



City of Alameda Homeless Needs Assessment

Prepared for the Alameda Reuse and Redevelopment Authority

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Prepared by PMC



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I. INTRODUCTION

In November 2007, the US Department of the Navy notified the Alameda Reuse and Redevelopment Authority (ARRA), of its intention to declare an additional 42 acres of Alameda Naval Air Station as surplus. The 42 acres encompasses a section of the former base commonly referred to as the North Housing Parcel. This formal declaration of surplus triggered the ARRA's obligation, as the Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA), to manage a legislatively prescribed screening process. The screening process will identify possible accommodations to meet the community's unmet homeless needs while balancing those needs with other community and economic development needs. On November 16, 2007 the ARRA published the Notice of Interest (NOI) for homeless providers, state and local governmental agencies, and others eligible to receive public benefit conveyances.

To assist in the screening process the ARRA commissioned this Homeless Needs Assessment to gauge the magnitude of homelessness and its characteristics in the City of Alameda. The assessment provides the following information:

- An estimate of the potential number of homeless individuals residing in the LRA's political jurisdiction;
- A descriptive list of existing services and housing resources for the homeless in the City of Alameda;
- A descriptive list of unmet needs for the homeless in the City of Alameda; and
- A discussion of national trends and best practices regarding the delivery of services to homeless individuals and families, as well as effective efforts to end homelessness.

The Homeless Needs Assessment will assist the ARRA in evaluating NOI responses from eligible homeless service providers.

II. HOMELESSNESS IN THE CITY OF ALAMEDA

Estimating the number of homeless people in the City of Alameda is quantitatively difficult given the transient and sometimes temporary nature of homelessness.¹ By its nature, homelessness is also a regional phenomenon. Homeless individuals and families often originate in one area and then move to, or migrate between, areas where services are located or where shelter and resources can be found.

By using a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods, however, it is possible to provide a range of estimates of the homeless population. These estimates can better inform the community about the current magnitude of homelessness in Alameda and identify the populations in the City that are currently at risk for homelessness.

Estimating the Number of Homeless in the City of Alameda

Since there is not a recent statistically valid point-in-time homeless count available for the City of Alameda, estimates of the homeless population in the City must be derived from other data sources. This report examines three basic sources of data to estimate the number of homeless in Alameda.

¹ National Coalition for the Homeless. "How Many People Experience Homelessness?" August 2007.

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Two of the sources—the Alameda County-wide Shelter and Service Survey (ACSSS) and US Census data—provide statistically valid estimations of the homeless population.

A third source is data gathered by homeless service providers in the City that can be used to corroborate statistical estimates. Since no available method of estimating the number of homeless in Alameda is infallible, the best alternative is to use all three to provide a range of estimates. Below is a series of tables and associated narratives that describe the estimates.

Using the Alameda Countywide Shelter and Services Survey (ACSSS)

The ACSSS examines homelessness at a sub-regional level. Alameda is included in the Mid- and North County Sub-region, which includes the cities of Emeryville, Alameda, Castro Valley, Hayward, and San Leandro. Due to the design of the survey, accurate estimates for the number of homeless cannot be derived for individual jurisdictions smaller than the identified sub-regions.

Table 2.1: Number of Homeless in Mid- and North Alameda County by Homeless Definition

Mid and North Alameda County				
	HUD-defined Homeless	County-defined Homeless	HUD Chronically Homeless	County-defined Chronically Homeless
Adults	436	532	45	398
Children with Surveyed Adult	489	532	--	481
Survey Total	925	1,064	45	879

Source: Alameda Countywide Shelter and Services Survey²

Using Total Population to Estimate the Number of Homeless

National research measuring homeless people as a proportion of total population has indicated that between 0.9 and 1.3 percent of a defined region's total population may be homeless over one year's time.³ Using the most current population estimate from the California Department of Finance for the City of Alameda (75,254), this method yields a range of between 677 and 978 homeless persons during the course of a year.

Table 2.2 - Annual Number of Homeless People in the City of Alameda

	City of Alameda
Population (2007)	75,254
Low Annual = 0.9%	677
High Annual = 1.3%	978

Source of Population Data: California Department of Finance

Using Census Data to Estimate those at Risk for Homelessness

Although other factors, such as mental illness and substance abuse, can lead to homelessness independent of a person's income, income and poverty statistics can still provide some perspective on the number of people at risk for homelessness. Within that context, one of the population segments most at risk for homelessness is renters who are classified as extremely-low income (earning 30 percent or less of the area's median family income).

² Speigman, Richard and Jean C. Norris. "Alameda Countywide Shelter and Services Survey." Oakland: Public Health Institute, 2004.

³ Burt, Martha and Carol Wilkins. "Estimating the Need," Corporation for Supportive Housing, March 2005.

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Census data for the City of Alameda indicates that 2,633 renters earn 30 percent or less of the area's median family income. Of those renters, approximately 2,143 (65.7 percent) are having severe problems with affordability by experiencing housing costs that exceed 50 percent of their total household income.

Table 2.3 - Renters at Risk for Homelessness in the City of Alameda

Name of Jurisdiction: City of Alameda, California		Source of Data: CHAS Data Book			
Household by Type, Income, & Housing Problem	Renters				
	Elderly 1 & 2 Member Households	Small Related (2 to 4)	Large Related (5 or more)	All Other Households	Total Renters
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
1. Household Income <=50% MFI	1,154	1,565	429	1,482	4,630
2. Household Income <=30% MFI	715	835	219	864	2,633
3. % with any housing problems	72	86.8	90.9	83.2	82
4. % Cost Burden >30%	69.2	80.8	77.2	82.1	77.8
5. % Cost Burden >50%	57.3	66.5	59.4	73.4	65.7

Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000, CHAS data

Another commonly accepted measure of homelessness finds that between five and ten percent of poor people are homeless at some point within a given year.⁴ If 200 percent of the federal poverty level is used to define poor, this yields a range of 708 to 1,416 persons in Alameda who may be homeless in a given year.

Table 2.4 - Low Income Residents at Risk for Homelessness in the City of Alameda

City of Alameda			
Total Population	<=200% Poverty	5% of Poor	10% of Poor
71,443	14,155	708	1,416

Source: United States Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 3

Gauging the Magnitude of Homelessness through Service Providers

Census data estimates can be corroborated on the ground through data collected by service providers serving the homeless and those at risk for homelessness. One of the most elucidating statistics for service providers in the City of Alameda is the number of people currently placed on waiting lists for transitional, assisted, and public housing.

⁴ Burt, Martha. "What Will it Take to End Homelessness?" Urban Institute, September 2001.

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Table 2.5 – Current Waiting Lists for Transitional, Assisted, and Public Housing

City of Alameda		
Housing Resource	Total Number of Units	Number on Waiting List
Alameda Point Collaborative	200	800
Alameda Housing Authority Section 8	(NA)	1,729
Alameda Housing Authority Public Housing	557	427

Source: Housing Authority of the City of Alameda

Additionally, the Alameda Food Bank serves a total of 3,375 individuals annually, which equates to approximately 1,300 households.⁵ The Food Bank serves homeless people as well as those at risk for homelessness. When these data are considered in aggregate from a qualitative perspective, the numbers appear to corroborate a potential homeless population in the City of Alameda in line with the statistical estimates.

Summary of Homeless Estimates

A comparison of the total number of homeless individuals determined by the different estimation methods reveals that the resulting estimates range from a low of 677 to a high of 1,416. If averages are taken from each data subset, the total number of homeless individuals ranges from a low of 828 to a high of 1,062. Averaging the data subset averages across all estimation methods yields approximately 961 homeless individuals in the City of Alameda in any year's time. This number falls between the HUD-defined number of homeless and the County-defined number of homeless in the ACSSS. Table 2.6 below summarizes the results using the various estimation methods.

Table 2.6 - Summary of Homeless Estimates

Data Source	ACSSS		Census – City of Alameda				Average Across all Estimation Methods
	Mid and North County		Total Population		>=200% Federal Poverty		
Estimation Criteria	HUD-defined Homeless	County-defined Homeless	Low Annual = 0.9%	High Annual = 1.3%	Low Income = 5%	Low Income = 10%	
Total Count	925	1,064	677	978	708	1,416	
Average	995		828		1,062		961

Sources: US Census Bureau, Census 2000; and Alameda Countywide Shelter and Services Survey (ACSSS)

III. HOMELESS SERVICES AND HOUSING AVAILABLE IN THE CITY OF ALAMEDA

Emergency Shelter

The Midway Shelter, which is owned and operated by Building Futures with Women and Children, is the only emergency homeless shelter in the City of Alameda. Midway Shelter offers temporary emergency housing, hot meals, a childcare program, and other supportive services to the homeless. All beds are occupied year-round and are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Residents are allowed to stay for up to four months. In addition to providing beds and meals, the shelter requires

⁵ Russell, Paul. Alameda Food Bank. Telephone Interview. 12 Feb. 2008.

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all residents to participate in an extensive case management program that assists them in securing permanent housing, employment, and medical care.

Table 3.1 - Emergency Shelter Beds Available in the City of Alameda

	Beds for Families	Beds for Individuals	Total Beds
Midway Shelter	15*	10*	25

* The number of beds available for families and individuals is not a fixed number and is subject to change according to the need.

Source: *Building Futures with Women and Children*.⁶

Transitional Supportive Housing

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development defines transitional housing as “a project that has as its purpose facilitating the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing within a reasonable amount of time (usually 24 months). Transitional housing includes housing primarily designed to serve deinstitutionalized homeless individuals and other homeless individuals with mental or physical disabilities and homeless families with children.”⁷

There are a total of 110 transitional units located at Alameda Point. The Alameda Point Collaborative manages 82 of those units, including the transitional units that are part of Bessie Coleman Court (BCC), an affordable housing project that offers both transitional and permanent housing for victims of domestic violence.⁸ Operation Dignity provides another 28 units of transitional housing to veterans and their families.⁹ All of the transitional housing units have access to a variety of supportive services located onsite, including counseling and other resources.

Table 3.2 - Fixed-Site Transitional Housing at Alameda Point

Organization	Units for Families	Units for Individuals	Total Units
Bessie Colman Court (APC)	14	8	22
APC	---	---	60
Operation Dignity	6	22	28
Total Transitional Units	20	30	110

Source: *Alameda Point Collaborative*¹⁰

Permanent Supportive Housing

Unlike emergency shelters and transitional housing, permanent housing typically has no maximum length of stay. Permanent supportive housing offers residents affordable rents with access to supportive services to assist them with maintaining their housing and other life skills. There are approximately 90 permanent supportive housing units located at Alameda Point. These units are available primarily to individuals and families with mental and physical disabilities. There are a wide variety of services and resources available to these households, such as life-skills development,

⁶ Varela, Liz. *Building Futures with Women & Children*. Telephone Interview. 11 February 2008.

⁷ US Department of Housing and Urban Development Online. HUD. 8 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/library/glossary/t/>>.

⁸ Kriebel, Jennifer. *Alameda Point Collaborative*. Telephone Interview. 11 Feb. 2008.

⁹ McElree, Alex. *Operation Dignity*. Telephone Interview. 15 Feb. 2008.

¹⁰ Kriebel.

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mental health counseling, substance abuse counseling, youth services, job training, a community arts center, and a community garden co-op.¹¹

Other Supportive Services

In addition to the supportive services offered to Alameda Point residents, there are a number of services available to Alameda residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Table 3.3 below summarizes a number of these services.

Table 3.3 - Other Supportive Service in the City of Alameda

City of Alameda	
Organization	Services Offered
American Red Cross Bay Area Service Center	Rental and utility payment assistance
Alameda Food Bank	Perishable and nonperishable food items for income-qualified households
Alameda Family Services	New parent support; a Head Start program; School-based health centers; Homeless youth services; Counseling; Drug and alcohol treatment; A clinical training program. ¹²
The Alameda One-Stop Career Center	Job placement services and access employment training information

The City of Alameda Housing Authority

The Housing Authority of the City of Alameda assists individuals and families with low and moderate incomes in finding adequate housing. Although these income groups are not necessarily considered to be at risk of homelessness, without the services provided by public and assisted housing, they may not have the means to afford their current living situations.

The Housing Authority currently manages a total of 557 units, including units to house seniors, families, and disabled persons. The number of available units does not satisfy the demand for such housing in the City of Alameda. The Housing Authority reports that as of February 2008, there are currently 1,729 households on the waiting list for Section 8 assistance and 427 households on the waiting list for public housing.¹³

Table 3.4 - Housing Units Managed by the Housing Authority

Special Needs Group	Seniors	Families	Disabled*	Total Units
Units	258	299	29	557

*Total number of accessible units is a subset of the total number of units for seniors and families
Source: Housing Authority of the City of Alameda¹⁴

¹¹ Alameda Point Collaborative Online. 9 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.apcollaborative.org/programs.htm>>.

¹² Alameda Family Services Online. 13 Jan. 2008. <<http://www.alamedafs.org/>>.

¹³ Lee, Doug; Housing Authority of the City of Alameda. Telephone Interview. 12 February 2008.

¹⁴ Lee.

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Table 3.5 - Housing Authority Current Waiting List Statistics

Housing Authority of the City of Alameda		
Housing Resource	Total Number of Units	Number on Waiting List
Alameda Housing Authority Section 8	(Depends on annual vacancies and tenancy request approvals)	1,729
Alameda Housing Authority Public Housing	557	427

Source: Housing Authority of the City of Alameda

VI. IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITIZING UNMET NEEDS

In evaluating Notices of Interest from homeless service providers for proposed homeless accommodations at the North Housing Parcel at Alameda Point, it is important to understand what unmet needs may exist among homeless people and those at risk for homelessness in the City of Alameda.

As part of this Homeless Needs Assessment the City of Alameda, PMC conducted two workshops with local policy experts and service providers for homeless individuals and families. Sixteen participants representing a broad range of local city and county agencies and non-profits organizations took part in the workshops in January 2008. In the workshops, participants were asked to examine the current set of services for homeless individuals and families in the City of Alameda and to accomplish the following tasks using their collective knowledge and experience:

1. Develop a comprehensive list of homeless services in Alameda;
2. Describe challenges and successes in providing services for the homeless in Alameda;
3. Develop a list of unmet needs for homeless individuals and families in Alameda;
4. Prioritize unmet needs in Alameda; and
5. Identify and describe any regional or national programs or practices that could be applied to the unmet needs in the City of Alameda.

After careful consideration of the current services available to the homeless in Alameda, the unmet needs cited most often by participants in the workshops include the following, in order of priority:

1. **Permanent Supportive Housing**—There is a need for permanent supportive housing in Alameda, especially housing designed for individuals, such as single-room occupancy facilities and housing for couples and small families. In general, participants wanted more diverse housing configuration types than the typical three and four bedroom single-family homes located at Alameda Point.
2. **Protection of Existing Affordable Housing Stock**—There needs to be more emphasis and better means to secure and maintain the existing stock of affordable housing in the community to prevent currently housed low-income residents from becoming homeless in the future.
3. **Access to Basic Amenities**—Homeless, sheltered, and formerly homeless individuals need access to transitional and supportive housing sites that are close to services and other retail

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establishments providing basic amenities, such as groceries, clothing, and toiletries. The Food Bank plays a critical role in helping to serve the need for groceries; however, the Food Bank currently needs additional storage space for perishable and dry goods. There is also a strong need for related services, such as hot meals, showers, laundry facilities, and warming centers during colder months.

4. **Transportation**—Adequate transportation options for the homeless and formerly homeless, who may be in transitional housing, was also a frequently mentioned concern. Homeless, sheltered, and formerly homeless people need to get to jobs, training, medical appointments, grocery stores, pharmacies, and other destinations to attend to their daily needs. Many felt the isolated location of Alameda Point created special challenges in regards to mobility, and many felt the area was underserved by public transportation.
5. **Educational Opportunities**—Education and training, including basic life skills, such as childcare, nutrition, cooking, and establishing and managing a household budget, are often needed to help integrate homeless and formerly homeless individuals back into the community.
6. **Programs for Children and Young Adults**—For children in homeless families or families in transition, afterschool programs and other programs geared to the special needs of homeless children could provide the necessary attention and stable learning environment that is lacking wherever they or their families manage to find shelter. Some participants felt that the needs of homeless boys and young men (ages 10 to 21) were not adequately addressed in the current service offerings in the City of Alameda. Workshop participants also felt that homeless young men were one of the most difficult demographic segments to reach through existing services, and that many homeless young men, despite their needs, do not utilize existing services in order to avoid being stigmatized or ostracized by their peers.
7. **Economic Opportunities**—Identifying and creating economic development opportunities for homeless and formerly homeless individuals, including technical training for sustainable employment is a critical step in assisting people in transition to reenter mainstream society.
8. **Mentoring**—Mentoring programs that establish connections to the community and help homeless and formerly homeless individuals develop productive personal and professional relationships while acquiring valuable experience and skills could play an important role in assisting program participants to reenter mainstream society and attain employment.

IV. LEGISLATIVE AND PROGRAMMATIC EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE HOMELESSNESS

There are several legislative and programmatic efforts to end homelessness at a federal and regional level that are utilized by the City of Alameda when evaluating new policies or programs to serve homeless individuals and families. Whereas the McKinney-Vento Act defines homelessness for the legislatively prescribed screening process, other efforts, such as EveryOne Home, provide regional statistics and proven practices.

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A summary of homeless initiatives and the year each was enacted is listed below:

- Federal Efforts
 - The McKinney-Vento Act (1987)
 - The Continuum of Care (1994)
 - The 10-year Plan to End Homelessness (2000)
- Current Regional Efforts
 - EveryOne Home (County of Alameda) (2004)

V. CURRENT METHODS AND PROVEN PRACTICES TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

There are several current approaches to addressing homelessness that have developed over time and have evolved with changing federal legislative and executive priorities. These proven practices include:

- **Interim Assistance**—These traditional “front-line” interim assistance approaches, often paired with social and mental health services for the homeless, include emergency shelter, food aid, healthcare, transitional housing, HIV/AIDS services, and combating resurgent communicable diseases.
- **The Continuum of Care**—A comprehensive approach to homelessness that recognizes that homelessness has multiple and varied causes, and that providing relief from the symptoms of homelessness is not sufficient to end or to prevent homelessness.
- **Transitional Housing**—Temporary housing that has a more stable and supportive environment than an emergency shelter. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, transitional housing is not intended to house homeless persons for a period of greater than 24 months.¹⁵
- **Permanent Supportive Housing**—Long-term affordable housing coupled with services to meet the needs of the permanently disabled, those with serious mental illness or chronic substance abuse problems, and persons infected with HIV or suffering from AIDS.¹⁶ Permanent supportive housing is one of the most cost-effective ways of housing the homeless.¹⁷
- **Housing First**—A model of “rapid re-housing” based on the premise that many of the challenges faced by the homeless, if not exacerbated by being homeless, are in fact caused by being homeless.¹⁸ The housing first model initially places the homeless person in housing and then seeks to treat the underlying issues and support the person as they recover.

¹⁵ US Department of Housing and Urban Development Online. “Overview of the Supportive Housing Program: Program Components” 23 Jan. 2008. HUD 8 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/library/shp/understandingshp/components.cfm>>.

¹⁶ US Department of Housing and Urban Development Online. “Overview of the Supportive Housing Program: Program Components” 23 Jan. 2008. HUD 8 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/library/shp/understandingshp/components.cfm>>.

¹⁷ The Lewin Group. “Costs of Serving Homeless Individuals in Nine Cities,” Corporation for Supportive Housing. 19 Nov. 2004.

¹⁸ National Alliance to End Homelessness. “What is Housing First?” 9 November 2006.

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- **Discharge Planning**—As a result of the Continuum of Care planning process, HUD regulations, and state legislation,^{19 20} communities have been examining the institutional sources of homelessness, which include jails, prisons, mental institutions, and hospitals. “Discharge planning” is focused on strategies for preventing persons discharged from these institutions from becoming homeless.

VII. CONCLUSION

The screening process triggered by the US Navy’s declaration of additional surplus housing at Alameda Point requires the ARRA to evaluate possible reuses of the North Housing Parcel, including homeless accommodations, according to statutory guidelines. The Homeless Needs Assessment for the City of Alameda is one of the tools that the ARRA will apply to that evaluation process. This assessment has established the following:

1. A baseline of current services for homeless individuals and families in the City of Alameda;
2. Statistically valid methods for estimating the current homeless population in the City of Alameda;
3. Identification and prioritization of current unmet needs for homeless individuals in the City of Alameda; and
4. A summary of national and regional best practices in providing for the homeless and eliminating homelessness.

¹⁹ HUD 2007 Continuum of Care Application: Exhibit 1, Section “O”

²⁰ Jones. California State Assembly Bill 2745, 2006.

HOMELESS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In 1993, the Alameda Naval Air Station was one of several military bases designated to be closed through the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. The BRAC process is used by the US Military and Congress to close excess military facilities and reallocate resources to increase financial and operating efficiency. The transition of military base property and assets to local agencies is governed by the designated Local Reuse Authority (LRA). The ARRA, a Joint Powers Authority consisting of the City of Alameda and the City of Alameda Community Improvement Commission, is the LRA responsible for governing the transition of the former Alameda Naval Air Station from military to civilian ownership. The ARRA has approved a Community Reuse Plan that envisions integration of the Naval Air Station into the City by 2020.

In November 2007, the US Department of the Navy declared an additional 42 acres of Alameda Naval Air Station as surplus property. The 42 acres encompasses a section of the former base commonly referred to as the North Housing Parcel. This formal declaration of surplus triggered the ARRA's obligation, as the LRA, to manage a legislatively prescribed screening process. The screening process will identify possible accommodations to meet the community's unmet homeless needs while balancing those needs with other community and economic development needs. On November 16, 2007 the ARRA published a Notice of Interest (NOI) for homeless service providers, state and local governmental agencies, and others eligible to receive public benefit conveyances.

To assist in the screening process the ARRA commissioned this Homeless Needs Assessment to gauge the magnitude of homelessness and its characteristics in the City of Alameda. The assessment provides the following information:

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- A discussion of national trends and best practices regarding the delivery of services to homeless individuals and families, as well as effective efforts to end homelessness.

The Homeless Needs Assessment will assist the ARRA in evaluating the NOI responses from eligible homeless service providers.

PREVIOUS HOMELESS ACCOMMODATIONS

An initial screening process was completed for NAS Alameda in 1996. The resulting accommodation for the homeless consists of 200 housing units and related economic development and community development initiatives, known as the Alameda Point Collaborative (APC). The related economic and community development initiatives, include:

- A community service center;
- A community garden; and

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- A commercial plant nursery.

THE LOCAL REUSE AUTHORITY'S POLITICAL JURISDICTION

In 1996, the Local Reuse Authority represented a large portion of the East Bay region, and the resulting accommodation embodied the best thinking at the time regarding how to integrate the NAS property into the broader community. Since that time, the composition and purview of the ARRA have shifted. The ARRA's decisions regarding the current screening process must be based solely on needs specific to the City of Alameda.

Map: Alameda Point and the North Housing Parcel



Source: City of Alameda

HOMELESS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

II. HOMELESSNESS IN THE CITY OF ALAMEDA

Estimating the number of homeless people in the City of Alameda is quantitatively difficult given the transient and sometimes temporary nature of homelessness.²¹ By using a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods, however, it is possible to provide a range of estimates of the homeless population. These estimates can better inform the community about the current magnitude of homelessness in Alameda and identify the populations in the City that are currently at risk for homelessness.

DEFINITION OF HOMELESS

The layman's perception of those who are homeless is often confined to those individuals who can be observed living on the streets in urban areas. Many of these individuals are often chronically homeless people who are also struggling with substance abuse, mental health issues, and other medical conditions that compound the difficulties they face in getting off the streets. Chronically homeless people constitute 10 to 20 percent of the total homeless population.^{22 23} The majority of homeless individuals and families—80 to 90 percent of all homeless people—may be homeless for short periods of time.²⁴ Some people may have to utilize temporary shelters or low-cost hotels for a brief time. Some may live in their cars, or move from place to place finding temporary refuge with family, friends, or charitable organizations. These are the majority of people facing homelessness.

Federal Definition

For purposes of the federal screening process, a homeless person is defined in the McKinney-Vento Act. The United States Code contains the federal definition of homeless in Title 42, Chapter 119, Subchapter I, §11302, which defines a homeless person as “1. an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and 2. an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is — a) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill); b) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or c) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.”

The McKinney-Vento Act uses the federal definition of homeless and expands on conditions of homelessness as they apply to children, including:

(i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;

(ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C));

²¹ National Coalition for the Homeless. “How Many People Experience Homelessness?” August 2007.

²² National Alliance to End Homeless. “A Plan, Not a Dream: How to End Homelessness in Ten Years.” June 2000.

²³ Caton, C.L.M., Wilkins, C., Anderson, J., et al. (2007). People Who Experience Long-Term Homelessness: Characteristics and Interventions. 2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research, 2007. 4-3.

²⁴ Caton, C.L.M., Wilkins, C., Anderson, J., et al.

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(iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

County of Alameda Definition

The County of Alameda has also adopted a community definition of homelessness that is more expansive than the federal definition. The community definition includes persons whose living arrangements are transient or precarious, those who lack a place of their own, and those for whom homelessness may be imminent. The County of Alameda definition also includes chronically homeless individuals as well as those who may experience episodic homelessness.²⁵

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS REGIONAL HOMELESS STUDIES

Alameda County has conducted surveys and partial counts of homeless individuals in the past and has used statistical methods to develop estimates of homeless populations for defined sub-regions within the County.

The Alameda County Homeless Continuum of Care Plan was developed in the mid-1990s. Developed through a multi-year collaborative effort spanning government jurisdictions in Alameda County, the Plan received HUD approval and garnered special recognition by receiving a HUD "Best Practices" Award. The Plan was adopted by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors in early 1998, and was incorporated into the City of Alameda's first Five-Year Strategic Plan by reference.²⁶ Building on the success of the Alameda County Homeless Continuum of Care Plan, the Continuum of Care Council, of which the City of Alameda is a member, conducted one of the most expansive studies of homelessness in Alameda County, the Alameda Countywide Shelter and Services Survey (ACSSS), which was published in 2004.

The Alameda Countywide Shelter and Services Survey

The ACSSS was prepared for the Alameda County-wide Homeless Continuum of Care Council and was funded by a diverse group of city and County agencies and private foundations specializing in housing, homelessness, public health, and community development. The ACSSS "provides a reliable estimate of the number of homeless persons in Alameda County and examines the characteristics, service use, and unmet needs of the County's homeless population and of the sector of the non-homeless population that uses food, shelter, and other service designed to serve homeless persons."²⁷ Trained volunteers were supervised by the County-wide Continuum of Care Council and surveyed over 1,400 clients at 51 homeless assistance services in a four-week period in February 2003.²⁸ The design of the sample likely "underestimate[d] the actual size of the homeless population since a number of potential service sites—jails, prisons, mental institutions, residential treatment centers, and group homes for disabled persons—were not included." The survey sample was also weighted to account for response rates and service use by individuals.²⁹

²⁵ Speiglmán, Richard and Jean C. Norris. "Alameda Countywide Shelter and Services Survey." Oakland: Public Health Institute, 2004.

²⁶ "Action Plan Non-Home Funds FY 2004/05." Alameda: City of Alameda, May 15, 2004. 20-22.

²⁷ Speiglmán and Norris.

²⁸ Speiglmán and Norris.

²⁹ Speiglmán, Richard and Jean C. Norris. "Alameda Countywide Shelter and Services Survey." Oakland: Public Health Institute, 2004.

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The sampling methods used by the study, however, do not allow an accurate homeless count to be determined for the City of Alameda. The report looked specifically at the cities of Oakland and Berkeley and then divided the rest of Alameda County into sub-regions. According to Richard Speigman, one of the authors of the report, the sampling size and methods used in the study are valid within the defined geographic areas, but results from the survey cannot accurately be proportioned to individual municipalities within the sub-regions. So while the ACSSS yields informative results concerning homelessness in specific sub-regions, the results of the survey do not provide an accurate count of the number of homeless people within the City of Alameda specifically.

The Alameda Countywide Homeless and Special Needs Housing Plan

The Alameda Countywide Homeless and Special Needs Housing Plan, published in 2006, was funded by local city and County agencies, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and private foundations. The Homeless and Special Needs Housing Plan “outlines a reorientation of housing and service systems to end chronic homelessness within ten years and significantly reduce housing crises for these vulnerable populations in Alameda County over fifteen years.”³⁰ “This plan identifies a need for 15,000 units of housing for people who are homeless or living with HIV/AIDS or mental illness, and estimates the cost of developing and operating housing and services over the next fifteen years at \$2.1 billion.”³¹

The County’s Plan is particularly proactive in its approach to ending homelessness with an emphasis on preventing rather than mitigating crises after they occur. The Plan establishes the following five goals:³²

1. Prevent homelessness and other housing crises;
2. Increase housing opportunities for the Plan’s target populations;
3. Deliver flexible services to support stability and independence;
4. Measure success and report outcomes; and
5. Develop long-term leadership and build political will.

An outgrowth of the County’s plan to end homelessness is the EveryOne Home Plan, which is spearheaded through the newly created County organization of the same name. EveryOne Home “coordinates the efforts of the county, local jurisdictions and community nonprofits to create housing opportunities with wrap-around services” that will fulfill the goals established in the County’s Homeless and Special Needs Housing Plan.³³

Applying Existing County Data and Plans to the City of Alameda

While neither of the County reports cited above have looked specifically at the City of Alameda or used statistical methods that would allow a valid estimate of the homeless population confined to the city limits of Alameda, there is still a great deal of information contained in the studies to inform the community about homelessness and the unmet needs of homeless individuals and families in the

³⁰ AIDS Housing of Washington. “Alameda Countywide Homeless and Special Needs Housing Plan,” April 2006.

³¹ AIDS Housing of Washington.

³² AIDS Housing of Washington.

³³ EveryOne Home Online. 2007. EveryOne Home Ending Homelessness in Alameda County. 30 Jan. 2008. <<http://www.everyonehome.org/>>.

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region. By its nature, homelessness is a regional phenomenon. Homeless individuals and families often originate in one area and then move to, or migrate between, areas where services are located or where shelters and resources can be found.

ESTIMATING THE NUMBER OF HOMELESS IN THE CITY OF ALAMEDA

Since there is not a recent statistically valid point-in-time homeless count available for the City of Alameda, estimates of the homeless population in the City must be derived from other data sources. This report examines two basic sources of data to estimate the number of homeless in Alameda: the ACSSS and US Census data. Each source has its relative strengths and weaknesses.

The strength of the ACSSS lies in the comprehensive nature of the survey, the sound statistical methods used, and the report's relative data currency. However, estimating the number of homeless in the City of Alameda is problematic due to the survey's design, which produced estimates at a sub-regional level. Applying generally accepted statistical methods to Census data, however, can yield results confined to the City of Alameda. The weakness of this source is the outdated nature of 2000 Census data and the inexact range of the high and low estimates.

A third source includes data gathered by homeless service providers in the City that must be analyzed and corroborated with statistical estimates. There is some advantage to examining data captured directly at the point of service, but due to differing data collection standards, overlapping client bases, and duplicate client information, this source is not very reliable in terms of producing an overall estimate of the total homeless population in Alameda. Since no available method of estimating the number of homeless in Alameda is infallible, the best alternative is to use all three to provide a range of estimates. Below are a series of tables and associated narratives that describe the estimates.

Using the Alameda Countywide Shelter and Services Survey (ACSSS)

The ACSSS examines homelessness at a sub-regional level. Alameda is included in the Mid- and North County sub-region, which includes the cities of Emeryville, Alameda, Castro Valley, Hayward, and San Leandro.

Table 2.1: Number of Homeless in Mid- and North Alameda County by Homeless Definition

Mid and North Alameda County				
	HUD-defined Homeless	County-defined Homeless	HUD Chronically Homeless	County-defined Chronically Homeless
Adults	436	532	45	398
Children with Surveyed Adult	489	532	--	481
Survey Total	925	1,064	45	879

Source: Alameda Countywide Shelter and Services Survey³⁴

Using Total Population to Estimate the Number of Homeless

Census data can be used to estimate the number of persons in a populations that may become homeless over a year period as well as identify segments of a population that are most at risk of homelessness in the future. National research measuring homeless people as a proportion of total population has indicated that between 0.9 and 1.3 percent of a defined region's total population may

³⁴ Speiglmán, Richard and Jean C. Norris. "Alameda Countywide Shelter and Services Survey." Oakland: Public Health Institute, 2004.

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be homeless over one year's time.³⁵ Using the most current population estimate from the California Department of Finance for the City of Alameda (75,254), this method yields a range of between 677 and 978 homeless persons during the course of a year.

Table 2.2 - Annual Number of Homeless People in the City of Alameda

	City of Alameda
Population (2007)	75,254
Low Annual = 0.9%	677
High Annual = 1.3%	978

Source of Population Data: California Department of Finance

Using Census Data to Estimate those at Risk for Homelessness

Although other factors, such as mental illness and substance abuse, can lead to homelessness independent of a person's income, income and poverty statistics can still provide some perspective on the number of people at risk for homelessness. Within that context, one of the population segments most at risk for homelessness is renters who are classified as extremely-low income (earning 30 percent or less of the area's median family income).

HUD receives a special tabulation of Census data that is not available through other sources. This data, typically referred to as the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data, is used by local governments to plan for housing as part of the Consolidated Plan process. The CHAS data for the City of Alameda indicates that 2,633 renters earn 30 percent or less of the area's median family income. Of those renters, approximately 2,143 (65.7 percent) are having severe problems with affordability by experiencing housing costs that exceed 50 percent of their total household income.

Table 2.3 - Renters at Risk for Homelessness in the City of Alameda

Name of Jurisdiction: City of Alameda, California	Source of Data: CHAS Data Book				
Household by Type, Income, & Housing Problem	Renters				
	Elderly 1 & 2 Member Households	Small Related (2 to 4)	Large Related (5 or more)	All Other Households	Total Renters
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
1. Household Income <=50% MFI	1,154	1,565	429	1,482	4,630
2. Household Income <=30% MFI	715	835	219	864	2,633
3. % with any housing problems	72	86.8	90.9	83.2	82
4. % Cost Burden >30%	69.2	80.8	77.2	82.1	77.8
5. % Cost Burden >50%	57.3	66.5	59.4	73.4	65.7

Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000, CHAS data

Another commonly accepted measure of homelessness finds that between five and ten percent of poor people are homeless at some point within a given year.³⁶ If 200 percent of the federal poverty level is used to define poor, this yields a range of 708 to 1,416 persons in Alameda who may be homeless in a given year.

³⁵ Burt, Martha and Carol Wilkins. "Estimating the Need," Corporation for Supportive Housing, March 2005.

³⁶ Burt, Martha. "What Will it Take to End Homelessness?" Urban Institute, September 2001.

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Table 2.4 - Low Income Residents at Risk for Homelessness in the City of Alameda

City of Alameda			
Total Population	<=200% Poverty	5% of Poor	10% of Poor
71,443	14,155	708	1,416

Source: United States Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 3

Gauging the Magnitude of Homelessness through Service Providers

Census data estimates can be corroborated on the ground through data collected by service providers serving the homeless and those at risk for homelessness. One of the most illuminating statistics for service providers in the City of Alameda is the number of people currently placed on waiting lists for transitional, assisted, and public housing.

In February 2008, there are approximately 800 people on the waiting list for housing at the Alameda Point Collaborative. The waiting list at APC usually ranges between 500 and 1000 people seeking housing.³⁷ The current waiting list at the Alameda Housing Authority stands at 1,729 households for Section 8 assistance and 427 households on the waiting list for public housing.³⁸

Additionally, the Alameda Food Bank serves a total of 3,375 individuals annually, which equates to approximately 1,300 households.³⁹ The Food Bank serves homeless people as well as those at risk for homelessness. When all these statistics are considered in aggregate from a qualitative perspective, the numbers do appear to corroborate a homeless population in the City of Alameda in line with the statistical estimates.

Table 2.5 – Current Waiting Lists for Transitional, Assisted, and Public

City of Alameda		
Housing Resource	Total Number of Units	Number on Waiting List
Alameda Point Collaborative	200	800
Alameda Housing Authority Section 8	(Depends on vacancies and tenancy request approval)	1,729
Alameda Housing Authority Public Housing	557	427

Source: Housing Authority of the City of Alameda

Summary of Homeless Estimates

A comparison of the total number of homeless individuals determined by the different estimation methods reveals that the resulting estimates range from a low of 677 to a high of 1,416. If averages are taken from each data subset, the total number of homeless individuals ranges from a low of 828 to a high of 1,062. Averaging the data subset averages across all estimation methods yields approximately 961 homeless individuals in the City of Alameda in any year's time. This number

³⁷ Kriebel, Jennifer; Alameda Point Collaborative. Telephone Interview. 11 Feb. 2008.

³⁸ Kriebel, Jennifer.

³⁹ Russell, Paul. Alameda Food Bank. Telephone Interview. 12 Feb. 2008.

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falls between the HUD-defined number of homeless and the County-defined number of homeless in the ACSSS.

Table 2.6 - Summary of Homeless Estimates

Data Source	ACSSS		Census – City of Alameda				Average Across all Estimation Methods
Data Subset	Mid and North County		Total Population		>=200% Federal Poverty		
Estimation Criteria	HUD- defined Homeless	County- defined Homeless	Low Annual = 0.9%	High Annual = 1.3%	Low Income = 5%	Low Income = 10%	
Total Count	925	1,064	677	978	708	1,416	
Average	995		828		1,062		

Sources: US Census Bureau, Census 2000; and Alameda Countywide Shelter and Services Survey (ACSSS)

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III. HOMELESS SERVICES AND HOUSING AVAILABLE IN THE CITY OF ALAMEDA

EMERGENCY SHELTER

The Midway Shelter is the only emergency homeless shelter in the City of Alameda. Midway Shelter is owned and operated by Building Futures with Women and Children, an agency serving victims of domestic violence, their children, and the homeless. Midway Shelter offers temporary emergency housing, hot meals, a childcare program, and other supportive services to the homeless. All beds are occupied year-round and are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Residents are allowed to stay for up to four months. In addition to providing beds and meals, the shelter requires all residents to participate in an extensive case management program that assists them in obtaining permanent housing, securing jobs, and receiving medical care.

Sixty percent of people housed at Midway Shelter have some form of temporary or permanent housing when they leave the facility. An estimated 20 percent of those 60 percent move to shared housing and/or move in with friends and family members. Forty (40) percent of the people departing from the shelter do not have any housing and will likely return to the streets.⁴⁰

Midway Shelter has a total of 25 beds: 15 beds for families and 10 for single individuals. There may be multiple beds in a single housing unit. Midway Shelter does not keep a waiting list, but the centralized crisis line that refers people to the shelter reportedly receives 4,000 calls a year for the three shelters that it serves.⁴¹ The other two shelters served by the crisis line are located in the City of San Leandro.

Table 3.1 - Emergency Shelter Beds Available in the City of Alameda

	Beds for Families	Beds for Individuals	Total Beds
Midway Shelter	15*	10*	25

Source: Building Futures with Women and Children.⁴²

* The number of beds available for families and individuals is not a fixed number and is subject to change according to the need.

TRANSITIONAL SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development defines transitional housing as “a project that has as its purpose facilitating the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing within a reasonable amount of time (usually 24 months). Transitional housing includes housing primarily designed to serve deinstitutionalized homeless individuals and other homeless individuals with mental or physical disabilities and homeless families with children.”⁴³

All transitional housing in Alameda is located at Alameda Point. There are a total of 200 transitional and permanent units located at Alameda Point, 172 of which are managed by the Alameda Point Collaborative (APC). Approximately 82 of these units are reserved for transitional housing, and include the transitional units at Bessie Coleman Court described below. All of the transitional

⁴⁰ Varela, Liz; Building Futures with Women & Children. Telephone Interview. 11 Feb. 2008.

⁴¹ Varela, Liz.

⁴² Varela, Liz.

⁴³ US Department of Housing and Urban Development Online. HUD. 8 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/library/glossary/t/>>.

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housing units have access to a variety of supportive services located onsite including counseling and other resources.

Operation Dignity provides an additional 28 transitional housing units to veterans and their families at Alameda Point.⁴⁴ Studies indicate that veterans comprise about 20 percent of the service-using homeless population in the US.⁴⁵ The Veterans Administration estimates that about 194,000 veterans were homeless in the United States on a given night in 2005.⁴⁶ Among homeless veterans, roughly 25 to 30 percent can be classified as chronically homeless.⁴⁷

Bessie Coleman Court (BCC) is an affordable housing project located on Alameda Point that offers both transitional and permanent housing for victims of domestic violence operated by Building Futures for Women and Children. Out of 52 units at Bessie Colman Court, 22 are reserved for transitional housing. All residents have access to onsite case management, a variety of support groups, and life-skills training. In addition to the services provided onsite, residents have access to the Alameda Point Collaborative Multi-Service Center, which provides job training, medical care, substance abuse rehabilitation, and an array of other services.⁴⁸ Bessie Coleman Court reportedly has a waiting list of approximately 230 people.⁴⁹

Table 3.2 - Fixed-Site Transitional Housing at Alameda Point

	Units for Families	Units for Individuals	Total Units
Bessie Colman Court (APC)	14	8	22
APC	---	---	60
Operation Dignity	6	22	28
Total Transitional Units	20	30	110

Source: Alameda Point Collaborative⁵⁰

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Unlike emergency shelters and transitional housing, permanent housing has no maximum length of stay. Permanent supportive housing offers residents affordable rents with access to supportive services to assist them with maintaining their housing and other life skills.

Thirty (30) units at Bessie Colman Court are permanent supportive housing. Permanent housing residents at Bessie Coleman Court have access to the same services provided to those residing in the transitional housing units and other housing units managed by the Alameda Point Collaborative.⁵¹ There are an additional sixty (60) units at Alameda Point reserved for permanent housing. These units are available primarily to individuals and families with mental and physical disabilities. There are a wide variety of services and resources available to these households, such as life-skills

⁴⁴ McElree, Alex; Operation Dignity. Telephone Interview. 15 Feb. 2008.

⁴⁵ Mojtabai, R. (2005). Perceived reasons for loss of housing and continued homelessness among homeless persons with mental illness. *Psychiatric Services*, 56, 172-178.

⁴⁶ General Accounting Office. "Homeless veterans programs: Improved communications and follow-up could further enhance the grant and per diem program." Report to the Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs, House of Representatives. Washington, DC: Author. Sept. 2006.

⁴⁷ Dougherty, P. H. Statement before the Committee on Senate Veterans Affairs, U.S. Senate. 16 March 2006.

⁴⁸ Building Futures with Women and Children Online. 2003. 9 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.bfwc.org/about/bessie.html>>

⁴⁹ Kriebel, Jennifer; Alameda Point Collaborative. Telephone Interview. 11 Feb. 2008.

⁵⁰ Kriebel.

⁵¹ Kriebel.

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development, mental health counseling, substance abuse counseling, youth services, job training, a community arts center, and a community garden co-op.⁵²

OTHER SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

In addition to the supportive services offered to Alameda Point residents, there are a number of services available to Alameda residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Red Cross

The American Red Cross Bay Area has a Service Center located at Alameda Point. This Alameda Red Cross office is a non-site-based service provider that offers utility and rental assistance to help prevent families and individuals in Alameda from being evicted. Although the Red Cross does not offer any direct services to the homeless, the organization does offer referrals to those already experiencing homelessness. Both the utility and rental assistance programs are intended to help at-risk households prevent homelessness. Income-qualified residents of Alameda are able to receive a maximum of one month's rent through the rental assistance program.

There are two support options under the utility assistance program at the Red Cross. The first provides assistance to pay past-due bills. The Red Cross will match customer payments of up to \$200 over a three-year period. The second option provides a 25 percent discount on electric bills for one year. Annually, the Red Cross offers assistance to approximately 800 Alameda residents through both the rental and utility assistance programs. The American Red Cross is the only agency that offers this type of supportive service in Alameda.⁵³

Alameda Food Bank

The Alameda Food Bank is another non-site-based service offered to Alameda residents. The Food Bank assists community members by providing both perishable and nonperishable food items to income-qualified households. The Alameda Food Bank serves a total of 3,375 individuals annually, which equates to approximately 1,300 households. Fifty-one percent of people assisted through the Food Bank are under the age of 18. Similar to the services provided by the American Red Cross, the Food Bank primarily assists individuals and families at risk for homelessness.⁵⁴

Alameda Family Services

Alameda Family Services (formerly Xanthos, Inc.) is a human service organization dedicated to improving the “emotional, psychological and physical health of children, youth and families.”⁵⁵ Alameda Family Services offers a variety of services, a few of which are targeted to homeless youth:

- New parent support;
- A Head Start program;
- School-based health centers;
- Homeless youth services;

⁵² Alameda Point Collaborative Online. 9 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.apcollaborative.org/programs.htm>>.

⁵³ Franz, Jim. American Red Cross. Telephone Interview. 8 Feb. 2008.

⁵⁴ Russell, Paul. Alameda Food Bank. Telephone Interview. 12 Feb. 2008.

⁵⁵ Alameda Family Services Online. 13 Jan. 2008. <<http://www.alamedafs.org/>>

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- Counseling;
- Drug and alcohol treatment; and
- A clinical training program.⁵⁶

Alameda One-Stop Career Center

The Alameda One-Stop Career Center focuses on assisting Alameda residents with finding jobs and accessing training information. Access to career centers, such as the One-Stop, provides a stepping-stone in preventing and ending homelessness. With access to the Internet to locate jobs and the necessary training, individuals may be able to earn the income necessary to acquire and retain housing.⁵⁷

Table 3.3 - Other Supportive Service in the City of Alameda

City of Alameda	
Organization	Services Offered
American Red Cross Bay Area Service Center	Rental and utility payment assistance
Alameda Food Bank	Perishable and nonperishable food items for income-qualified households
Alameda Family Services	New parent support; a Head Start program; School-based health centers; Homeless youth services; Counseling; Drug and alcohol treatment; A clinical training program.
The Alameda One-Stop Career Center	Job placement services and access employment training information

THE LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Housing Authority of the City of Alameda assists individuals and families with low and moderate incomes to find adequate housing. Although these income groups are not necessarily considered to be at risk of homelessness, without the services provided by public and assisted housing, they may not have the means to afford their current living situations. Table 3.4 below displays the number of senior and family housing units managed by the Housing Authority of the City of Alameda. The disabled housing units are the number of units that are ADA-accessible in the family and senior units.

The number of available public and assisted housing units does not satisfy the demand for such housing in the City of Alameda. The Housing Authority reports that as of February 2008, there are 1,729 households on the waiting list for Section 8 assistance and 427 households on the waiting list for public housing.⁵⁸ In 2007, the Housing Authority issued 250 Section 8 vouchers. From those vouchers issued, the Housing Authority received 130 requests for tenancy approval, not all of which were approved. For those families who were issued new Section 8 vouchers, the success rate of finding and renting housing in the City of Alameda was less than 50 percent for 2007.⁵⁹ According

⁵⁶ Alameda Family Services Online. 13 Jan. 2008. <<http://www.alamedafs.org/>>

⁵⁷ Alameda One-Stop Career Center Online. EASTBAY Works, Inc. 23 Jan. 2008. <http://www.eastbayworks.com/ebw-resources/Alameda.htm>

⁵⁸ Lee, Doug; Housing Authority of the City of Alameda. Telephone Interview. 12 February 2008.

⁵⁹ Lee.

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to the Housing Authority, the current waiting list hypothetically represents a backlog of three to five years before eligible families on the list can procure a rental unit using a Section 8 voucher. This example clearly illustrates the critical need for more units of affordable housing in the City of Alameda.

Table 3.4 - Housing Units Managed by the Housing Authority

Special Needs Group	Seniors	Families	Disabled*	Total Units
Units	258	299	29	557

**Total number of accessible units is a subset of the total number of units for seniors and families
Source: Housing Authority of the City of Alameda⁶⁰*

Table 3.5 - Housing Authority Current Waiting List Statistics

Housing Authority of the City of Alameda		
Housing Resource	Total Number of Units	Number on Waiting List
Alameda Housing Authority Section 8	(Depends on annual vacancies and tenancy approvals)	1,729
Alameda Housing Authority Public Housing	557	427

Source: Housing Authority of the City of Alameda

IV. IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITIZING UNMET NEEDS

When evaluating Notices of Interest from homeless service providers for proposed homeless accommodations at the North Housing Parcel at Alameda Point, it is important to understand what unmet needs may exist among homeless people and those at risk for homelessness in the City of Alameda.

As part of this Homeless Needs Assessment the City of Alameda, PMC conducted two workshops with local policy experts and service providers for homeless individuals and families. Sixteen participants representing a broad range of local city and county agencies and non-profits organizations took part in the workshops in January 2008. In the workshops, participants were asked to examine the current set of services for homeless individuals and families in the City of Alameda and to accomplish the following tasks using their collective knowledge and experience:

1. Develop a comprehensive list of homeless services in Alameda;
2. Describe challenges and successes in providing services for the homeless in Alameda;
3. Develop a list of unmet needs for homeless individuals and families in Alameda;
4. Prioritize unmet needs in Alameda; and
5. Identify and describe any regional or national programs or practices that could be applied to the unmet needs in the City of Alameda

⁶⁰ Lee, Doug. Housing Authority of the City of Alameda. Telephone Interview. 12 February 2008.

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After careful consideration of the current services available to the homeless in Alameda the unmet needs cited most often by participants in the workshops include the following, in order of priority:

1. **Permanent Supportive Housing**—There is a need for permanent supportive housing in Alameda, especially housing designed for individuals, such as single-room occupancy facilities and housing for couples and small families. In general, participants wanted more diverse housing configuration types.
2. **Protection of Existing Affordable Housing Stock**—There needs to be more emphasis and better means to secure and maintain the existing stock of affordable housing in the community to prevent currently housed low-income residents from becoming homeless in the future.
3. **Access to Basic Amenities**—Homeless, sheltered, and formerly homeless individuals need access to transitional and supportive housing sites that are close to services and other retail establishments providing basic amenities, such as groceries, clothing, and toiletries. The Food Bank plays a critical role in helping to serve the need for groceries; however, the Food Bank currently needs additional storage space for perishable and dry goods. There is also a strong need for related services, such as hot meals, showers, laundry facilities, and warming centers during colder months.
4. **Transportation**—Adequate transportation options for the homeless and formerly homeless, who may be in transitional housing, was also a frequently mentioned concern. Homeless, sheltered, and formerly homeless people need to get to jobs, training, medical appointments, grocery stores, pharmacies, and other destinations to attend to their daily needs. Many felt the isolated location of Alameda Point created special challenges in regards to mobility, and many felt the area was underserved by public transportation.
5. **Educational Opportunities**—Education and training, including basic life skills, such as childcare, nutrition, cooking, and establishing and managing a household budget, are often needed to help integrate homeless and formerly homeless individuals back into the community.
6. **Programs for Children and Young Adults**—For children in homeless families or families in transition, afterschool programs and other programs geared to the special needs of homeless children could provide the necessary attention and stable learning environment that is lacking wherever they or their families manage to find shelter. Some participants felt that the needs of homeless boys and young men (ages 10 to 21) were not adequately addressed in the current service offerings in the City of Alameda. Workshop participants also felt that homeless young men were one of the most difficult demographic segments to reach through existing services, and that many homeless young men, despite their needs, do not utilize existing services in order to avoid being stigmatized or ostracized by their peers. The Alameda Unified School District could build on the experience local educators have gained working with homeless students and help establish or operate such programs, providing that adequate funding is identified and acquired.
7. **Economic Opportunities**—Identifying and creating economic development opportunities for homeless and formerly homeless individuals, including technical training for sustainable employment is a critical step in assisting people in transition to reenter mainstream society.
8. **Mentoring**—Mentoring programs that establish connections to the community and help homeless and formerly homeless individuals develop productive personal and professional

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relationships while acquiring valuable experience and skills could play an important role in assisting program participants to reenter mainstream society and attain employment.

V. A BRIEF HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE AND PROGRAMMATIC EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE HOMELESSNESS

THE MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT (PL 100-77)

With the passage of the federal Homeless Persons Survival Act of 1987 (later re-authorized and renamed the McKinney-Vento Act), there was recognition that homelessness is a persistent national phenomenon that merited a national response. The authors of the legislation sought to address what they perceived to be a national emergency in the form of an epidemic of homelessness. The Act targeted the immediate needs of those living on US streets: shelter, food, health care, and short-term (“transitional”) housing.

The Act also formed a national advisory body, the United States Inter-agency Council on Homelessness. The Council on Homelessness is responsible for providing leadership at the federal level for activities intended to assist homeless families and individuals.

Since its adoption, Congress has made several alterations to the Act and to programs under the Act. These include addressing the needs of homeless persons who are disabled, mentally ill, infected with HIV/AIDS, and those addicted to drugs and/or alcohol. It also focuses on the needs of homeless children, specifically the need for education.

HUD is the executive agency tasked with administering the programs authorized by the Act. The programs currently operated by HUD under the authority of the McKinney-Vento Act are:

- Supportive Housing;
- Shelter-Plus Care;
- Single-Room Occupancy;
- Emergency Shelter Grant;
- Base Re-alignment and Closure;
- Title V; and
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS.

The Supportive Housing, Shelter-Plus Care, and the Single-Room Occupancy programs all require applicants to compete for available funds, with funding available annually. Conversely, the Emergency Shelter Grant is an entitlement program, meaning that eligible jurisdictions receive an allocation that estimates need for funding based on the population and housing characteristics of a particular community. Title V and the Base Re-alignment and Closure programs give localities and other eligible agencies certain rights to the use of surplus federal real property.

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THE “CONTINUUM OF CARE”

Beginning in 1994, HUD encouraged localities to address homelessness in their communities in a “coordinated, comprehensive and strategic fashion.”⁶¹ This “Continuum of Care” is intended to create comprehensive services that meet the needs of a homeless person and that extend beyond housing. The Continuum of Care concept envisions an end to homelessness and preventing individuals from returning to homelessness. The competitive programs authorized under the McKinney-Vento Act fund the services and facilities of the Continuum of Care.

The Continuum of Care requires localities to critically assess the needs of the homeless in their community, to identify and address the root causes of homelessness, to assess the resources available to meet the needs of the homeless, and to develop a plan to end homelessness.

Localities must also document the state of homelessness and the impact of services through annual “street counts” (point-in-time counts) and the assembly of longitudinal data on the homeless served across agencies within the Continuum.

THE GOAL OF ENDING HOMELESSNESS AND A FOCUS ON THE “CHRONICALLY HOMELESS”

In 2000, the National Alliance to End Homelessness launched an effort to end homelessness within a 10-year period. The Alliance believed that strategic planning and an arsenal of inter-disciplinary approaches would lead to an end to homelessness.⁶²

One of the primary observations in the Alliance’s plan was that the majority of those who become homeless experience homelessness for a relatively short amount of time and often have only one episode of homelessness throughout their lifetime. The Alliance also observed that there is a small sub-group of the homeless (approximately 10 percent) that spend a significant amount of their lives being homeless and demand substantially more in public resources. The Alliance termed these persons “chronically homeless.”

The Alliance believed that the chronically homeless would benefit from affordable housing that was linked with a variety of services to meet the long-term needs of the chronically homeless; they refer to this as “permanent supportive housing.” The Alliance asserted that a focused effort to meet the needs of the chronically homeless would be the most effective means of addressing the overall problem and causes of homelessness.

Other public agencies soon followed the Alliance’s lead:

- In 2003, a renewed Inter-agency Council on Homelessness embraced the goal of ending chronic homeless in 10 years.⁶³
- In its 2003 Annual Action Plan, HUD adopted the objective to “end chronic homelessness in 10 years.”⁶⁴

⁶¹ US Department of Housing and Urban Development Online. “Guide to Continuum of Care Planning and Implementation,” 11 June. 2001. HUD. 5 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/library/coc/cocguide/>>.

⁶² National Alliance to End Homeless. “A Plan, Not a Dream: How to End Homelessness in Ten Years.” June 2000.

⁶³ Mangano, Philip. “Plenary Remarks.” US Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting. 23 Jan. 2003.

⁶⁴ “Final FY 2003 Annual Performance Plan.” HUD, April 2002.

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- In 2005, Governor Schwarzenegger launched a homeless initiative that included capital funding for permanent supportive housing that serves chronically homeless individuals with severe mental illness.⁶⁵
- Many communities, including Alameda County, have adopted “ten-year plans” in support of this goal.^{66 67}

SHIFTING FEDERAL PRIORITIES

In 2001, the HUD Secretary announced a new emphasis in federal programs on combating homelessness. HUD’s efforts were focused on providing capital funding to assist the homeless; on meeting the needs of the chronically homeless, specifically by moving them towards permanent housing with supportive services; on those most at risk of becoming homeless; and on “nurturing stronger ties with faith- and community-based organizations that are closest to the root causes of homelessness.”⁶⁸ The regulatory environment and scoring criteria for competitive funding have shifted accordingly to reflect these priorities.

EVERYONE HOME

Alameda County’s EveryOne Home is an organization that is approaching the issue and solutions related to homelessness from a regional perspective. EveryOne Home maintains that homelessness is not a problem concentrated in a specific area, but rather that it is a regional problem requiring a regional response.

Prior to 2004, there were a variety of plans and efforts in place to address homelessness and special needs housing in Alameda County. A number of the agencies providing services realized that they were serving people with related needs and decided that their organizations could be more influential by consolidating their efforts. In 2004, the following agencies joined their efforts and created the EveryOne Home Plan (originally called the Alameda Countywide Homeless and Special Needs Housing Plan):

- County of Alameda Housing and Community Development Department;
- Behavioral Health Care Services;
- Public Health Office of AID Administration;
- Social Service Agency;
- The City of Oakland’s Department of Human Services and Community and Economic Development Agency;
- The City of Berkeley’s Health and Human Services Department and Housing Department; and
- The Alameda Countywide Homeless Continuum of Care Council.

⁶⁵ “Governor Schwarzenegger Announces Initiative to End Long-Term Homelessness in California.” Press Release from the California State Office of the Governor, 31 Aug. 2005.

⁶⁶ AIDS Housing of Washington. “Alameda Countywide Homeless and Special Needs Housing Plan,” April 2006.

⁶⁷ U.S. Inter-agency Council on Homelessness Online. “State and Local Initiatives” 23 Aug. 2007. U.S Inter-Agency Council on Homelessness. 5 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.ich.gov/slocal/index.html>>.

⁶⁸ HUD Press Release 01-070, 20 July 2001.

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EveryOne Home believes that the County's resources are best spent by developing long-term solutions and creating innovative strategies for ending homelessness. The countywide efforts to end homelessness include "building capacity to attract funding from federal, state and philanthropic sources."⁶⁹

VI. Current Methods And Proven Practices To Address Homelessness

There are several current approaches to addressing homelessness that have developed over time and have often responded to changing federal legislative and executive priorities.

INTERIM ASSISTANCE

The traditional "front-line" interim assistance approaches were first embodied in the 1987 Act, and include the following:

- Emergency shelter;
- Food aid;
- Healthcare; and
- Transitional housing.

Over the years, these approaches have become more nuanced to meet the varied needs of the homeless. They have addressed new needs, such as treating HIV/AIDS and resurgent communicable diseases. They are also often paired with social and mental health services for the homeless.

Funding for the operation of these traditional programs has become more competitive as funding has not kept pace with the cost of providing services. Federal funds have also shifted more towards capital projects benefitting the homeless rather than services.

Although traditional "drop-in" shelters are still in existence, these types of shelters are increasingly relying on private support to continue operations. Opening new shelters or expanding existing ones has recently become quite difficult.

THE "CONTINUUM OF CARE"

The Continuum of Care reflects a planning requirement imposed by HUD, as well as a specific approach to dealing with homelessness. The Continuum of Care approach moves beyond meeting the immediate needs of homeless people. It has goals to eventually integrate homeless people back into mainstream permanent housing and to prevent future homelessness.

The Continuum of Care is an attempt to develop a comprehensive solution to homelessness. This is in contrast to earlier efforts focused on immediate needs and interim assistance. This approach recognizes that homelessness has multiple and varied causes, and that providing relief from the symptoms of homelessness is not sufficient to end or to prevent homelessness.

⁶⁹ EveryOne Home Online. 2007. EveryOne Home Ending Homelessness in Alameda County. 30 Jan. 2008. <<http://www.everyonehome.org/>>.

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The Continuum of Care system, as defined by HUD, has four major components:⁷⁰

- Outreach, intake, and assessment;
- Emergency shelter;
- Transitional housing; and
- Permanent housing.

The approach's name was derived from a vision of homeless persons and families moving through a "continuum of care" beginning with an initial assessment of needs and moving to the provision of customized services and referrals. The homeless are then sheltered temporarily until they are ready to be housed in transitional, permanent supportive, or non-supportive permanent housing. Some homeless may also move from a shelter to transitional housing, to supported housing, and finally on to independent living.

The Continuum approach reflects a belief that the homeless become and remain homeless for more than a single reason. Getting them successfully housed often takes more than one agency providing more than one service. Ending homelessness is not simply about housing a person, but about addressing the underlying causes of homelessness.

TRANSITIONAL AND PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Beyond emergency shelters, the continuum of housing for the homeless includes transitional housing, which may or may not be service-enriched, and permanent supportive housing, both of which offer longer-term assistance.

Transitional Housing

Transitional housing for the homeless took the concept of a "halfway house," long used in the fields of corrections, substance abuse, and mental health treatment, and applied it to the homeless. First developed as a demonstration program under the McKinney-Vento Act, transitional housing became a key component of housing the homeless in communities nationwide by 1996.⁷¹

The need for transitional housing emerged from the experience of emergency shelter operators who recognized that shelters alone were not sufficient for a number of people to escape the cycle of homelessness. Transitional housing, which may or may not be service-enriched, provides a more stable and supportive environment than an emergency shelter does. As the name suggests, the goal is for homeless persons to transition to permanent housing. By definition under the McKinney-Vento Act, transitional housing is not intended to house homeless persons for a period of greater than 24 months.⁷²

Permanent Supportive Housing

Permanent supportive housing is long-term affordable housing coupled with services to meet the needs of the permanently disabled, those with serious mental illness or chronic substance abuse

⁷⁰ US Department of Housing and Urban Development Online. "Guide to Continuum of Care Planning and Implementation," 11 June. 2001. HUD. 5 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/library/coc/cocguide/>>.

⁷¹ Burt, Martha. "Characteristics of Transitional Housing for Homeless Families, Final Report." Urban Institute, 2006..

⁷² US Department of Housing and Urban Development Online. "Overview of the Supportive Housing Program: Program Components" 23 Jan. 2008. HUD 8 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/library/shp/understandingshp/components.cfm>>.

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problems, and persons infected with HIV or suffering from AIDS.⁷³ Permanent supportive housing has been shown to be one of the most cost-effective ways of housing the homeless.⁷⁴

Permanent supportive housing recognizes that once-homeless people are often unable live without some sort of support. A person's inability to live entirely independently may be caused by social, medical, or other factors. There may be a life-long need for assistance resulting from a personal history of substance abuse, disease, disability, or physical or emotional abuse. There is recognition that for some, the experience of homelessness has led to lasting injury that may make independent living difficult or perhaps even impossible. For those with a history of mental illness, permanent supportive housing has proven to be the most successful form of housing.⁷⁵ It has offered an alternative to more intensive in-patient treatment or incarceration and is therefore an effective means of dealing with one of the more troubling and socially disruptive homeless sub-populations.

Permanent supportive housing often focuses on meeting the long-term needs of sub-populations of the homeless. For example, permanent supportive housing has been used for homeless youth and young adults "aging out" of the foster care system.⁷⁶ This approach has effectively bridged the period of adolescence/young adulthood and independent adulthood (a sort of semi-permanent housing) and benefited severely emotionally disturbed youths.⁷⁷

Permanent supportive housing is also an important means of reducing criminal recidivism. Anecdotal reports state that significant numbers of the homeless have been incarcerated at one time or another and that living in permanent supportive housing has contributed to a reduction in criminal behavior.⁷⁸ Having realized this benefit, homeless service providers and policy-makers are looking at the specific role supportive housing can play in community corrections.

Although permanent supportive housing has been shown to be effective in combating individual homelessness and in dealing with some of the most hard-to-house persons, it has a role in family housing as well.^{79,80} Permanent supportive housing for families not only serves the different needs of the individual family members, but also focuses resources on helping families live together after one or more members of the family have experienced homelessness.

HOUSING FIRST

The "housing first" model or "rapid re-housing" is based on the premise that many of the challenges faced by the homeless may in fact be caused by homelessness.⁸¹ The housing first model initially

⁷³ US Department of Housing and Urban Development Online. "Overview of the Supportive Housing Program: Program Components" 23 Jan. 2008. HUD 8 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/library/shp/understandingshp/components.cfm>>.

⁷⁴ The Lewin Group. "Costs of Serving Homeless Individuals in Nine Cities," Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2004.

⁷⁵ Wong Ying-Ling Irene, et. al. "Predicting Staying in or Leaving Permanent Supportive Housing That Serves Homeless People with Serious Mental Illness, Final Report." Dept. Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research, March 2006.

⁷⁶ CSH's New York Program and National Resource Center Teams "New Homes, Brighter Futures: Profiles of Housing Programs for Young Adults," Corporation for Supportive Housing, Sept. 2007.

⁷⁷ Straka, Doreen, et al. "Supportive Housing for Youth: A Background of the Issues in the Design and Development of Supportive Housing for Homeless Youth." Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2003.

⁷⁸ Black, Kendall, et al. "New Beginnings: The Need for Supportive Housing for Previously Incarcerated People." Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2004.

⁷⁹ Durham, Kate. "Home Works: Solving Family Homelessness Through Permanent Supportive Housing." Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2005.

⁸⁰ Shegos, Ellen Hart. "Family Matters: A Guide to Developing Family Supportive Housing." Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2001.

⁸¹ National Alliance to End Homelessness. "What is Housing First?" 9 November 2006.

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places the homeless person in housing and then seeks to treat the underlying issues and support the person as they recover. The environment in the housing first model is typically more tolerant of occasional undesirable or anti-social behavior than other models of housing.

Although this model has had some success and has many adamant adherents in the housing and social services world, it remains controversial. Some providers have concerns that by tolerating behaviors like drug and alcohol use in group housing, housing is no longer a safe place for those who desire to abstain. Because this model is relatively new, the body of research on this strategy is limited in its depth and breadth.⁸²

Although not explicitly a housing first model, an examination of programs funded under California's Mental Health Services Act of 2004 and its legislative predecessors (AB 34 and AB 2034) lend support to the belief that stable housing can contribute greatly to the successful treatment of the seriously mentally ill.⁸³

DISCHARGE PLANNING

Both as a result of the Continuum of Care planning process and HUD regulations and state legislation, communities have been examining the institutional sources of homelessness, which include jails, prisons, mental institutions, and hospitals.^{84, 85} "Discharge planning" is focused on strategies for preventing persons discharged from these institutions from becoming homeless. Discharge planning prevents homelessness by assuring that those who are exiting an institution and who are vulnerable to homelessness have the resources they need to integrate back into society. This concept is referred to as "closing the front door" to homelessness. For example, the cross-fertilization of healthcare institutions and homeless service providers engendered new thinking on the needs of the homeless and the effects of homelessness on public health. As a result, hospitals have increasingly become involved in permanent supportive housing.⁸⁶

APPLYING PROVEN PRACTICES TO CURRENT CRISES

Homelessness remains a serious social problem in our nation. Its persistence has led to a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of its varied root causes. The resources and methods deployed to end homelessness have responded accordingly. The provision of immediate relief in the form of food and shelter has been supplanted by a commitment to providing permanent housing coupled with services that help the homeless to overcome the challenges they face in attaining permanent housing. The most current trend, "Housing First," believes that stable permanent housing itself is a critical component to the "treatment" of homelessness.

⁸² Pearson, Carol L., et. al. "The Applicability of Housing First Models to Homeless Persons with Serious Mental Illness," U.S. Dept. Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research, 2007.

⁸³ Burt, Martha and Anderson, Jacquelyn. "AB 2034 Program Experiences in Housing Homeless People with Serious Mental Illness." Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2005.

⁸⁴ HUD 2007 Continuum of Care Application: Exhibit 1, Section "O"

⁸⁵ Jones. California State Assembly Bill 2745, 2006.

⁸⁶ Cho, Richard. "Involving Public and Non-profit Hospitals in Supportive Housing," Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2005.

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VII. CONCLUSION

The screening process triggered by the US Navy's declaration of additional surplus housing at Alameda Point requires the ARRA to evaluate possible reuses of the North Housing Parcel according to statutory guidelines. The Homeless Needs Assessment for the City of Alameda is one of the tools that the ARRA will apply to that evaluation process. This assessment has established the following:

1. A baseline of current services;
2. Statistically valid methods for estimating the current homeless population in the City of Alameda;
3. Identification and prioritization of current unmet needs for homeless individuals.
4. A summary of national and regional best practices in providing for the homeless and eliminating homelessness; and

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