

**RURAL HOMELESS
INITIATIVE OF
SOUTHEAST AND CENTRAL OHIO:**

Implementation Phase I

Six-Month Progress Report

January - June 2008

Initiative Highlights

- ✓ Coalitions leveraged over \$500,000 in new state and local funding during the first six months of implementation for case management, rent subsidy, transportation, housing and services for special populations, aging out of foster care, and chronic homelessness programs.
- ✓ Knox County's tax clinic recognized as a model program by the Ohio Benefit Bank.
- ✓ Over 1,000 people received information and referral to community resources to help prevent homelessness during the first six months of implementation.
- ✓ The Foundation hosted a grantee convening in May 2008 with 50 coalition representatives to share best practices on rural homeless prevention
- ✓ Release of "RHISCO: A National Model for Planning to End Rural Homelessness" report by the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

Background

In June 2005, the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation and the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville (the Foundations) established homelessness as a multi-year, multi-phase funding priority. The Foundations' homeless funding priority includes the seventeen county Rural Homelessness Initiative for Southeast and Central Ohio (RHISCO), which is designed to improve the health and quality of life of homeless individuals, families and those at-risk of homelessness through a comprehensive, coordinated plan and implementation to prevent and end homelessness. The Initiative phases include facilitated planning, capacity building, implementation, and evaluation.

Capacity Building Phase

During the Capacity Building Phase of RHISCO, the Foundations engaged the National Alliance to End Homelessness (the Alliance) to facilitate the development of comprehensive, coordinated plans to prevent and end homelessness, with local planning led by county-level coalitions. With planning guidance and technical assistance from the Alliance, participating

counties organized locally and developed plans to address issues related to homelessness, homeless prevention, and housing issues at the county level.

Implementation Phase 1

The Osteopathic Heritage Foundations and Fannie Mae approved \$744,000 in grant funding to participating counties that successfully completed the Capacity Building Phase. Central Ohio counties include Delaware, Fayette, Knox, Licking, Madison, Pickaway and Union. Southeastern Ohio counties include Athens, Fairfield, Hocking, Jackson, Meigs, Morgan, Perry, Ross, and Washington.

The Foundations and Fannie Mae focused investments on four overarching themes (prevention, affordable housing, provider coordination, and data systems) that were identified in the Capacity Building phase. Implementation Phase 1 funding was designed to achieve outcomes related to housing stability, economic independence, family and/or individual self-sufficiency, access to and coordination of mainstream services, agency/community capacity building, and community support in the region.

Initiative Structure and Investments (January 2005 to present)

Initiative Phase	Total Number of Grants	Foundations' Investments
		Approved
Facilitated Planning	2	\$467,543
County-level support	17	\$255,000
Capacity Building Total	19	\$722,543
Technical Assistance & External Reporting	2	\$24,510
County-level support*	12	\$744,000
Implementation - Phase 1 Total	14	\$768,510
Related Investments	5	\$34,500
Total	38	\$1,525,553

*Includes Fannie Mae Contribution

Conditions in the Region

Population in counties participating in RHISCO is less dense on average when compared with the rest of Ohio. On average, there are about 100 people per square mile in counties participating in RHISCO as compared to 277 people per square mile throughout Ohio. County populations average 57,372 residents, and range from 14,821 residents in Morgan County to 156,697 residents in Delaware Countyⁱ.

Income is lower in the RHISCO target area, especially in southeastern Ohio. The median household income ranges from \$29,614 in Athens County to \$76,214 in Delaware Countyⁱⁱ. The percentage of people in poverty averages 13.5% and ranges from 18.1% in Meigs County to 4.5% in Delaware County. Unemployment is much higher than the Ohio average in several counties participating in RHISCO. As of July 2008, Ohio averaged 7.2% unemployment, compared to Meigs County at 11.0%, Morgan County at 10.9%, Perry County at 9.2%, Ross County at 8.2%, and Athens County at 8.1%ⁱⁱⁱ. About 10.4% of the population was without health insurance in the year 2000 for counties participating in the RHISCO Initiative, which is likely to be even higher today.

Economic dependency is higher in the target area. The amount of government assistance received versus employment income averages 21.4% in counties participating in the RHISCO Initiative compared to 17.1% in Ohio^{iv}. This value ranges from 31.6% in Meigs County to 7.5% in Delaware County. The Prevention, Retention, and Contingency (PRC) program is the part of Ohio's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program designed to provide job training, employment assistance, and work support services to help parents find and maintain employment. PRC funding per 1,000 population averages \$19,669 in RHISCO counties compared to \$15,295 in Ohio^v. A total of 3.3% of the region's population receive Ohio Works First benefits and 17.2% receive food stamps.

The scale of homelessness is somewhat clearer since most counties in the RHISCO service area conducted a Point-In-Time Count in January of 2008. The Point-In-Time Count provides a snapshot of the number of persons who are homeless or at imminent risk of being homeless in each county. A Point-In-Time Count is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for coalitions that seek federal funding to address homelessness through the Continuum of Care program. Not all counties submitted a federal Continuum of Care application, and therefore some did not conduct a count. Rural homelessness is different when compared with urban homelessness, for example, there are fewer homeless shelters and less visible "street" homelessness in rural areas. As a result, rural homelessness is often under-reported due in part to more people "doubled-up" or living in cramped conditions, paying a high percentage of income for rent, or living in substandard housing. Some counties participating in RHISCO projects these individuals as being "at-risk" of homelessness to demonstrate the number of homeless persons more accurately. While attempts have been made to quantify the amount of at-risk individuals and families, the numbers reported in the Point-In-Time counts significantly under-represent those on the brink of homelessness.

Nine of the twelve Implementation Phase 1 grantees returned Point-In-Time Count results with their six-month reports, but different methods were used to conduct the count. HUD's count

report form asks for data about sheltered homeless persons, unsheltered or “street” homeless persons, and persons who are “at-risk” of homelessness. Some counties counted only sheltered persons. Other counties used different criteria to define persons who are “at-risk” of homelessness, including persons who paid an excessive amount of their income for housing, persons living in substandard housing, or persons on waiting lists for shelter. There was missing data in some categories for the count in at least one county.

The variation in reporting methods and definitions makes it difficult to establish the number of at-risk homeless persons in the region with a high degree of accuracy. The Coalition on Housing and Homelessness in Ohio (COHHIO) is working to establish a more standardized system for next year’s count. Results from counties that conducted a count are summarized in the following table. It is anticipated that counties participating in RHISCO will conduct a Point-In-Time Count in January 2009. Results from the count will be analyzed and included in a future report.

2008 Point-In-Time Count of Homeless Persons Counties Participating in RHISCO Implementation Phase 1

	Sheltered	Unsheltered	At Risk	Total
Homeless Individuals	24	41	68	155
Homeless Families	16	2	55	73
Severely Mentally Ill	23	53	24	171
Chronic Substance Abuse	39	53	0	150
Veterans	12	16	0	28
Persons with HIV/AIDS	0	2	0	2
Victims of Domestic Violence	57	17	0	104
Youth (Under 18 years of age)	41	46	2	89
Total - Unduplicated	195	193	123	897 *

* Note: One county reported homeless persons without specifying the category. Their total number was added to the “Total - Unduplicated” number above. Due to this variance in reporting, however, the “Total - Unduplicated” figure is larger than the sum of the categories listed above.

Summary of Results, Approaches, and Outcomes

The following table is a summary of the results of the Foundations' investment from all twelve grantees during the first six months of Implementation Phase 1. The goal of RHISCO Implementation Phase 1 is to improve the health and quality of life for homeless individuals, families and those at-risk of homelessness through comprehensive and coordinated plans to help end homelessness in the Foundations' service area. Grantees have implemented project components identified in their plans during the Capacity Building Phase that can be organized into three general categories: prevention, coordination, and data systems.

Result Areas	Approaches	Six-Month Outcomes
Prevention: More at-risk individuals and families will maintain stable, affordable housing and self-sufficiency	Information and Referral - Single Point of Entry, No Wrong Door	1,022 persons or households
	Direct client assistance (rent, utility, deposit) and case management	318 households
	Home repair	Starting next phase
	Transportation	158 persons
	Housing and services for special populations (transitional youth, at-risk families, etc.)	24 persons
	Family asset development (employment services, benefits, financial skill development)	299 persons
Coordination: Communities will increase their effectiveness and resources to implement strategies to collaboratively prevent homelessness.	Landlord outreach	14 landlords
	Coalition development - new representatives	29 new representatives
	Coalition development - training for agencies	171 staff members trained
	Public Awareness Campaigns	Starting next phase
	Conference attendance, meeting support, and support for coalition coordinator.	50 staff attended
Data Systems: More reliable and timely data will be available to assess and monitor local needs, progress toward objectives, and barriers to housing for persons who are at-risk of being homeless or actually homeless.	Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) expansion	Starting next phase
	Needs Assessments, Point-In-Time Counts, surveys	9 Point-In-Time Counts, 1 Housing Survey
	Data analysis, reporting, and technical assistance	Starting next phase

Analysis of Select Approaches to Resolve Rural Homelessness

Prevention: Avoiding Homelessness and Maintaining Stable Housing - A total of 1,022 people were assisted with information and referral to community resources to help avoid homelessness as a result of funding from the Foundations during the first six-month reporting period of RHISCO Implementation Phase 1. A total of 318 households maintained stable housing by receiving direct client assistance, most often in the form of financial assistance with rent and deposits, utilities, and related housing costs. Coalitions reported that 299 persons received training to develop new skills and assets, including financial training, employment training, and benefits eligibility assessment. A total of 158 people received transportation to employment or critical need appointments. A total of 24 persons in special populations avoided homelessness by receiving housing and support services, including 12 youth transitioning from foster care and 12 adults returning to the community from incarceration.

Coordination: Increasing Community Involvement and Coalition Structure - Housing Coalitions participating in RHISCO have added 29 new representatives in the past six months. This includes government, healthcare, social service, criminal justice system, and landlord representatives. Coalitions provided outreach to 14 private-sector landlords with information about community resources to help tenants at risk of homelessness. Coalitions trained 58 social service agencies and 171 staff members about how to use programs and services established through RHISCO and other programs.

Data Systems: Developing Accurate Data and Reporting - Most coalitions were still in the planning phase for these projects. Nine counties conducted Point-In-Time counts and one county conducted a housing survey to analyze the needs of at-risk or homeless persons. Several counties are working on

RHISCO Project Success Story

Working Through Crisis

“Marie,” a single mother with two young children, came to the *Fayette County Community Action Agency* in tears with an eviction notice and utility shut-off letters. Marie was a full-time student at the local community college and lost her job. She was an only child and both of her parents had passed away. She left an abusive relationship and her income was only \$230 a month from child support. She fell behind on rent and was afraid of losing Section 8 rental assistance, which would mean she and the children would lose the only place they had to call home.

The Case Manager realized Marie needed more than financial help. She set up a plan to provide assistance and support, and contacted the Section 8 program to ask for an increase in Marie’s rental assistance. Direct assistance helped Marie with rent and utilities. She began attending weekly case management meetings, completed a budgeting class, and began sharing childcare with other single parents. Marie has been able to maintain housing for her family and is working toward her Associate’s Degree in Business Management. She hopes to find a job soon, but in the mean time is learning how to remain independent.

implementing or improving a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to capture data about homeless persons and services.

Analysis of Overall Foundations' Investment

Strengths

- **Flexible Approach to Preventing Rural Homelessness** - The Foundation provided funding for participating counties to conduct needs assessment and create plans to resolve homelessness in their own communities. Each plan was unique and called for different approaches. Foundation investment in RHISCO Implementation Phase 1 was flexible and allowed counties to tailor programs and services based on community needs. The result has been more buy-in from coalition members and identification of successful programs and practices to prevent homelessness.
- **Building Partnerships** - Eight counties formed partnerships to apply for RHISCO Implementation Phase 1 funding. Two other counties joined together for an application to the Ohio Department of Development. Partnerships helped counties demonstrate greater need and compete for funding more successfully. County homeless coalitions added 29 new representatives from government, social service, criminal justice, and private-sector landlords to help share resources and information.
- **Changing the Way People Look for Housing** - Implementation Phase 1 projects are changing the way individuals and families look for housing in many rural communities in southeast and central Ohio. Six counties made it easier for individuals and families to find housing on their own by creating information and referral programs, housing resource guides, and apartment "tip sheets." Six

RHISCO Project Success Story

Overcoming Chronic Homelessness

"Susan" has a severe mental illness and was chronically homeless for ten years prior to entering the *I'm Home - Permanent Supportive Housing Program* in Union County. Susan had problems keeping appointments at the mental health center, and never seemed to have medication when she needed it. She would go for days without eating toward the end of the month when her income and food stamps were gone.

After she became a resident of the *I'm Home* program, Susan received assistance with transportation to mental health appointments. The program also helped subsidize the cost of her medication, and bought groceries when she ran out of food. After many years of instability, Susan is doing much better and has been able to avoid homelessness and hospitalization for the past six months. The housing program provides a stable environment that allows Susan to remain stable and makes food, medicine, and transportation available when it is most needed.

counties developed a “single point of contact” system to resolve housing issues for persons at-risk of being homeless, and assist agencies with finding housing for their clients. Eight counties provided training for social service agency staff members to increase knowledge of local housing resources and promote effective practices in working with at-risk homeless individuals and families.

- **Preventing Homelessness with Direct Assistance** -A number of participating counties have leveraged the Foundations’ investments to provide families and individuals who are at risk of homelessness with direct assistance. Programs are placing more emphasis on making resources available quickly to prevent homelessness. A total of 328 persons or households received direct client assistance with rent, utilities, and other housing needs to help them avoid eviction and unsafe living conditions. Assistance was generally provided together with information, referral, and case management services.
- **Building Personal and Financial Strength** - Six programs are providing life skills training to help people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness learn how to live more independently. Life skills training include financial education, tax help, employment counseling, and linkage to support services. Families and individuals at-risk of becoming homeless are receiving additional benefits as a result of the Foundations’ investment in RHISCO. Most housing coalitions provided training on the Benefit Bank, which helps low income families and individuals assess their eligibility for assistance programs. Several counties have established tax filing assistance programs to help low income residents take advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit.
- **Leveraging Resources** - The Osteopathic Heritage Foundations’ investment in RHISCO is helping communities leverage investment from other sources. More than \$500,000 in leveraged funding has been granted during the first six months of the implementation phase. Fayette and Pickaway counties partnered to receive a \$362,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Development for the Family Homeless Prevention Pilot program, which helps low-income families avoid homelessness and maintain stable housing without disrupting their children’s school placement. Three new vans valued at \$150,000 were purchased for work transportation through the Job Access / Reverse Commute program in Fayette County. New transportation services have been established in a partnership between the Jackson and Gallia County Job and Family Services agencies to help homeless and low-income job seekers find employment. Several grantees are applying for new housing and rent subsidy programs through HUD and the Ohio Department of Development’s Housing Trust Fund. Athens / Hocking, Fayette, and Licking counties are participating in the Supportive Housing Institute provided by the Corporation for Supportive Housing and

“We were approved for a transportation grant and RHISCO funds will be used as match for three accessible vans to transport low-income people to work. The grant brings another \$150,000 to Fayette County.” The private dollars for leverage are invaluable.

- Bambi Baughn
Fayette County Community
Action Agency

received funding for housing development and training activities.

Challenges

- **Data Collection and Reporting** - Grantees and agencies have been slow to develop HMIS reporting systems across the region. Some counties did not conduct a point-in-time count, and the method of collecting data varied for those who did conduct a count. This makes it difficult to assess the level of need across counties in the region and determine the impact of programs designed to prevent and end homelessness. Lack of data makes it more difficult to compete for funding. Technical assistance from HUD, COHHIO, or other sources may help counties develop appropriate data collection and reporting systems, especially for the at-risk population.
- **Homeless Coalition Involvement** - Some counties are still experiencing challenges with key system representatives becoming involved in their homeless coalitions. Some systems have experienced budget cuts and shortfalls, and may perceive that additional resources will be required if they become involved. The Implementation Phase 1 results indicate that major social service systems who participate in homeless coalition activities in rural areas benefit from greater coordination of housing and services.
- **Ongoing Investment** - State, federal, and local investment for homeless programs is very important for resolving homelessness in rural areas. Multiple sources of revenue and coordinated investment will create more affordable housing, additional subsidies, and more support services for families and individuals at risk of homelessness to help them become more independent. The Foundations encourage funding sources and social service systems to work together with housing coalitions in rural areas to collaborate on investments in affordable housing and support services for their clients. Support for homeless coalition activities and coordinated investment will have a beneficial effect on many populations, including families with low income, unemployed individuals, people with disabilities, and people returning to the community from hospitals, prisons, and other institutions.

Opportunities

- **Landlord Involvement** - Partnerships with private-sector landlords are being worked out to provide rent subsidies, deposit guarantees, and referral pipelines that decrease risk for landlords and improve housing stability for low-income families and individuals. Ideas that result in more public-private partnerships and local coordination of housing resources bear further exploration and development.
- **Volunteer Support** - Building relationships with local businesses, churches, colleges and universities, and civic groups can generate volunteers for point-in-time counts, mentoring programs, and support services. Americorp/VISTA volunteers can be employed to help build capacity and provide direct service for programs.

- **State-wide Learning** - Several counties participating in RHISCO have representatives on the COHHIO Rural Advisory Council. The Rural Advisory Council, funded by the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation, helps to advise COHHIO on state and federal public policies, inform changes to homelessness and housing in rural areas, and to develop capacity in rural communities. Grantees have also developed training programs for their local agencies that could be replicated at the state level, such as training for social service agencies on how to access homeless services and how to develop more coordinated single point of contact systems. The expertise developed through the RHISCO Implementation Phase 1 can help other rural counties develop effective methods of preventing and ending homelessness.

Communication

Media coverage of the RHISCO Initiative is increasing awareness of rural homelessness and promoting volunteer service for point-in-time counts and agency programs. The *Record Herald* in Fayette County covered Housing Coalition meetings, the Continuum of Care process, and the summer point-in-time count, and a staff writer shared his experiences as a volunteer for the homeless count. The *Madison Press*, *Newark Advocate*, *Morgan County Press*, and *Marietta Times* covered the annual point-in-time counts. The *Mt. Vernon News* promoted tax assistance and Earned Income Tax Credit programs. The *Marietta Times* ran articles about local efforts to serve homeless families that helped increase awareness of the issues. The *Lancaster Eagle Gazette* ran articles about the Fairfield County Homeless Coalition and efforts to prevent foreclosures, and two radio programs in Lancaster helped increase awareness of homeless issues and programs.

The Institute for Local Government Administration and Rural Development (ILGARD) at Ohio University released a report in May 2008 entitled *Issues of Housing and Homelessness in Rural Southeast Ohio; A Five County Study* that reflected the needs of Athens, Hocking, Jackson, Ross, and Vinton Counties. The study recommended developing more affordable housing for families with low income, housing and services for youth, more scattered-site supportive housing for homeless persons with disabilities, education and training for employment, and cooperation among service agencies and community groups with flexibility and innovation to address homelessness.

Websites with information about RHISCO Initiative include:

- National Alliance to End Homelessness - www.endhomelessness.org
- COHHIO - www.cohhio.org
- Fairfield County's Project House Call - www.informationreferral.org

Reports about the RHISCO Initiative released include *RHISCO: A National Model for Planning to End Homelessness* written by the National Alliance to End Homelessness and released in March 2008, and the *RHISCO Grantee Convening Executive Summary* released to all grantees and other interested parties in July 2008.

Initiative Activities

The Osteopathic Heritage Foundations held a Funding Award Recognition in March of 2008 to release the report entitled *RHISCO: A National Model for Planning to End Homelessness* that outlined the planning process for rural counties to address homelessness and acknowledge grant awards for Phase 1 of the RHISCO Initiative. In May 2008 the Foundations sponsored a one-day convening of RHISCO grantees. Fifty participants discussed grant reporting requirements, early achievements, and program outcomes and successes. Participants also discussed challenges and brainstormed about potential solutions to barriers with program implementation.

COHHIO's Rural Advisory Council met in January, April, and July of 2008. Three representatives on the Council are from counties participating in RHISCO. The Council advocates for more effective policies to prevent and end rural homelessness at the state and federal level, and helps determine training needs for rural communities to develop knowledge and programs to help end homelessness. The Rural Advisory Council held a convening in June for rural providers to share information about funding opportunities and methods to produce more affordable housing and support services for families and individuals who are at-risk of becoming homeless.

General Implementation

Reaching Target Populations - Implementation Phase 1 of RHISCO has been very successful. At the first six-month interval, all grantees have implemented at least one-third of their proposed project components. RHISCO projects have had a significant impact on families and individuals who are at-risk of becoming homeless. Grantees chose three target populations for their projects: individuals or families, landlords, and social service agencies. During the first six-month interval projects served about 50% of the individuals or families, 61% of the landlords, and 73% of the social service agencies proposed in the grant application. The benefits for homeless and at-risk individuals have been very substantial.

Developing Coalitions - Coalition development has been a success in most counties. Communities are beginning to realize that preventing homelessness creates benefits for entire systems of care and not just for individuals and families who are at-risk. Providing housing is a stabilizing factor that helps the whole community, regardless of other issues they face. Coalition development is likely to continue with the involvement of groups who receive significant benefit from housing planning, coordination, and services as long as their clients are served. Grantees that can demonstrate the benefits of coalition membership are likely to have more success with maintaining an active coalition.

The Foundations Role in Implementation - The Foundations provided funding to implement project components identified through coordinated county plans developed during the Capacity Building Phase. The Foundations organized a grantee convening during the early phase of implementation to facilitate the exchange of ideas about implementation, including overcoming challenges, successes and opportunities. Foundation staff have been assisting grantees with the implementation phase and supporting program development efforts.

Areas for Further Examination and Analysis

Geography and Demographics Help Determine Program Models - In general, rural counties located farther away from population centers with less social service infrastructure appear to favor the “Single Point of Contact” model to provide assistance with housing. Examples include Fayette, Jackson-Meigs, Knox, and Pickaway counties. Conversely, counties with more suburban profiles and more structured agencies appear to favor the “No Wrong Door” model, training staff members to provide information and use the system in a consistent manner. Examples include Delaware-Union and Fairfield counties. The tendency to select these models for program development based on geography and demographics may be a topic for further research. Rural counties may want to consider these factors when deciding which model works best.

Local Management of Housing Resources - Some housing coalitions are becoming involved in local planning for affordable housing development with city and county government leaders. Coalitions are working with Housing Authorities to help prioritize populations for Section 8 rent subsidies. There may be even more significant opportunities for local management of housing resources, especially if HUD permits more local control of housing vouchers and other programs. Coalitions may be able to work effectively with preferred landlords in a more structured manner in the future.

Combining Direct Assistance with Mainstream Services - Programs that focus on direct assistance in case management, education and training, employment services, financial literacy, and other support programs have documented success in helping to build long-term stability. Changes to the welfare system over the past decade successfully linked benefits to employment and education to address the root causes of poverty. Programs that serve families and individuals at risk of homelessness may find it beneficial to experiment with similar requirements, especially for individuals and families that do not have an ongoing disability that prevents them from maintaining housing or employment.

Gathering Data - This area continues to be a significant challenge for rural counties. Standardized methods for conducting point-in-time counts and reporting services are needed. Rural counties have difficulty quantifying the number of individuals and families who are “at-risk” of homelessness, but pending federal legislation may help clarify the rules. HUD’s definition of homeless may expand to include people fleeing domestic violence and persons in danger of losing housing within 14 days. The proposed bill also states that rural areas with low homeless counts will be able to use Continuum of Care funding in a flexible manner to serve those who are considered homeless under broader definitions. This may include persons who are “doubled-up” and sharing housing as a result of losing their own housing or economic hardship, and persons living in motels, campgrounds, or other temporary accommodations due to lack of alternatives. Rural counties need to gather data on these “at risk” categories to better quantify need. Rural counties need to access assistance with developing Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) to track prevention efforts, shelter, housing, supportive services, and outcomes for homeless individuals and families. Coalitions need to work with service providers to achieve the highest level of participation in HMIS data collection

possible. This may require further discussion to accomplish, but will further document rural homelessness and the success of the RHISCO initiative and other funding in the future.

Capacity for RHISCO Implementation Phase II - The most successful grantees for RHISCO Implementation Phase 1 had more structured planning activities, more specific data on homelessness, and greater participation on housing coalitions. These achievements resulted in more comprehensive plans to develop services that involve prevention, intervention, system training and development, and housing development strategies. Counties that focus on collaboration and building partnerships appear to have greater success. Contributing factors to this success may include attendance and representation at coalition meetings, capacity of service providers, buy-in from local government and service systems, ability to collaborate with other areas, etc. Rural communities have few homeless-specific service programs, requiring mainstream programs and services to be more engaged in the issue. Communities are encouraged to work collaboratively to prevent homelessness and promote the self-sufficiency of at-risk individuals and families to maintain quality, stable housing.

End Notes

ⁱ U.S. Census, 2006 Population Estimates.

ⁱⁱ U.S. Census data, 2005 County Quick Facts.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Office of Workforce Development, Bureau of Labor Market Information statistics, July 2008.

^{iv} Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, 2006 statistics.

^v Ohio Department of Job and Family Services county statistics, July 2008.