

Overview:

In March 1983 the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies responded to the concerns of the homeless by sponsoring a project coordinated by FECS in cooperation with JBFCS and Altro. The Federation Homeless Project (i.e., the Intervention Assessment & Referral Unit) was established to both assess the degree of homelessness in the Jewish community as well as to provide direct services to those in need. In its first 9 months almost 500 individuals have received emergency food, shelter, referral for medical treatment, training, employment and other critical services to permanently relieve homelessness of the individual and his/her family. The Project also serves as the major resource for collecting and analyzing demographic information about the problem of homelessness in the Jewish community. Additionally, through a 6 month \$200,000 FEMA grant initiated by the Metropolitan New York Coordinating Council on Jewish Poverty in cooperation with FECS, emergency food and shelter services have been provided.

The delivery of the myriad of "immediate" services required by the homeless is both complex and demanding and even the joint efforts of the Federation agencies have been unable to respond to all of the necessary services required by individuals whose needs are so catastrophic.

The attached incorporates the coordinated needs of the FEG/Altro/JBFCS Project and the Met Council. It demonstrates not only effective agency service delivery coordination but the deep commitment programatically and financially that each agency has made to help support this effort.

I. Statement of need or problem:

The "homeless" are defined as individuals and families without a current residence. They resist easy classification or categorization. Most have lived either in a series of apartments, S.R.O.'s or with friends and families. Eventually circumstances such as lack of financial resources stemming from loss of entitlement program, employment, or supporting spouse force them to move. Some have lived in subways or on streets for long periods of time but most are recently (one month or less) homeless. Few have used city shelters, for they fear whatever valuables they have left would be subject to theft.

Many have a history of psychiatric institutionalization, or exhibit behavioral characteristics that appear to represent a somewhat distorted picture of reality. Many have medical disabilities of varying types, some of which, having been unattended to for long periods of time, result in physical handicaps that make their condition more debilitating.

In general, there are six main causal factors that appear to be representative of the homeless:

1. Individuals who have become recently unemployed, without sufficient family networks of support.
2. Transients who come to New York, often immigrants, with high expectations of making a new start on life, but with no clear reality orientation of available opportunities.
3. Discharged patients from psychiatric hospitals and institutions, who have been released to communities with inadequate after-care planning.
4. Elderly and/or indigent individuals whose public entitlements have been reduced or terminated, or who have been unable to keep pace with rising rents and inflation.
5. Individuals, particularly observant Jews, who came to New York for personal reasons on a temporary basis and become attracted to highly religious Jewish oriented communities such as Crown Heights or Boro Park, New York.
6. Individuals, who live in single room occupancy hotels or boarding houses, supported by public entitlements, whose monthly check is insufficient.
7. With all of the above problems which appear to represent the homeless, what is striking is the number of individuals who come to our Program with small children. These individuals may be recently divorced, or in cases where the entire family is intact they may be victims of eviction, fire or other catastrophies and the services needed for the parents are only a small part of what is needed for the entire family. Children often require clothing, dental and medical treatment, counseling, referral to Day Care Centers, placement in schools and long term treatment. In particular, the transient nature of the homeless family makes it even more difficult for the children to enter school and this in turn has a long range debilitating effect on the children and the family.

Estimates of the numbers of homeless in the Metropolitan area range from 6,000 to over 36,000 individuals, of which as many as 1,000 may be Jewish. When the Federation Homeless Project began in April 1983, no one had a clear idea of either the accuracy of those numbers, or the dimensions of the problem and how to effectively deal with it from a social service perspective.

Nine months and almost 500 homeless clients later, we are just beginning to understand the scope of what we are trying to accomplish. With young and old, individuals and entire families, psychiatrically disturbed, physically disabled, unemployed, immigrants, and victims of entitlement cuts, these people resist simple solutions.

In addition to serving a volume of clients, predominantly Jewish, beyond any of our initial planning estimates, we have found that to respond in any effective manner to their monumental needs we must have an increasingly varied response capacity. Simple face-to-face case work is insufficient when a client needs a roof over his head or food on his plate, and until those basic necessities are provided, on demand, nothing else really matters.

Once this aspect has been taken care of, the problems begin. Each client has a set of difficulties which require very individualized approaches, necessitating such back-up resources as psychiatric assessment, access to sufficient clothing, emergency cash to buy medicine and/or amenities such as soap and toothpaste. Escorts are needed to assist these individuals in navigating entitlement systems and bureaucratic mazes that life on the streets has effectively isolated them from. They need transportation, they need permanent housing, job counseling and training, re-socialization skills...the range is endless.

Each of these clients cannot be served in a "50-minute hour" - staff is overwhelmed, and otherwise eligible individuals are being turned away because of inadequate resources.

A unique phenomenon of cooperation has evolved within the Jewish community to deal with this target population. The Homeless Project began as a triumvirate with FECS, Altro, and JBFCS under an FJP grant. Shortly thereafter, when a FEMA grant was awarded to the Met Council in cooperation with FECS, a fourth partner was added. Additionally, Project Dorot and Respite House of the Educational Alliance joined the partnership as independent affiliates, and the efforts of the city's local Jewish Community Councils, JASA, JCS-LI, and other Jewish communal institutions such as synagogues have entered the fold, contributing in a variety of ways.

Operationally, the Homeless Project serves as the base for these efforts, and the following request asks for the minimal tools needed to coordinate and respond to this tragic phenomenon.

II. Objectives

1. To continue to be the resource for Jewish community to refer homeless individuals for emergency services, including but not limited to: shelter, food, psychiatric assessment, psychiatric treatment, family counseling, vocational testing, employment preparation, vocational training, job finding and follow-up, medical and dental treatment, child care, referral for government entitlements (Public Assistance, Medicaid), clothing, transportation, provision of personal articles, legal assistance, immigration assistance, family liason.
2. To act as the on-going clinical resource to plan for long term housing, employment, treatment, and other needed services to help change the individuals status of homelessness to one of independence.
3. To coordinate the resources of the Jewish community and the broad community to continuously assure the homeless of access to needed services.
4. To collect and analyze demographic data of the Jewish homeless population to provide Communal planners in New York and across the United States the information needed to plan and coordinate service priorities.
5. To continue to update already compiled resource materials on the availability of citywide services for the homeless and to make this information available to the Federation network.
6. To participate in the on-going activities of Federation, government, community groups to insure that the Jewish homeless receive the maximum services vis-a-vis government entitlements, resources, advocacy, and other benefits.
7. To plan with Federation the operation of a volunteer coordinated thrift shop to provide on a regular basis emergency clothing to the homeless adults and their children.
8. To provide specialized and intensive services for homeless children including the referral for counseling and/or treatment, referral for medical/dental services, referral for Day Care Centers and/or school and other services as may be required.

III. Methods:

1. Through a coordinated team of professionals (social workers, rehabilitation counselors, case aides) in conjunction with psychiatric, medical, psychological staff to interview, assess, treat and refer, the homeless to appropriate emergency services.
2. To access the full range of services of FECS, JBFCS, Altro, Met Council and other Federation agencies through the joint partnership of the four agencies working together to both provide immediate services as well as liason needed long term services.
3. To provide on-going counseling and treatment services to assist the individual and/or his/her family in obtaining long term services: continuing treatment, housing, training, employment.
4. To administer psychiatric and medical evaluations prior to as well as concurrent with treatment plans. The psychiatrist sees clients whom the caseworkers assess as having psychiatric problems and especially those who may have suicidal tendencies and may recommend medication review, referral to Day Treatment services or hospitalization if necessary. The FECS Staff Physician provides physical examinations and administers required State T.B. tests for all clients who are placed in adult homes.
5. On-going demographic data collection at intake and throughout the course of treatment has been documented since the Project's inception will continue to be compiled and analyzed.
6. One indication re the importance of this information has been confirmed by learning that over 50% of the individuals seen have at least a high school education and some have college degrees and advanced degrees. We also know that many individuals have worked and can now state that we are working with a population that despite its acute and tragic current situation, shows potential for training and employment, and hence, self sufficiency. This data is vital if we are to seek and secure funding for training.
7. Through participation in community activities, meetings, and local and national conferences, to continue to gather resource information and to continuously update FJP's Homeless Project Resource Manual which is distributed to Federation's Jewish Information and Referral Service, JBFCS, Altro and all other Federation agencies working with the homeless.
8. The Project staff is active in the Federation Task Force on the Homeless; is a member of local groups representing the homeless in NYC; attended a national conference in Chicago which addressed this issue; works with other agencies directly to secure services; responds to government proposals to secure additional funding for the homeless. These activities will continue throughout the Project.

IV. Population to be served:

Estimates indicate that there are approximately 700 to 1,000 Jewish Homeless individuals and families in the New York Metropolitan area. Through the first nine months of the Project's existence we have been able to identify and give assistance to a population of almost 500 Jewish clients.

The Project has found that homelessness knows no bounds. It makes its mark on all segments of the population in all parts of the city. It affects persons of all backgrounds, and all age groups.

The following demographic statistics are significant and worth noting:

1. 85% of the clients are Jewish
2. 60% of the clients are male
3. 34% of the clients were received as homeless families
4. 52% of the homeless families were single parent families
5. 53% of the clients were between the ages of 21 - 50
6. 5% of the clients are over age 65
7. 56% of the individuals whose educational background is known, have at least a high school degree.
8. 15% of the population are below the age of 17, including children as young as a few weeks.

* This may be due to the fact that older adults were being referred to other Federation sponsored shelters, i.e. Project Dorot and Respite House.

(Please refer to Appendix C Client Demographic and Statistics)

V. Evaluation:

An important goal of the Federation Homeless Project is to gather data regarding the numbers and characteristics of the homeless and the outcome of the services that the agency provided. Semi-annual and annual reports will be prepared for review by the Federation Task Force Committee on the homeless and other appropriate organizations.

Monthly statistical/demographic records are maintained which describe the population served and the services they receive. Un-met needs are reviewed regularly with the Project staff, FJP, FECS, JBFCS, Altro to develop new resources for client services.

Having resources which are government or third party funded is critical in addressing the overwhelming needs of this population. The project supervisor, in addition to participating in the FJP Task Force on the Homeless is very active in a variety of coalitions which prioritize the needs of the homeless, and through these activities, is continually informed of new resources for food, shelter, clothing and other necessary services.

VI. Dissemination/Replication:

Urban areas across the country are faced with problems of the homeless. The Jewish community, however, has not fully realized that this growing social and economic concern is a Jewish problem, particularly as unemployment continues to rise and individuals who we never would have believed homeless find themselves in this state. FECS believes deeply that it is our responsibility to inform the Jewish community nationwide of our experiences. All too often we have learned that if a trend exists in NY that it usually exists in other Jewish communities in North America and eventually in Israel.

In addition to presenting to the leadership of Federation what we have learned, FECS and Altro made a joint presentation at the Association of Jewish Vocational Service Professionals Practitioners Conference (October 1983, Philadelphia), and at the General Assembly (November 1983, Atlanta) and is scheduled to present at CJCS in Los Angeles (June 1984). These presentations vividly detail not only homelessness and what can be done but indicate how related much of this problem is to unemployment in Jewish America; these presentations are tragically expressing to our colleagues nationwide how serious is the situation and how critical it is for action. The Project will continue to conduct activities locally and nationally.

VII. Future Funding:

The FJP Homeless Project has already leveraged over \$300,000 in government funds for Federation agencies to be directed toward providing services to the homeless. The Federation staff involved in government affairs is directly advocating the needs of the homeless, brings to the attention of the agencies legislation and information about funding for this group, and works with individual agencies to assist them, as appropriate, in targeting funds and developing programs. To the degree that the Federation Homeless Project as well as other Federation services for the homeless continue to bring in additional government monies to meet this tragic need in the Jewish community.

FECS already has initiated an effort to target monies for vocational skills training for the homeless, since any government funding which has been made available for this group has primarily focused on food and shelter. While both are critical, it is extremely shortsighted to eliminate support for vocational training which will lead to permanent employment if we are to truly help people to become economically independent and achieve a place to live in and a community to be a part of.

FECS will continue to work with Federation and its sister agencies to advocate for the needs of the homeless and to seek government and private money and resources toward this effort.

VIII. Budget:

See attached.

FJP HOMELESS PROJECT

MONTHLY STATISTICS

Month of MARCH 1984

PART I	Monthly		Cumulative		Cumulative Total of all clients seen
	Jewish	Non-Jewish	Jewish	Non-Jewish	
TOTAL # CLIENTS REFERRED:	25	29	499	142	641

PART II

<u>OUTCOME OF CLIENT PLACEMENTS DURING THE MONTH:</u>	<u>MONTHLY</u>	<u>CUMULATIVE</u>
1. Shelter/Food*	19	316
2. Financial Assistance*	40	386
3. FECS/Psychiatric/Medical Services	15	132
4. FECS Day Program	0	15
5. FECS Vocational Services	2	20
6. FECS Emergency Job Assistance/Job Placement	6	24
7. JBFCS Counseling Services	3	38
8. ALTRO Day Program	2	5
9. ALTRO Rehabilitation Services	0	0
10. Other Agencies (includes permanent housing)	16	214
III. Refused Services**	15	176

*Each client may be referred for more than 1 service

**Client may have accepted assistance but neglected to follow through, also client may have been deemed inappropriate for service.