



Bridges to Housing Update

January 2009

Bridges to Housing is a coordinated regional response to the crisis of family homelessness.

Government agencies and housing and service providers in the four-county Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area have joined forces to develop a response to the needs of high resource-using homeless families.

Bridges to Housing supports local and regional efforts to end homelessness by further refining systems for assessing family strengths and needs and matching the best intervention to each family.

Bridges to Housing will test whether housing plus services works to stabilize high-need, homeless families in the Portland area.

Bridges to Housing begins Year Two

Bridges to Housing begins Year Two in September of 2008. We began our first full year in Fall 2007, serving 56 families in the four counties. In year two, Bridges to Housing will serve an additional 89 families. With year one, and the pilot projects in Clark and Multnomah Counties, Bridges to Housing will bring its total number of families served to over 200. In year two, \$890,000 was allocated to projects in all four counties:

- Clackamas County: Clackamas County Social Services received funding to serve an additional eight families at scattered sites in Clackamas County. Families began moving in Fall 2009.
- Clark County: Share ASPIRE received funding to serve fifteen families at several scattered site properties in Clark County. The sites include strong community relationships and amenities. Doors opened in Fall 2008.
- Multnomah County: Private funding will join with public funding from Multnomah County to serve families at three sites - Humboldt Gardens, Esperanza Court and Broadway-Vantage. 49 families will be served. Childcare subsidies are made possible through the Portland Children's Investment Fund.
- Washington County: Community Action and two local non-profit housing providers, CPAH and TVHP will serve an additional twelve families. The sites all include family friendly amenities and opened in Fall 2008.

Evaluation of Effort Continues

Bridges to Housing includes a significant evaluation effort. The evaluation was designed and is being conducted by the Regional Research Institute at Portland State University. The evaluation has three components aimed at understanding and assessing the impact of the program and contributing valuable information to support systems change at the local, county, regional and national levels. These components are:

- A process study focusing on the implementation of Bridges to Housing and the experience of providers and families;
- A longitudinal outcome study of children and families served.

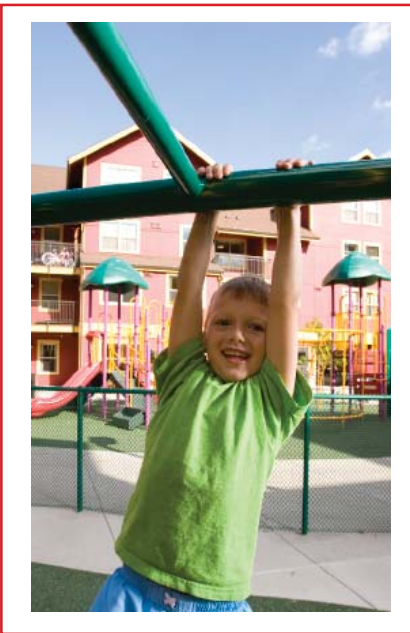
This study is being implemented through the use of the Homeless Management Information System, or HMIS.

- A comparative study of the impact and relative effectiveness of Bridges to Housing in improving outcomes for high resource-using families and their children.

The evaluation gathers data on families using the HMIS system at entry and every six months for up to twenty-four months as resources allow. The first report was released in January of 2008. A third report with information on families at the twelve-month mark will be available soon. Evaluation reports are available at: www.bridgestohousing.org.

Bridges to Housing • Fast Facts

- Bridges to Housing combines three program elements: first, families will be placed into permanent affordable housing using a Housing First or transitions-in-place model; second, Bridges to Housing provides intensive case management in a strengths-based approach which is uniform across the four counties; and third, Bridges to Housing will provide support as funding allows for childrens services and child care.
- Bridges to Housing operates in four counties in the Portland metropolitan area: Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties in Oregon and Clark County, Washington.
- Significant philanthropic investment has been made, totalling nearly \$2.5 million to date. Bridges to Housing is



funded by: The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, The Paul G. Allen Foundation, Oregon Community Foundation, the Portland Children's Investment Fund and Enterprise Community Partners.

- Bridges to Housing has also recently received an Allies for Employment Planning Grant from the Corporation for Supportive Housing. This planning grant will allow us to work closely with the workforce development system in the four county region to build linkages and partnerships to better meet the employment needs of high-need homeless families.
- Significant local public investment has been made in capital for family housing, as well as services and rent subsidies. The investment totals over \$25 million to date from the public sector.
- The project involves city and county governments, non-profit housing and service providers and housing authorities.
- Bridges to Housing also stimulates the development of permanent supportive housing for families.
- A rigorous evaluation is being conducted, using data generated through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), interviews, process observations, case notes and a comparison group.
- Bridges to Housing is tracking numerous outcomes, including increased stability in housing, increased economic well-being, decreased need for crisis and emergency care, increased family and child safety and stability.

- The Neighborhood Partnership Fund (NPF) administers funds contributed to Bridges to Housing. These funds will supplement local resources to provide housing plus services to families in all four counties in the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan region. NPF is also overseeing the evaluation, communicating learnings from Bridges to Housing, and raising additional funds.
- A Regional Steering Committee serves as a policy setting body, and includes representatives from each of the four counties. Members include elected officials, business leaders, non-profit organizations, staff from state agencies serving homeless families, funders, and formerly homeless mothers.
- A systems change strategy is being articulated at the state and local levels, and the Regional Steering Committee has begun to engage on policy agendas and system change efforts. This strategy seeks to support plans to end homelessness as well as re-structure family support networks.

CONTACT US!

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