseholder, rather than the household occupying the unit. In the Demonstration Project, Beyond Shelter has held the leases on all such units (utilizing them as "emergency shelter") and the families have been considered "guests," who have signed and been bound by short-term housing agreements with the agency that stipulated their responsibilities with regard to physical maintenance, financial liability for damages, drug use, violence, and overnight visitors.

Problems Accessing Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing

In the original program design, it was expected that approximately 200 of 500 families during the year would be relocated from hotels and motels into existing emergency shelters and transitional housing programs located throughout L.A. County, where they would remain until Section 8 vouchers were issued. However, it quickly became apparent that the availability of emergency shelters and transitional housing had decreased significantly during 2006 and 2007. The lack of shelter beds for families in the community at-large seriously impacted the number of families who could be served by the Skid Row Families Demonstration Project during the year, as indicated earlier, and the number served was decreased from 500 to 300 families, as a result.

Impact of the LAHSA-funded Skid Row Families Pilot Project (2006)

The fact that shelters and transitional housing programs could not accommodate families enrolled into the Demonstration Project can be partly attributed to the *Skid Row Families Pilot Project* administered by Beyond Shelter from May–October 2006, and funded by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) as a precursor to the Demonstration Project. During the six-month period of the Skid Row Families Pilot Project, approximately 300 homeless families were referred to Beyond Shelter from Skid Row, through both the L.A. County Skid Row Outreach Team and the Weingart Homeless Access Center. Families were provided immediate assistance in relocating to hotels outside the Skid Row area and received crisis intervention services at the same time. Approximately 200 of the 300 participating families were enrolled into Beyond Shelter's regular Housing First Program and assisted in relocating to emergency shelters and transitional housing in the community at-large, while Section 8 vouchers were processed. During 2007, many of the families participating in the earlier program received their Section 8 vouchers and were assisted in moving into permanent housing; others are still in the process of housing search and relocation. Because many of these families have remained in emergency shelters and transitional housing concurrent with Year One of the Demonstration Project, new families participating in the Demonstration Project were unable to get into those same facilities.

The Use of Master-Leased Apartments as Shelter

It should be noted that the original Demonstration Project program design accounted for the fact that many participant families would move more slowly through the program than others. This would enable Beyond Shelter case managers to address the special needs and other crises the families might be experiencing, that could prevent them from successfully stabilizing in permanent housing, once they had moved into an apartment of their own. The majority of such families were to reside in master-leased apartments and in transitional housing programs in the community at-large for up to six months, particularly for situations involving current domestic violence and substance abuse.

Families with special needs could include families with current or recent substance abuse histories, mental health problems, DCFS histories, physical or developmental disabilities or other health problems, and large families.

In the original program design, 50 families with “special needs” were to be moved from motels into master-leased apartments prior to moving into permanent housing. Due to the high number of families with special needs who were actually enrolled into the Demonstration Project, including many families who were identified with special needs many months after enrollment, 135 apartments were eventually “master-leased” to serve as emergency shelter for families. This new model has demonstrated significant cost savings to the program and has also provided a more normalized living environment for homeless families with children. In fact, some families have converted their master-leased apartment to permanent housing, once they have been issued a Section 8 voucher.

Stabilizing in Motels and Master-Leased Apartments

Because families have remained in motels and master-leased apartments for a much longer period of time than originally anticipated, many of their crisis needs have been addressed during that time. Families who previously felt alienated and were resistant to offers of assistance and support have often become more responsive. Many families who previously resisted working with their assigned case manager have now become “engaged” in the process, which will continue as they move into permanent housing and begin rebuilding their lives.

Families Who Remained Unstable or Difficult-to-Serve

Unfortunately, some participant families not only failed to respond to case management interventions and support, but also exhibited new problems and behaviors that have impacted the housing-search phase of the program once their Section 8 voucher was issued. As a “high tolerance” program, the Demonstration Project has tried to provide a longer period of time in temporary housing for such families, while additional efforts to resolve the situation have been implemented. In the end, some of these families have been terminated from the program or have lost custody of their children and are therefore no longer eligible to participate. Other families have eventually responded to case management interventions and have been assisted in moving forward in the program.

It is important to note that some families enrolled in the Demonstration Project have remained in a constant state of crisis, resisting efforts to help them resolve the multiple issues that prevent movement towards improved stability in their daily lives. For other families, new crises or problems have become apparent, which were not previously identified prior to the referral to Beyond Shelter or by Beyond Shelter during the screening and enrollment process. Crisis case management has continued in the majority of those cases, until the crisis situation has been either temporarily stabilized or resolved. Once families are temporarily stabilized, Crisis Case Managers referred the case to Phase II of the Demonstration Project, the Housing First Program.

Participant families who remained in the Crisis Intervention phase for a longer period of time did so for a variety of reasons. In some situations, a family was enrolled into the Demonstration Project, placed immediately into a motel outside Skid Row, and then disappeared from the motel and the program when efforts were made to contact them. In other situations, participants were enrolled but then, later on in the process, refused to provide requested documents or provided false information. A small number of participants were incarcerated after enrollment, while others had children detained by DCFS. In situations where the child(ren) was to be returned within an agreed-upon timeframe, however, the participant remained on the Demonstration Project caseload.

Current and ongoing domestic violence situations sometimes prevented the transfer of the family to the Housing First Program, as did drug relapse in which the parent refused referrals for intervention and treatment. Although families were not terminated from the program in these instances, delays often occurred in the process leading to permanent housing.

Submission of Section 8 applications could be delayed, for example, when participants missed appointments or would not provide required documents. Further delays in the permanent housing process occurred with some families who received their Section 8 voucher, when they refused to work with Housing Specialists to identify permanent housing units, or missed appointments with HACLA, or experienced other personal crises which impacted their movement into permanent housing. In fact, periodically families disappeared from the program for some time, but then returned. In other situations, participants found permanent housing on their own and dropped out of the program. One family moved in with relatives and refused further services.

Although a small number of families have been identified with gang affiliation, it is believed that there are many more. Not only does this pose possible danger for case managers, but Beyond Shelter will not knowingly place such a family in an apartment where they and/or their neighbors might be in danger. This may also cause a case to be terminated from the program.

Creating additional complications for housing and social services planning, families often include a male partner who is not disclosed upon enrollment into the Demonstration Project, but who may appear early in the process; in many cases, the male partner has a felony, is on probation, or is gang-affiliated, further complicating the social services and housing plan.

Twenty-one families have incurred serious damages to either a Master-Leased apartment or to a motel room. These damages have not been strictly malicious; in three instances, the damages were the result of poor housekeeping and health and hygiene practices. However, families who intentionally damaged their dwellings are not good candidates for Section 8 subsidies and alternative permanent housing plans had to be made, which sometimes complicated and delayed the housing search and placement process.

PHASE II

ENROLLMENT INTO THE HOUSING FIRST PROGRAM

While a wide variety of case management activities and interventions were occurring with families during the Crisis Intervention Phase, the case file was also being processed for enrollment into the *Housing First Program*. By the end of the first year, all families enrolled in the Demonstration Project and still participating in the program had been referred to, and enrolled in, the Housing First Program for assistance in moving into permanent housing. Families with serious issues and/or new problems not previously identified during the enrollment and screening process, however, often continued to receive crisis intervention services until the situation could be stabilized; these issues included active domestic violence, criminal activity (including some related to gang affiliations), and child protection issues that could slow the process leading to permanent housing.

The majority of families were assigned to a Housing First Case Manager within 30 days of enrollment into the Housing First Program. The Housing First Case Manager then continued to work with each family both before and after the move into permanent housing. In the early stages, the Crisis Case Manager and Housing First Case Manager conferred regularly during this transfer process, so that the new case manager could follow through on case management issues identified earlier. In the latter stages of the Demonstration Project's first year, Crisis Case Managers were transferred to the Housing First Program as Housing First Case Managers; many have been able to continue to serve the same families they served in their Crisis Intervention caseload, providing continuity for many families whose lives have otherwise remained fairly unstable.

Once families are enrolled into the Housing First Program, they work closely with their Housing First Case Manager to develop an individualized Family Action Plan, with the level of Service Needs Intensity and a family's "special needs" helping to shape the plan. Goals and objectives are primarily short-term in the beginning, and are modified as specific tasks are accomplished and thresholds are reached. Specific tasks and responsibilities of the head-of-household and the case manager are written into the plan to meet the family's immediate objectives and longer-range goals.

The individualized Family Action Plan for each family is developed in phases and consists of the family's needs assessment, priorities/goals, record of referrals to appropriate services (which includes, but is not limited to, mental health, substance abuse, employment, domestic violence services, etc.), and steps to attain the goal of permanent housing. Housing First Case Managers continue to screen and assess families for low, moderate, or high intensity service needs, as addressed in the Service Needs

Typology for Homeless Families.³ Family Action Plans are modified over time, as objectives and goals change and/or are accomplished.

All families enrolled in the Housing First Program are provided Beyond Shelter training manuals, including "Successful Household Money Management" and the "Family Survival Guide," to improve their money management, household management, and parenting skills. Materials are available in both English and Spanish. Although discussion of some of the issues may begin early in the program for families, as may be appropriate, the manuals are primarily utilized once the family has been relocated to permanent housing.

Helping Families Access Section 8 Rent Subsidies or Other Affordable Housing Opportunities

The Skid Row Families Demonstration Project was allocated 300 Section 8 vouchers from the Housing Authority, City of Los Angeles (HACLA) and 50 Section 8 vouchers from the Housing Authority, County of Los Angeles (HACoLA). During Year One of the Demonstration Project, 214 Section 8 applications were submitted to HACLA and 184 Section 8 Vouchers were issued. Approximately 14 families had their Section 8 applications terminated or withdrawn by HACLA during the last quarter of the contract year.

The fact that families participating in the Demonstration Project were fearful of moving into new communities prevented many of them from applying for Section 8 vouchers through HACoLA. Another major barrier was the fact that many Demonstration Project participants were either on probation or parole and had felony records, both of which would prevent a HACoLA Section 8 application from being submitted. HACLA accepts many such applicants, however, and differentiates between types of felonies and other issues related to probation. As a result of these issues, families have been processed primarily for HACLA subsidies and are relocating primarily to neighborhoods in the City of Los Angeles.

Demonstration project families who were ineligible for a Section 8 subsidy have been assisted in moving into subsidized apartments in low-income housing projects or are on waiting lists to move in. Others are being relocated to permanent housing with temporary rent subsidies ("shallow subsidies") which will terminate in December 2008. During that time, heads-of-household in those families will either be assisted in obtaining employment to enable them to pay full rent without support or, when such employment is not feasible, will be assisted in moving into rental units in affordable housing projects in the community at-large, to enable them to remain in permanent housing after the shallow subsidy ends.

³ Beyond Shelter's Institute for Research, Training, and Technical Assistance developed the typology, which is a matrix organized by categories of need or risk factors (e.g., substance abuse, homelessness history, age of head-of-household, etc.) and intensity levels, low, moderate, and high. The typology is intended to give a holistic picture of the needs and strengths of individual families and to shape the case management process accordingly. Refer to the appendices to view the typology and accompanying form.

Delays in Submission & Issuance of Section 8 Vouchers

In the original program design for the Demonstration Project, it was anticipated that HACLA would expedite the processing and issuance of Section 8 applications for Demonstration Project participants. This would require decreasing the time from submission to issuance from ten-twelve weeks to six weeks. It was anticipated that the majority of families in the Demonstration Project would qualify for the rent subsidy and would therefore be able to move into permanent housing within three months of enrollment into the Housing First Program. In reality, as described earlier, this timeline did not occur due to a number of unanticipated challenges to that process.

The original program design was developed with the understanding that CalWORKs recipients, who comprise the vast majority of Demonstration Project participants, would have vital records available in their case files. This proved not to be the case and valuable time was expended trying to obtain documents necessary for Section 8 submissions. It also became apparent that many families were not capable of taking the steps necessary to obtain vital documents without multiple and repeated directions and one-on-one assistance. Further slowing down the process was the fact that once families were issued vouchers, the process of housing search, lease negotiation, and approval from HACLA for move in could take up to two months, and in some cases longer. For these reasons, many families remained in temporary housing situations for up to eight months, twice the time in the original program design.

Movement into Permanent Housing

Housing placement activities at Beyond Shelter are provided by Beyond Shelter Housing Specialists, who also provide assistance with processing of applications for Section 8 vouchers and shallow rent subsidies. Once families have a Section 8 subsidy, Housing Specialists assigned to each family assist them with housing search, lease negotiation, and assistance in overcoming bad credit, eviction histories, and discrimination based on ethnicity, income source, gender, and homelessness. Generally, families are shown a maximum of four different apartment units from which to choose. This entails housing search by the assigned Housing Specialists in the neighborhoods that a specific family would like to move to (or remain in). Units must be found that will accept a Section 8 subsidy and that will accept the rent level negotiated with HACLA. Units must pass the HACLA inspection process, with repairs provided by the owner before authorization by HACLA for a family to move in.

When Beyond Shelter's Housing Specialists have assisted a family in identifying a rental unit to move into, the information is submitted to HACLA for unit inspection and lease negotiation with landlords and management companies. Inspections, lease negotiation, contract completion, and then approval date for move-in, can take up to six weeks or more. If the negotiation is not successful or the landlord finds a less tenuous rental candidate (in terms of the Section 8 approval process, rental fees, and client tenant history), the unit is sometimes lost and the process must start again. This may

significantly add to the length of time necessary to move a family into permanent housing.

Altogether, a total of 74 families moved into permanent housing during Year One of the Demonstration Project (through December 31, 2007). Permanent housing includes private-market housing utilizing a Section 8 voucher, subsidized housing owned and operated by nonprofit landlords, subsidized housing with “shallow rent subsidies” for one year, Fair Market Rent, and one situation involving shared housing with a relative.

Families were assisted in moving into neighborhoods throughout the City of Los Angeles, including the San Fernando Valley (Van Nuys, Canoga Park, Reseda, Sun Valley, North Hills, Sylmar, Chatsworth); Palmdale-Lancaster; Highland Park, Eagle Rock, Glassell Park, and Echo Park; Mid-Wilshire, South L.A., East L.A., and Central L.A., including Venice, Mar Vista, Westchester, Huntington Park, Watts, San Pedro, and the Harbor Gateway areas of Los Angeles. In most cases, families have chosen to relocate from inner-city areas of Los Angeles. The choice for many families is to relocate away from areas where gang activity is more prevalent. Or they move to a neighborhood where their children can continue to attend the same school without interruption.

In December 2007, the majority of families who had been issued a voucher but were not yet in permanent housing were in various stages of active housing search, housing inspection, and/or lease negotiation. As many Demonstration Project families are finally receiving their Section 8 vouchers and others have applications in process, it is anticipated that all families in the program will be successfully moved into permanent housing within the next four to six months.

Permanent Housing Outcomes – Year One*

Families moved into permanent housing	74	24%
Families who received a Section 8 voucher	184	61%
Families waiting for Section 8 issuance	30	10%
Families in Active Housing Search (including unit inspection and lease negotiation)	87	29%
Families in shallow rent subsidy program (ineligible for Section 8)	4	0.1%
Families in subsidized rental housing in the community at-large	5	0.2%

*Table totals are greater than 300 because the categories are not mutually exclusive: the 184 families who received a Section 8 voucher includes most of the 74 families who moved into permanent housing.

A small number of families have refused to work with Housing Specialists or have missed appointments to seek housing or interview with landlords. Some families have refused every apartment they have been shown. Although families have been given strict deadlines for compliance, at the end of the first contract year, a few families were in the process of being terminated for non-compliance with housing search deadlines.

Helping Families with the Move

The Housing First Case Manager and Housing Specialist together assist each family with their move into permanent housing, except in cases where the family coordinates their move independently. Generally, a U-Haul is rented and hired movers assist in relocating families to their new apartment. Each family in the Demonstration Project who moves into permanent housing is provided basic furnishings, linens, and other basic household items, unless they already own those items. This includes beds for each family member, couch and/or loveseat, a dining table with four chairs, stove, refrigerator, microwave, towels and sheets, pillows and comforters, pots and pans, cooking utensils, household cleaning products, sponges, towels, and personal hygiene products such as soap, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, and toilet paper. (Families moving to permanent housing from master-leased apartments are able to take the basic furnishings with them.)

Home-Based Case Management

Housing First Case Managers assist each family in enrolling their children in school and becoming acquainted with their new neighborhood. Families are then provided home-based case management for six full months after the move into permanent housing, to help them improve their coping skills, become reoriented to stable living patterns, and establish links with community-based resources and services. The frequency and duration of home visits depends upon the family's level of service need. All case management is voluntary, however, after a family is moved into permanent housing and thus requires the family's willingness to participate.

Because families in the Demonstration Project have remained in temporary housing for up to eight months while waiting for Section 8 applications to be processed and then utilized, many of their crisis needs have been addressed during that time. In other situations, however, additional problems that had not been previously apparent have been identified. For this reason, all families are being re-assessed either prior to moving into permanent housing or immediately thereafter, to modify the intensity level of service need, when appropriate. While many families have exhibited a decreased intensity level of service need, from High Intensity to Moderate, or from Moderate Intensity to Low, other families have remained at the level of service need originally identified upon enrollment.

Participant families with *high intensity service needs* are visited weekly during the first 90 days after the move into permanent housing and for a minimum of one home visit per month for the next 90 days, with phone contact weekly. Participant families with *moderate intensity service needs* are visited weekly during the first 30 days, bi-monthly during the next 60 days, and monthly for the next 90 days, with phone contact as needed. Participant families with *low intensity service needs* are visited monthly for 180 days (six months), with weekly phone contact for the first 90 days and thereafter as needed. In reality, some weekly contacts take place by phone or in the office, when scheduling a home visit is difficult, i.e. the parent is unavailable at the scheduled time or a case manager must cancel due to other priorities that come up. Often, a case manager is in

phone contact with parents multiple times during a given week or month for various case management contacts and referrals. Case managers help families make appropriate connections in their new community in order to begin to develop a sense of belonging. The children are enrolled in school and the family is encouraged to become familiar with the neighborhood.

At the conclusion of Year One of the Demonstration Project, the majority of families in permanent housing have resided in their own rental unit for approximately three months and most are beginning to stabilize. While a few families have faced challenges that could impact continued housing stability, all families have benefited from ongoing case management and the structure this has provided in their lives. The Housing First Case Manager has guided each family through various difficulties, including interpersonal problems with landlords and neighbors, problems enrolling children in school, problems with utilities, and advocacy with DPSS on a variety of issues. The major issues confronting families, however, have typically involved money management and effective communication with outside agencies with whom they might be working.

The Housing First Case Manager maintains close contact with the family, particularly during the first three months, when they are most at risk of another housing crisis. In most cases, families are quite receptive to the ongoing case management. They appreciate the support, particularly in instances in which the family continues to struggle with budgeting, household management, and relationships with neighbors or the landlord. As appropriate for each family, Beyond Shelter's Family Survival Guide is used as a tool and provides a structured guide for families, depending upon need. The case manager also periodically reviews Beyond Shelter's budgeting manual, Successful Household Money Management, focusing on chapters referring to savings and budgeting to help parents improve their financial management skills.

Follow-Up and "Graduation"

Families enrolled in the Housing First Program that are placed in permanent housing will receive six months of follow-up phone contact for monitoring and crisis intervention by the Housing First Case Manager, after the six-month case management program has been completed. Approximately 75% of families will receive monthly phone contact to monitor their continued transition to stability. Follow-up will focus on timely payment of rent, participation in employment programs, money management issues, additional assistance from Beyond Shelter through referrals for services/resources, and the provision of crisis intervention services. At twelve months in permanent housing, families will "graduate" from the program, with all formal services coming to an end.

Evaluation of Family Outcomes

The Demonstration Project includes an evaluation component that is tracking the progress of families, particularly after they have moved into permanent housing. Housing

First Case Managers are administering assessment tools to heads-of-household at approximately one, three, and six months in permanent housing. Through the administration of these tools at multiple time points, the evaluation design is expected to enable Beyond Shelter to measure the incremental gains families are making as they stabilize in permanent housing and begin to rebuild their lives. Outcome areas to be reported on at the end of Year Two of the Demonstration Project include, but are not limited to: residential stability, adequacy of family resources, employment, new or recurrent domestic violence, criminal justice system involvement, and children's school stability.

Specialized Services Provided Before and After the Move into Permanent Housing:

Children's Services and Employment Assistance

Because of the high level of dysfunction and instability in the majority of families enrolled in the Demonstration Project, there has been a serious focus on the impact of homelessness on their children. For the Demonstration Project, the Children's Services Specialist has several major duties which include the assessment of children upon intake; responding to referrals from both Crisis Intervention Case Managers and Housing First Case Managers; participating in Team Decision Meetings when the family is involved with DCFS; providing ongoing advocacy and referrals to families for a variety of special needs; collaborating with other community resources to assist families with specific issues; and conducting home visits with case managers. Because a major focus of the Demonstration Project has been on services to children and youth, a more in-depth description of the scope of such services is included in this section.

Any case manager or staff person who detects the need for a child assessment and/or specialized children's services may refer a family to Beyond Shelter's Children's Services staff. During the year, Demonstration Project families have been referred for child abuse and neglect intervention and prevention, assistance in obtaining childcare, and for referrals to address health, developmental, and other special needs of their children. An ancillary role of the Children's Services staff has included the maintenance, cataloguing and documenting of the disbursement of clothing, canned goods, diapers, and other special health and hygiene items that are donated, and coordination of specific donations for children, such as strollers, car seats, and school uniforms. The Children's Services staff have also helped to provide and coordinate childcare for children of families participating in special events, such as those conducted by HACLA to expedite issuance of Section 8 vouchers.

During Year One of the Demonstration Project, the Children's Services Specialists conducted approximately 210 home visits and, during that same period, received 125 referrals from case managers. Approximately 479 referrals were made to outside agencies and resources for child-related services. The number of referrals for services far exceeds the number of requests for assistance because the Children's Services Specialist

provides each participant with two or three referrals for assistance from outside agencies and, in some cases, more than one issue is being addressed.

The concrete changes in families who have received the assistance of a Children's Services Specialist are difficult to quantify, due to the wide variety of factors that have affected the family as a whole; however, the Children's Services Specialists have reported during the year that families who followed through on referrals appeared to be more stable and generally in an improved state of mind. Additionally, in some cases, the children appeared to be more focused on school, with a greater understanding of the importance of an education.

Children's Services Provided During Year One

MONTH	Parenting Education Referrals	School-Related Services	Counseling Referrals	Health-Related Referrals	Day Care Referrals
February	10	24	9	12	0
March	18	57	30	18	6
April	23	66	27	48	3
May	9	48	18	15	9
June	3	15	6	0	0
July	3	22	6	0	7
August	5	62	4	13	10
September	6	54	3	5	9
October	2	19	11	1	3
November	2	15	9	0	2
December	1	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	81	252	67	41	38

MONTH	Groceries & Food Vouchers	Basic Clothing	Hygiene & Household Items	Books, Toys & Backpacks
February	15	15	30	48
March	85	64	106	105
April	145	43	157	130
May	498	68	553	165
June	508	41	460	143
July	75	50	442	108
August	61	38	1,199	107
September	116	117	917	81
October	28	27	1,039	45
November	79	53	629	51
December	15	31	419	15
TOTAL*	1,612	541	5,928	998

** Numbers vary widely from month to month depending on supply & demand. They do not include items donated by Baby2Baby (cribs, strollers, diapers, baby clothing and other items). Numbers for clothing provided does not include items placed in the reception area on a daily basis for general pick-up.*

Examples of Specialized Children's Services

Requests for parenting education are usually submitted by case managers after observation of parents' interactions with their children. Referral agencies include such organizations as Children's Institute, Avalon Carver Community Center, Families In New Directions, El Nido Family Services, the Parenting Institute, and others depending on geographic location of the family.

Referrals dealing with schooling often include (1) locating and ensuring that families have a school identified for their children that addresses their geographic need; (2) creating a letter verifying family's current address to ensure that the family has all documentation needed to enroll the children at that school; and (3) working closely with the Los Angeles Unified School District Homeless Education Program to verify enrollment, link children with transportation, if applicable, and obtain school supplies or clothing vouchers. Parents are encouraged and assisted in enrolling their children in Head Start and Early Head Start programs or a preschool. The Children's Services Specialist also assists with locating after school programs and, when they are not available on-site, referring families to organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club or YMCA.

Requests for counseling referrals for children are usually submitted by case managers after parents request assistance and/or because the case manager or Children's Services Specialist have observed behavioral problems. Referrals have been made to such agencies as Seven Generations Child and Family Counseling Center (recommended by DMH), Los Angeles Child Guidance Clinic, The Children's Institute, and the child's designated school psychologist.

Families are assisted on an ongoing basis with referrals to, and advocacy in accessing, vision, dental and other health services for their children. When clients have children of preschool age that are not attending a child development program, the Children's Services Specialist strongly encourages clients to enroll their child(ren) in Early Head Start, Head Start, or preschool, and will always link clients with these programs in the vicinity of their residence. The Children's Services Specialist also identifies and helps parents access the appropriate Child Care Resource and Referral Agency to assist with placement of children into subsidized childcare. Often parents ask for more information on a subject matter that he/she knows little about and information and/or referrals are provided. Examples include requests for information on breastfeeding, potty training, and, in one situation, information on a prescription drug a client's daughter was taking.

Employment Services Provided by Beyond Shelter

Although Beyond Shelter generally does not focus on job placement for participants in the Housing First Program while they are still homeless, 76 heads-of-household in the Demonstration Project were referred to the Employment Services Department during Year One. Of these, 52 participants refused the services of the Employment Services Department for a variety of reasons, including "not being ready to work" to wanting to

wait until they had obtained permanent housing. However, 24 heads-of-household chose to participate in the Employment Services Program during the year, with 12 of the 24 participants eventually becoming employed. The average starting wage was \$9.00 an hour. As the year ended, the other 12 participants were in the process of job search and expected to obtain employment within 60 days.

Upon enrollment into the Employment Program, each participant received a complete assessment of his or her systemic and psychological barriers to employment, which included educational and psychological testing. Emphasis was placed on involving the participant in individualized job readiness and placement activities, to teach them job search and retention skills for the future. After counseling and assessment, each of the 24 participants created an individual employment plan. Job readiness and placement activities included resume creation, internet employment search and interview techniques. Beyond Shelter Employment Specialists continue to follow up monthly, or more frequently in the case of high-risk cases, to ensure that the participants maintain their employment. Should a participant become unemployed, Employment Specialists help them to identify the issues that led to termination of employment and work closely with them to find new employment.

Job Title	Company	Hourly Rate	Status
Security Guard	Access Security	\$8.00	Full-time
Sales Associate	Goodwill Industries	\$7.00	Full-time
Installer	Same's Artistic Tiles	\$20.00	Full-time
Nurse Assistant	Maximus Health	\$8.25	Full-time
Laborer	Manpower	\$10.00	Full-time
Pipe Fitter	Breiners Oil Refinery	\$18.00	Full-time

Greater Avenues to Independence (GAIN)

The Employment Services Department found that most participants who were receiving GAIN services were complying with the program to prevent sanctions. However, no positive employment outcomes occurred as a result of their participation. The participants basically view the program as a means to keep receiving their cash aid and supportive services and to be able to attend school. Many find ways to “stop the clock,” so they can concentrate on other issues. Many participants who are not willing to participate in Beyond Shelter’s more individualized Employment Program are simply not ready to work. They are concerned about where they are going to live and what is going to happen to their family.

Comments from participants included the following:

- “I’m too busy dealing with Section 8 issues and my children. I want to work but just can’t do it now.”
- “I am placing my job search on hold until everything is completed with my Section 8.”
- “How do you expect me to look for work when I don’t know where I am going to live?”
- “Don’t call me, I’ll call you.”
- “Put me on hold until I have my Section 8.”

Current Performance Requirement Summary Table
(12/18/06 - 12/17/07)

Strategy	Operational Measure	Indicator
<p>Short-term housing within 24 hours (in response to referrals to Beyond Shelter)</p> <p>and</p> <p>The Hotel Voucher Program.</p> <p>Contract Ref. Sec. 9.1 & 9.2</p>	<p>Number of families relocated to short-term housing, including designated hotels, emergency shelters, and/or transitional housing.</p>	<p>231 families were relocated into short-term housing; 47 families were already in short-term housing, including hotels, emergency shelter, and/or transitional housing.</p>
<p>Short-term housing for families with special needs.</p> <p>Contract Ref. Sec. 9.3</p>	<p>Number of families with special needs placed into short-term housing for families with special needs.</p>	<p>159 families with special needs were placed into short-term housing.</p>
<p>Referrals to resources and specialized services in the community, prior to moving into permanent housing, including referrals for children with special needs.</p> <p>Contract Ref. Sec. 9.4</p>	<p>Number of families who received referrals to community-based resources and specialized services, including referrals for children with special needs.</p>	<p>288 families were provided with referrals to community-based resources and specialized services including referrals for children with special needs.</p>
<p>Permanent Housing for Housing First Program Families.</p> <p>Contract Ref. Sec. 9.5 & 9.6</p>	<p>Number of families moved into permanent housing within 90 days of enrollment into the Housing First program.</p> <p>Number of families in permanent housing after six (6) months of permanent housing placement.</p>	<p>74 families had moved into permanent housing, none within 90 days due to long delays at HACLA; 87 families were in the process of housing search, inspections, or lease negotiations; 184 families had been issued a Section 8 voucher; and 30 families were waiting for Section 8 issuance.</p>
<p>Case Management for Housing First Program families.</p> <p>Contract Ref. Sec. 9.6 thru 9.10</p>	<p>Number (100%) of families enrolled in the Housing First Program, with a developed individualized Family Action Plan and receiving case management support.</p>	<p>288 families were enrolled into the Housing First Program, with 33 families either terminated or dropping out of the program. Family Action Plans have been developed for 85%.</p>

SECTION IV:

CHALLENGES IN WORKING WITH THE TARGET POPULATION

The Demonstration Project was designed to be highly tolerant of dysfunctional behavior, unless children are at risk. Demonstration Project case managers in both the crisis intervention phase and permanent housing phase are highly vigilant and at the same time highly supportive, continually assessing participants in order to identify behavioral health problems or other crisis issues such as domestic violence, that may affect the case management process, while utilizing respectful, non-threatening, strengths-based response strategies. This section of the report will briefly review some of the more challenging issues affecting the lives of participant families, and Beyond Shelter's efforts to help address these issues without further alienating the head-of-household.

Domestic Violence

Of the 300 families enrolled in the Demonstration Project, at least 115 families have histories of or current involvement with domestic violence, based on case file reviews. This number includes both men and women as victims. At least 10 families currently enrolled in the Demonstration Project continue to experience domestic violence situations, either with new perpetrators or with the original perpetrator. The situation often includes DCFS involvement, the need to move the family to a new hotel or master-leased apartment unknown to the perpetrator (this had been necessary more than once with the same family), and very close monitoring and case management.

As with the majority of Demonstration Project participants, the DV-impacted families generally arrive at Beyond Shelter's offices in extreme crisis, after multiple moves between missions, shelters, hotels, and/or family and friends. The adult head-of-household typically demonstrates high anxiety, symptoms of post-traumatic stress, fear, low self-esteem, and is often extremely angry and distrustful. The children, depending on their age, are often acting out and traumatized as well, in many cases having witnessed firsthand violence within their families (research has found that almost 25% of homeless children have witnessed such violence^{viii}).

Case managers refer families for domestic violence counseling and individual or family counseling and try to ensure that the parent follows through. Staff assist with filing restraining orders or understanding restraining orders. Referrals are made to domestic violence shelters, often repeatedly, until a victim is finally ready to separate from the abuser. Stabilizing a family affected by domestic violence requires gaining the family's trust, which often takes multiple interventions and contacts over time. With the ongoing support of Demonstration Project Crisis Case Managers and Housing First Case Managers, many families have finally been able to resolve their domestic violence situations and focus instead on obtaining permanent housing.

Mental Health/Trauma Issues

Based on clinical diagnosis, client self-report, case manager assessments, and case file reviews, the majority of the families enrolled in the Skid Row Families Demonstration Project have experienced severe trauma at some point in their lives, which not only resulted in physical injury, but is also likely to have caused post-traumatic stress responses. Nearly all case managers have noted instances of family exposure to violence: domestic violence and exposure to crime, sometimes extremely violent (gang shootings or beatings). Parents and children alike are exposed to one, or more, of the stressors for traumatic stress disorders. Such exposure occurred during recent or past experiences of violence and trauma and/or during the stress of poverty and its ultimate manifestation, homelessness. Past research on family homelessness has shown that 92% of homeless mothers have been physically or sexually assaulted at some point during their lives^{ix}, while other studies have discussed the psychological toll of homelessness and identified homelessness as a risk factor for emotional problems.^x Almost one in two homeless children ages 6-17 suffer from emotional problems, including anxiety, depression, or withdrawal, compared to 18% of their school-age counterparts.^{xi}

Case managers confirm that parents and children are exhibiting stress-response behaviors including: depression, inability to recall important information, paranoia (which makes the case management process difficult), sudden anger (as evidenced by many client conflicts while in motels and master-leased apartments) – all of which are associated with stress disorders. While many parents have accessed DMH services, others are “undiagnosed” or recognized as having severe mental illness or serious depression only through the case management process once they are participating in the Demonstration Project. Accessing services as participants are beginning to recover from their homeless crisis is critical, yet overstressed systems cannot always accommodate them immediately (waits can sometimes be several weeks to several months for regular services). In addition, a far higher percentage of the homeless parents participating in the project are either permanently disabled, or have children with serious disabilities ranging from autism to liver disease.

Traumatic stress responses, coupled with ongoing chronic illness, mental or physical, have impacted the ability of many families to cope as well as to engage in case management relationships. Studies have shown that heads-of-households’ ability to form trusting relationships is inhibited by their experiences of traumatization and past difficulties in maintaining both formal and informal relationships^{xii}; the helping relationship must develop over time in a caring, non-threatening manner and such development is integral to family success^{xiii}^{xiv}. For these families, the goal of the case management process at Beyond Shelter has been to focus first on building rapport in a non-judgmental, supportive manner, while taking steps to address immediate and ongoing crisis needs, rather than moving these families through the program in the same way as other families who have not exhibited the same acute or chronic challenges. For many families, this has slowed down their movement through the various phases of the Demonstration Project.

Substance Abuse

At least 25 adult participants in the Demonstration Project are known to have some history of substance abuse, either self-reported, criminally investigated, or documented through services previously received. In the case of at least 10 additional adult participants, current substance abuse or previous substance abuse has been identified during the case management process; these adults did not disclose prior addiction nor have they ever been in treatment. Altogether, however, the numbers are much lower than had previously been suspected.

Substance abuse is often suspected when parents in homeless families are unable to follow through on the simplest of tasks. The challenge has been that the majority of participants in the Demonstration Project who are known to be currently abusing drugs, or in which it is suspected, vehemently deny it. This includes at least two participants in which it is suspected that methamphetamines are the drugs of choice.

While trying to direct the client into recovery programs, with success in a few cases, the case managers have primarily focused on a “harm reduction” approach with participants in which substance abuse has been identified or suspected. Engaging and meeting the family “where they are at” has been a core strategy in case management with drug-involved parents. The substance abuse literature clearly indicates that client retention and engagement are instrumental to promoting positive outcomes.^{xv} Rather than viewing and labeling parents who are using, regardless of whether such use has been acknowledged, as unmotivated, case managers have strived to the best of their abilities to partner with clients to work towards increased motivation and positive change. Research on client motivation and the stages-of-change strongly supports this approach to working with challenging cases where substance abuse is involved.^{xvi}

Through this approach, case managers try to maintain close and supportive contact with the participant in an effort to guide him/her through each step in the process leading to permanent housing. This may include transporting the participant to all required appointments and helping him/her complete required paperwork. It includes referrals to AA meetings, to drug treatment programs, and for general counseling to address the specific needs of the participant and his/her children. The impact of substance abuse on his/her efforts to obtain housing and its impact on his/her children are discussed regularly. The permanent housing plan is developed with accessible treatment and/or substance abuse counseling resources identified for longer-term support.

With close and involved case management, many parents affected by substance abuse addiction have been able to complete the requirements necessary to process Section 8 vouchers and to obtain permanent housing. Families in which the parent has a previous history of substance abuse, and those in which the parent is determined to remain sober with the assistance of case management and services, are successfully participating in the program, caring for their children and moving into, and stabilizing in, permanent housing. The parents are gaining a sense of empowerment and self-esteem and are proud of their achievements. Other participants, however, remain in denial and continue to struggle.

Child Welfare

At least 20 families enrolled in the Demonstration Project are currently involved with DCFS and dependency court or voluntary services. The majority of the families with current DCFS involvement also have past DCFS involvement. The child welfare issues are generally related to poor parenting and incarceration. In several cases, a parent has been arrested and incarcerated without notifying Beyond Shelter. In some of these instances, inappropriate or ineffective child care plans were made by the parent in which either the childcare provider did not meet his/her responsibilities or the length of incarceration precluded his/her continuing to care for the children. During a parent's incarceration in four to five situations, Beyond Shelter has identified poor planning for the children's care as well as safety concerns and has involved Child Protective Services after attempts to resolve the situation with nearby relatives or friends have failed. In these cases, Beyond Shelter has advocated, when appropriate, for the parent to regain custody of his/her child upon release from jail.

In at least five situations, a child has been physically abused and removed from the parent's custody; there was a history of DCFS involvement in some of these cases. In several cases, DCFS became involved following a domestic violence dispute in which the children were present during the altercation. Beyond Shelter has also exercised the need to act as a mandated reporter in numerous situations in which a child or children were in danger. These issues have, in some cases, prevented an application for Section 8 to be submitted, or has stopped the entire process of moving into permanent housing; once the situation has been resolved, the case usually moves forward to the next step. The agency has also advocated with the court on behalf of parents trying to regain custody of their children; these situations most often involve helping the parent meet the court-mandated permanent housing requirement.

Case managers have participated in Team Decision Making meetings at DCFS in order to assist with the support and services being provided to a family. The Children's Services Specialist is also closely involved with all families involved in child welfare issues. She meets regularly with the children and parent, to ensure appropriate adjustment and development of the children. Whenever additional services or referrals are needed, the Children's Services Specialist works collaboratively with the case manager to ensure that all appropriate referrals are made and also monitors the family to ensure that they receive the services that are necessary.

A Subgroup of Service-Resistant Families

One benefit of longer stays in short-term and temporary housing for Demonstration Project families is that many of the families begin to stabilize during that time, as special needs are addressed and a relationship with a case manager begins to develop. Unfortunately, some participant families not only failed to respond to case management interventions and support, but also exhibited new problems and behavior that would preclude them from engaging in the housing search process and remaining in permanent housing, once moved. As a “high tolerance” program, the Demonstration Project has tried to provide a longer period of time in temporary housing for such families, while additional efforts to resolve the situation have been implemented.

Outcomes have varied. Some of these highly difficult families have been terminated from the program, others have lost custody of their children and are no longer eligible, while others have developed new housing and case management plans to try to maintain their participation in the program. As described earlier, some families have refused to work with Housing Specialists or have missed appointments to seek housing or interview with landlords. A small number of families have refused every apartment they have been shown. Although families have been given strict deadlines for compliance, at the end of the first contract year, some families were being terminated for non-compliance with housing search deadlines. A significant number of families, however, have eventually responded positively to continued efforts to engage them. This number includes a few families who were terminated, or told that they would be terminated, and who have then participated in the development of new housing and case management plans to continue their program participation.

EXAMPLES OF “HARD-TO-SERVE” FAMILIES CONTINUING IN PROGRAM

Nora: Nora is a married 35-year-old mother of two children, 14-year-old Heather, and eighteen-month-old Bran. Nora is undocumented and her husband Marcos has a 15-year history of heroin abuse. With at least four prior evictions, the family has been homeless multiple times and can be considered “chronically homeless.” At intake into the Demonstration Project, Marcos declared that he was in recovery and participating in a methadone maintenance program. The family also has a history of domestic violence, including an incident in which Marcos struck Nora in the head with a free weight. After intake, the family initiated the Section 8 application process in April 2007. Their Section 8 application was denied in June 2007 due to Marcos’ prior felony conviction. Nora may not reapply for twelve months. In order to reapply, she must legally separate from her husband. As Beyond Shelter’s case manager continued to work with the family, it became clear that Nora was gravely codependent upon her husband, who was suffering from severe, undiagnosed mental illness, in addition to his long history of documented substance abuse (now dually-diagnosed). The case manager and Children’s Services Specialist offered Nora and Marcos approximately 10 different service referrals,

including drug counseling and treatment, mental health counseling, legal assistance, and codependency support groups. Nora and Marcos did not follow through with any of the referrals. In addition, the family received many visits from the Child Development Specialist, and the family also participated in case conferences with DCFS. After learning that Marcos had been driving erratically with the two children in the car, the case manager made a DCFS report. Marcos was hallucinating on drugs at the time and was unaware that three police cars were following him. DCFS sent a doctor to assess Marcos's condition. He was diagnosed as displaying Psychotic Disorder NOS. Marcos was required by DCFS to seek mental health counseling. Marcos initially went to a mental health treatment facility but soon left treatment and refused to return. The children were then placed in the sole custody of the mother, and mother and children were moved into a hotel, with the location undisclosed to Marcos. Shortly after Nora moved into the hotel, Marcos was arrested and incarcerated for attempted car-jacking. While Marcos was incarcerated, Nora began participation in her DCFS-mandated parenting, domestic violence, and individual counseling sessions. The family's interpersonal, behavioral, health, legal, and child welfare issues have provided multiple barriers to the permanent housing placement process. Now separated from Marcos, Nora and her family were finally placed in permanent housing at a Beyond Shelter service-enriched housing complex, with the assistance of a shallow subsidy through December 2008. The case manager is helping Nora apply for a work permit. She is expected to be employed when the subsidy ends, in order to afford the rent on her own.

Lisa: Lisa is a 30-year-old single mother of four children, who experienced one prior episode of homelessness. Her current situation is the result of domestic violence, in addition to an arrest for outstanding warrants following a dispute with a bus driver. Upon release from jail, her two younger children, 4-year-old Isaiah and 18-month-old Joseph, were returned to her custody. Her oldest son is in the custody of his father. Although she shares custody of the second oldest son, he currently lives with his father until Lisa is able to obtain permanent housing. Prior to coming to Beyond Shelter, Lisa was in an extremely brutal domestic violence relationship. Her batterer, the biological father of Isaiah and Joseph, pushed her out of a moving car causing Lisa to hit her head. The trauma caused her to lose her sense of taste and smell. In addition, Lisa came down with a severe case of vertigo, which caused her to lose her job and eventually become homeless. The battering relationship endured for five years, and Lisa has been to five domestic violence shelters/programs during that time. When Lisa came to Beyond Shelter for enrollment into the Demonstration Project, she stated that she was no longer involved with her batterer. However, her Crisis Case Manager discovered otherwise and had to remove her from her initial hotel placement and place her in a safer, unknown location. Then, the case manager assisted her in obtaining a restraining order against the man. On several occasions, the case manager accompanied Lisa to the police department to drop off her children for visitation. It appeared as if Lisa was finally breaking free of her batterer but, unfortunately, her case manager found him at the new hotel during an unscheduled home visit. Lisa's case manager has given her several referrals for domestic violence counseling but Lisa has not followed through. During several home visits, Lisa and her case manager have discussed her situation, but there appears to be no change

forthcoming. Lisa's reluctance to terminate the abusive relationship completely has challenged the case management and housing process. She has also exhibited signs of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and paranoia, but refuses referrals for mental health services. A few months ago, she was moved into a master-leased apartment in a new neighborhood, with the hope that this would help her to end the relationship, but to no avail. Her son is beginning to exhibit signs of severe distress, including the smearing of feces on the walls of Beyond Shelter's office bathroom and the walls of their master-leased apartment. Nevertheless, the case manager continues to work with Lisa on a permanent housing plan and persistently supports and encourages her to break free from her abuser. Although it appears that she wants to end the relationship, she continues to have contact with the abuser. Currently ineligible for a Section 8 voucher, she refuses to consider employment; the provision of a shallow subsidy to enable her to move into permanent housing is not an option in this situation. Efforts are currently underway to move her to a transitional housing program while waiting for an available unit at a "special needs" housing project in the community.

Maria: Maria is a 28-year-old mother of a 5-year-old daughter, Desiree, and a 2-year-old son, Derrell. She is currently living with her domestic partner Lonnie in a master-leased apartment. Maria has a history of homelessness, with one prior period of homelessness of 1½ years. She is the mother of five other children who were permanently removed from her care six years ago by DCFS and her parental rights terminated, due to severe neglect. This was as a result of Maria's previous substance abuse (crack cocaine). Maria also has documented mental health issues and is receiving DMH services. At the time Maria was referred to the Demonstration Project, she was alone in Pershing Square with her two children, following Lonnie's incarceration (Derrell's father). After a period in a motel where she received crisis intervention services, Maria was placed in a master-leased apartment and an application for Section 8 was submitted. Unfortunately, after many months, Maria's application for Section 8 was denied because of prior welfare fraud (related to Lonnie/Derrell). She was assisted in enrolling in an externship program providing computer training that will lead to employment. At all home visits by the case manager, the children have appeared clean and well-groomed. Maria does not appear to be actively abusing drugs and states that she has six years of sobriety. Following his release from jail and assessment by the SRAT, Lonnie was added to her case and is in residence in the apartment as of December 2007. Lonnie is actively looking for full-time employment. Another application for Section 8 was made in November 2007. Maria has nearly completed her externship program, and will be able to begin part-time employment soon. At present, the family's options are: conversion of their master-leased apartment to permanent housing once their Section 8 voucher has been issued, moving to Fair Market housing with a shallow subsidy through December 2008, or moving into a Beyond Shelter housing project when a unit becomes available. Applications for all three possibilities have been made.

SUCCESSFUL FAMILY OUTCOMES

Family Success Stories

Leonard

Leonard and his girlfriend were living together in Riverside and Leonard was running his own business. After he learned from friends and from the LAPD that his 6-year-old son's mother, who is mentally ill, had abandoned their son with a friend in the Skid Row area, he tried to bring the boy to live with him. However, the girlfriend refused to allow the son in the house, and, as a result, father and son became homeless.

Father and son then experienced months of instability without a resolution to their housing crisis. First, they exhausted their 14-day homeless assistance motel voucher through CalWORKs. Then, Leonard and his son were referred to Volunteers of America (VOA), where they were sheltered for several months. Leonard's son potentially has autism and has diagnosed learning disabilities. During that time, the son began receiving services at Para Los Ninos for his learning disabilities. Although Leonard and his son were given various services at VOA, they were not provided an exit plan and the money Leonard had saved was inadequate to find housing. Leonard's savings were eventually spent on motels until the family was able to be placed in LAHSA's 120-day program. At the end of their stay, they were referred to PATH for four months of emergency shelter. When that time was completed, the family was forced to return to Skid Row and sought assistance from the Midnight Mission. The Mission referred the family to Beyond Shelter for enrollment into the Demonstration Project.

Beyond Shelter assisted the family to move first to a motel outside of Skid Row and then into a studio master-leased apartment. Their case manager began working closely with Leonard on a permanent housing plan, which included applying for a Section 8 voucher. No longer eligible for services through Para Los Ninos, Leonard's son was demonstrating behavioral problems including disruptive outbursts and disregard of authority. When the school placed him into special education classes, which did not benefit him, the case manager advocated with Para Los Ninos to have Leonard's son evaluated for possible autism. Based on this diagnosis, the son was placed into a magnet school where he could receive more individualized attention. The case manager also referred the family to Almanacer, a community counseling agency which has a less restrictive catchment area than Para Los Ninos. Meanwhile, Leonard has been working with the GAIN program to complete janitorial training and has a job offer at his son's current school. He will start as soon as he completes the training program. In December 2007, Leonard and his son received their Section 8 voucher. They immediately found an apartment unit that they liked and finally moved into permanent housing in March 2008. Within 3 weeks of moving into their new apartment, Leonard reported that his son's behavior had completely turned around and that he appeared less anxious and more at ease. He had his own room, which he kept neat and tidy, and, according to his father he loves his new school. The son's special education class has 12 students and constant supervision. His son enjoys school so much that when he had the choice of staying home with his father for Spring Break or going to school, he chose school!

Erika

Erika is a 19-year-old mother of three children: a four-year-old daughter, Vanessa, a two-year-old daughter, Jazzlyne, and a 9-month-old boy, Damien. Erika was born in Mexico and moved to the United States with her parents when she was 2. Her parents were in a domestic violence relationship during her childhood. Her mother is an alcoholic and her father has been in prison since she was 10. Erika first became pregnant at 15 and had been living with her mother and her children in the mother's apartment when she was forced to leave the apartment they had been sharing. She sought emergency services in Skid Row and was referred to Beyond Shelter in April 2007.

Erika arrived at Beyond Shelter without any personal documentation. She had been unable to get a copy of her birth certificate because her place of birth in Mexico no longer existed. Without her birth certificate, she was unable to get a photo ID. Undocumented, she did not have a social security card. The week before Erika came to Beyond Shelter, her diaper bag containing her children's documentation was stolen while she was riding the bus. With the help of her Crisis Case Manager, Erika was able to reapply for and obtain all of her children's documents. She was also assisted in obtaining photo identification for herself.

Once the family was stabilized in a motel, her case manager helped her to apply for a Section 8 voucher from HACLA. She received her Section 8 voucher on July 28, 2007, and Beyond Shelter staff immediately began seeking permanent housing for her. However, very few landlords were willing to rent to her, primarily due to her documentation status. Erika also had trouble looking at properties because she had no one to provide child care and therefore had to bring all three children along each time. It also became apparent that Erika was not returning phone calls nor showing up for scheduled appointments with her case manager. At one point, her Housing Specialist had secured a unit for her but couldn't get her to follow through with the accompanying paperwork. On November 7, 2007 it became clear why Erika had been unresponsive. She called both her case manager and her Housing Relocation Specialist that day to report that her boyfriend (and the father of her son) had been abusive for some time and that he had just knocked her to the ground, kicking her repeatedly when she was down. She called the police at the urging of her case manager and decided to press charges. After many delays, due to both depression and court dates, she finally moved into a one-bedroom apartment on February 1, 2008. Erika's income is \$584 and her rent is \$361.

Erika's case manager noticed an immediate change in her upon her move to permanent housing. In her own home for the first time, her mood changed from apathetic to upbeat. She told her case manager that her family has started to come around to visit. Her case manager provided a referral to an organization that provides services to victims of domestic violence, including assistance with getting her United States citizenship. Erika's case manager also gave her referrals to local agencies that could assist her with getting her GED, and she is following through with referrals for local Headstart Programs for her children. Her family has also been very supportive since she ended the relationship with the abusive boyfriend and they have offered financial help if she needs it.

Clemmie & Steven

Clemmie is a 38-year-old African-American woman married to Steven, a 33-year-old Caucasian male. Together they relocated to California from Oklahoma with their two boys, Brandon, 11-years-old and Devon, 10-years-old. The family relocated to Los Angeles after Clemmie lost her job in Oklahoma. Unable to find employment before their funds ran out, they were encountered by the Skid Row Assessment Team when they sought emergency shelter services in Skid Row in May 2007. The family was immediately referred to Beyond Shelter for enrollment into the Skid Row Families Demonstration Project.

Beyond Shelter quickly assisted the family in relocating to a hotel outside of the Skid Row area. Once relocated, the family actively participated in developing plans for both employment and permanent housing. However, Clemmie had to return to Oklahoma suddenly, to help her older son, who had remained with her sister, with some legal issues. Meanwhile, Beyond Shelter continued to assist the rest of the family with hotel and food vouchers and transportation assistance. With Beyond Shelter's assistance, the father and sons made plans to return to Oklahoma. After further discussion with her husband, however, Clemmie returned to Los Angeles in July, after settling her oldest son's problems with the law.

During the next few months, with the assistance of the case manager and housing specialist, the parents worked on gathering all the required vital documents they would need for their Section 8 application, and attended all appointments for required interviews at HACLA. The family was issued a Section 8 voucher on October 26, 2007. They worked closely with the Beyond Shelter Housing Specialist throughout November and were finally able to move a two-bedroom apartment on December 21, 2007. Basic furnishings and household items were provided through Demonstration Project funding.

Once the family had adjusted to their new environment and felt comfortable in their new home, their case manager encouraged the parents to return to school and/or seek employment. Steven enrolled in school and completed his CNA certification and is currently in search of employment. Clemmie's goal is to obtain employment in the nursing field, as she has many years of employment experience as a LVN. The children continue to attend school and have adapted very well to their new surroundings. This family is working together to rebuild their lives.

SECTION V:

LESSONS LEARNED/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW PROGRAM DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

1. Assessment of family needs is an ongoing process, not a one-time event, due in part to family apprehension about negative program ramifications from personal disclosure. Beyond Shelter often learned new details about family problems in the weeks and months after families were enrolled in the Demonstration Project. Levels of need and support determined at initial assessment often had to be adjusted based on new information. Program implementation and case planning, therefore, must be flexible and responsive to information and needs as they arise.
2. Due to the intensity of service needs exhibited by the majority of families served in the Demonstration Project, the current case manager-family ratio of 1:25 has impacted the ability of case managers to effectively meet the varying needs of their caseloads. Smaller caseloads of 10-15 families per case manager are recommended for any program serving a similar homeless family population. If the program model is replicated, other recommended staffing protocols include one Supervising Social Worker per five case managers, one Children's Services Specialist per 50 families, and one Psychiatric Social Worker per 50 families. Higher ratios compromise quality of care and support received by parents and children, as well as supervision and training received by frontline staff.
3. The development of trust and rapport between heads-of-household and case managers is essential to being able to successfully serve high-risk homeless families. In instances where this process is hindered by personal experiences of traumatization and past difficulties in maintaining both formal and informal relationships, the head-of-household may appear "unmotivated," "resistant," or "defiant." Repeated, non-threatening attempts to engage the head-of-household eventually can result in greater levels of participation and changed attitudes from parents.
4. There is a need for "high tolerance" homeless programs for a subgroup of harder-to-serve homeless families. Such "high tolerance-low demand," programs have been successfully developed for chronically homeless individuals (e.g., safe havens, The Community Model). A comparable yet distinct model is sorely needed for this subgroup of families, who might otherwise be denied entry to or terminated from conventional programs.
5. Many homeless families harbor great fears – of failure, of new or increased responsibility, of living on one's own, of moving to new communities. Programs serving these families must be cognizant of and responsive to this psychological phenomenon.

6. Future public and nonprofit collaborations serving homeless families, regardless of the catchment area, should include at a minimum: agency commitments of more active involvement and interaction in program design and implementation. For example, the Demonstration Project would have benefited greatly from ongoing collaboration between DPSS Homeless Case Managers in Skid Row and Beyond Shelter Crisis Case Managers to address specific families' emergency needs (including access to vital documents) during the first 30-45 days.
7. The roles and responsibilities of partner agencies in collaborative efforts should be formalized in program contracts or Memoranda of Understanding so that a clear, well-defined set of expectations exists between agencies.
8. The Demonstration Project design required rapid processing of Section 8 applications and it was originally thought that, as CalWORKs recipients, a majority of participants would already have all documentation necessary in their case files. However, it was soon discovered that a significant number of enrolled families lacked proper identification and/or birth certificates for their children, particularly those born out of L.A. County or the State of California. This often resulted in long delays for submission of Section 8 applications. Programs serving homeless families must factor the need for documentation assistance into program planning and design.
9. A major responsibility of the L.A. County Department of Public Social Services should be assistance in the procurement of vital documents for homeless families, many of whom must rely on public transportation, do not have childcare and must therefore travel with their children, and are often so depressed and overwhelmed by their situation that they are unable to easily maneuver the various steps required of them by government agencies.
10. Program budgets for future demonstration or pilot projects must be sufficient in size to accommodate lengthy emergency shelter placements (minimum of 6-8 months) in motels and elsewhere (e.g., apartments master-leased as short-term housing), while Section 8 applications are being processed. As long as L.A. County continues to experience a crisis in family homelessness, the emergency shelter system will not have adequate capacity to meet demand from new or expanded projects and funds will need to be available to provide for alternative emergency shelter options.
11. Hotel stays longer than 30 days should only be used as a "last resort" for most families and alternative, temporary housing options should be developed. Strict controls on motels should also be required in order to ensure the quality and safety of motels utilized as emergency shelter.

12. Because the capacity of the current emergency shelter system has reached a limit, the use of master-leased apartments to serve as “emergency shelter” should be considered. Policy makers and local continuum of care officials should consider shifting or reallocating funds presently used for hotel vouchers to this purpose. The use of non-traditional monies, such as from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, city or county general funds, private foundations and local affordable housing trust funds, should also be explored. Where restrictions on local use currently exist, officials should explore broadening eligibility criteria to include agency-leased apartments as an eligible program.
13. A master-leasing program in which apartments in the community at-large are used as “emergency shelter” should be adequately staffed and managed, and must include furnishings. Cost-effectiveness can be improved through quick “turn-over” in families, with a crew being available immediately to prepare units for the next family.
14. Steps should be taken to expedite the Section 8 process as much as possible in order to reduce shelter stays, costs associated with those stays, and the impact of homelessness on families with children. Such steps would include increased staffing at local housing authorities, dedicated staffing to new initiatives, streamlining the unit inspections process to reduce the need for multiple inspections, and co-locating housing authority staff at offices of service providers.
15. Rent subsidies are indispensable to ending and preventing family homelessness. Where conventional subsidy programs (e.g., Section 8) impose narrow eligibility criteria (e.g., no criminal convictions), alternative subsidy programs with flexible eligibility guidelines must be accessed or created in order to ensure that families are able to receive this vital assistance.
16. Due to the high prevalence of traumatization among homeless families, programs serving such families should be funded and designed to provide, whether directly or through referral, trauma-informed services, including individual and group counseling, support groups, etc.
17. Due to the relationship between homelessness and many other issues, including child protection, substance abuse, and domestic violence, policy makers should promote and incentivize collaboration between homeless and mainstream systems in order to effectively and holistically address the crisis intervention, permanent housing, and longer-term service needs of homeless families.
18. New pilot projects should be allowed a 6-8 week start-up period before referral and enrollment of clients begins. This period is necessary to hire and train new staff, develop new program forms and service delivery protocols, make modifications to contracts, etc.

19. Home-based case management for a subgroup of homeless families with multiple problems and histories of homelessness should be provided for a minimum of one full year after families are assisted in relocating into permanent, rental housing, and sometimes longer, when resources and services in the community do not exist in order to address a specific family's special needs.
20. The continued operation of government-funded emergency shelter programs, including the 120-day LAHSA-funded program for CalWORKs participants, should be evaluated for permanent housing outcomes and include the addition of case management and permanent housing assistance. Without these additional components, the majority of such programs simply "recycle" homeless families at a high cost, both financially to the public and private sectors and personally for families.

ⁱ The United States Conference of Mayors Hunger and Homelessness Survey 2007. Accessed January 28, 2008, from <http://usmayors.org/HHSurvey2007/hhsurvey07.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Research, Evaluation and Quality Assurance Division, Department of Public Social Services, and Research and Evaluation Services, Chief Executive Office, CalWORKs Homeless Families: Report to the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors. May 2005. Los Angeles: Department of Public Social Services.

ⁱⁱⁱ National Low Income Housing Coalition. Out of Reach: 2006. Accessed January 29, 2008, from <http://www.nlihc.org/oor/oor2006/data.cfm?getmsa=on&msa=301&getcounty=on&county=203&state=CA>

^{iv} Shelter Partnership, Inc. Operating at Capacity: Family Shelters in Los Angeles County. 2006. Los Angeles: Shelter Partnership, Inc.

^v Ibid.

^{vi} The United States Conference of Mayors Hunger and Homelessness Survey 2006. Accessed May 14, 2007, from <http://www.usmayors.org/uscm/hungersurvey/2006/report06.pdf>

^{vii} Shelter Partnership, Inc. Criminal Background and the Admissions Process: A Review of Management Policies Among Affordable Housing Providers in Los Angeles County. November 2005. Los Angeles: Shelter Partnership, Inc.

^{viii} National Low Income Housing Coalition. Out of Reach: 2006. Accessed January 29, 2008, from <http://www.nlihc.org/oor/oor2006/data.cfm?getmsa=on&msa=301&getcounty=on&county=203&state=CA>

^{ix} National Center on Family Homelessness, Homeless Children: America's New Outcasts, 1999, p. 10.

^x Bassuk, E.L., Weinreb, L., Buckner, J., et al. (1996). The characteristics and needs of sheltered homeless and low-income housed mothers. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 276(8): 640-646.

^{xi} Goodman, L., Saxe, L., and Harvey, M. (1991). Homelessness as Psychological Trauma: Broadening Perspectives. *American Psychologist*. Nov: 46 (11): 1219-25.

^{xii} National Center on Family Homelessness, Homeless Children: America's New Outcasts, 1999, p. 13.

^{xiii} National Center on Family Homelessness and the Health Care for the Homeless Clinicians' Network. October 2003. Accessed December 5, 2006, from www.familyhomelessness.org

^{xiv} Facts on Trauma and Homeless Children. National Child Traumatic Stress Network. 2005. Accessed March 20, 2008, from http://www.nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/promising_practices/Facts_on_Trauma_and_Homeless_Children.pdf

^{xv} SAMHSA Homeless Families Coordinating Center. (2005). Trauma Interventions for Homeless Families—Innovative Features and Common Themes. Washington, DC: Vanderbilt University Center for Evaluation and Program Improvement.

^{xvi} Zweben, Joan E. 2007. Evidenced-Based Research Findings on Substance Use Disorders. Presentation at the National Alliance to End Homelessness Family Homelessness Conference, Oakland, CA. February 8.

^{xvii} Enhancing Motivation for Change in Substance Abuse Treatment. Treatment Improvement Protocol 35. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT).