

## **NACo 2008 Policy Resolution:**

### **Endorsing 10 Year Plans to End Chronic Homelessness**

**Issue:** Jurisdictionally-led, community-based 10 Year Plans to End the Homelessness of those who are the most disabled, most vulnerable and most expensive citizens.

**Proposed Policy:** NACo strongly supports community- based 10 Year Plans to end homelessness, as also proposed in the statement of principles and actions of America's Road Home: A Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. Furthermore:

- NACo endorses the targeting of federal resources to housing first and rapid re-housing strategies and other innovations in 10 Year Plans that have demonstrated results towards reducing and ending homelessness;
- NACo supports additional federal funding for 10 Year Plans. Such federal programs and grants shall not create unfunded mandates;
- NACo endorses increased investments in solutions to veteran homelessness, and encourages both the Administration and the Congress to continue to increase the resources targeted to end the homelessness of veterans; and
- NACo endorses and encourages county officials to develop and implement 10 Year Plans to End Homelessness for their communities and adopt the national innovations identified through those Plans.

**Background:** County officials in partnership with the U. S. Interagency Council on Homelessness are committed to preventing and ending homelessness in our nation's counties, a partnership of accountability and results. County officials and counties are on the front lines of the response to chronic homelessness. Ending chronic homelessness requires a partnership with all levels of government, the private sector, and all other community stakeholders. As a result of this partnership with county officials, other elected representatives, the private sector, and all other stakeholders, more than 335 counties and cities have committed to create and implement jurisdictionally- led, community-based, business-oriented 10 Year Plans to End Homelessness.

**"America's Road Home Statement of Principles and Actions** was developed by county commissioners, county executives, and mayors in partnership with the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness at a Summit in Denver. More than 335 county commissioners, county executives and mayors are signatories to America's Road Home Statement of Principles and Actions. These principles include:

1. End the homelessness of our most vulnerable and disabled citizens who reside on our streets and in our shelters, those experiencing chronic homelessness, especially including homeless veterans;
2. With the support of our partners work to shorten the time any person is homeless;
3. Accept jurisdictional responsibility for accountability and results in the broader partnership that includes other levels of government and the private sector for an issue that is visible, expensive, and unacceptable in our communities;

4. Affirm our jurisdictionally-led, community- based 10 Year Plans as the community's primary planning strategy to effect accountability and results in ending and preventing homelessness; and
5. Develop these plans to ensure that the measurable outcomes are sustainable and render lasting solutions to homelessness.

**Ten Year Plans** have identified innovations, such as assertive community treatment, housing first and rapid re-housing, private-sector community champions, cost benefit analysis, ending the homelessness of ex-offenders, and Project Homeless Connect (PHC), that have been adopted by communities across the country. A number of communities implementing 10 Year Plans and adopting these innovations are seeing reductions in the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness living on their streets and languishing in emergency shelters, the first such reductions communities have seen in over 20 years. These reductions in chronic and street homelessness are improving the quality of life for all members of urban and rural communities, housed and homeless alike.

NACo encourages and supports the increased involvement of county officials in creating **Project Homeless Connect** events and participating in the 2008 National Project Homeless Connect (NPHC) Week and throughout the year in proven strategies that end homelessness. County officials have organized PHC events specifically to engage homeless youth, homeless families, and persons experiencing chronic homelessness on community streets and in shelters. County officials have engaged business, academia, professional sports, and an expansive range of new public and private partners in executing PHC events.

"Some returning **veterans** face difficulties in their return related to psychological or physical challenges and disabilities, and become homeless. County officials are committed to supporting homeless veterans and assuring they have the housing and services they need to rebuild their lives. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently reported that, on any given night, there are 154,000 veterans who are homeless. This is a decrease from 250,000 veterans that were homeless the VA reported in the late 1990's, and from 195,000 veterans that were homeless the VA reported in 2006, which corresponds to the creation of permanent supported housing as the primary intervention.

**Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Developing and implementing jurisdictionally-led, community based 10 Year Plans to End Homelessness has led to documented savings and substantial reductions of tax payer expenses in communities nationally. This is attributable to redirection of chronically homeless people away from costly public systems of care to more cost effective permanent supported housing. 10 Year Plans have also strengthened already existing local collaborative groups, whose purpose is to garner federal targeted homeless assistance resources, thereby positioning communities to be more competitive for future federal resources.