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**H E L P U S A**



Building Better Lives

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- the act or practice of stopping something bad from happening: the act of preventing something

# **Concept and Definition of Prevention**

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“Homelessness is such a disruption to one’s life; it’s hard to understate the damaging effects on a person or family system.”

## **Enduring Destructive Nature of Homelessness**

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## Social Costs

- Frequent use of emergency shelter, medical and mental health services, and public corrections (Padgett, Stanhope, Henwood, & Stefancic, 2009; Stein, Dixon, & Nyamathi, 2008; Culhane, 2002)
- Gladwell's, "Million Dollar Murray" (2006) which highlight chronic homelessness and the frequent utilization of emergency systems
- Social disadvantage (Draine, Salzer, Culhane & Hadley, 2002)
- Stigmatization (Phelan, Link, Moore & Stueve, 1997)

# **Enduring Destructive Nature of Homelessness**

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## Individual Costs

- Incidence of sexual abuse and violence is much higher for homeless youth than for non-homeless youth (Swick, 2008; Rew, Fouladi, & Yockey, 2002)
- Homeless adolescents are at higher risk for substance abuse, delinquency, victimization, physical and mental health problems (Zerger, Strehlow, & Gundlapalli, 2008; Milburn, et al, 2006)
- Single homeless adults experience greater incidence of substance abuse and mental health issues (Mibly, et. al, 2010; Caton, Wilkens, & Anderson, 2007)

# **Enduring Destructive Nature of Homelessness**

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## Legal Costs

- Homelessness strips basic liberties and equalities, as people experiencing homelessness lack basic acknowledgment by society (Wright, 2007-2008)
- People who are homeless lose their right to property, personhood, and protection against illegal search and seizure, as legal protections are contingent on having a private, personal space (Stec, 2006).
- Homelessness is equated to being subjugated by the law in virtually all capacities, especially with many local anti-solicitation ordinances (Iwamoto, 2007-2008)

# **Enduring Destructive Nature of Homelessness**

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- Determinants of Homelessness are complex, multifaceted and ever-changing
- Cascading effects of multiple risk factors without sufficient protective factors as counterweight. Results in tipping point into homelessness
- Convergence of multiple unfortunate micro (domestic violence, substance abuse) and macro factors (hot housing market) *and* destabilizing events (loss of income) (Lee, Tyler & Wright, 2010; Early, 2005; O'Flaherty, 2004)

## **Determining Risk factors of Homelessness**

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- Homeless prevention model
  - Prevent episode of homelessness by working with families and single adults identified as high risk for homelessness, and who are likely to enter into NYC's shelter system (Primary)
- Rapid Rehousing/Diversion model
  - Rapidly rehouse/divert families from shelter who recently entered shelter system or are literally homeless on the street (Secondary)

## **Conceptual Framework of Homebase Homeless Prevention**

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- Homebase started in 2004 in New York City in the six community districts which had the highest rate of entry into family shelter system
- Expanded citywide in 2008
- HELP USA has two Homebase programs responsible for serving The Bronx
- In FY 18, HELP USA expanded its Homebase teams and now has 13 million U.S. dollars in annual funding

## **History (and future) of Homebase**

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- Targeting is vital to a successful homeless prevention
- Risk Assessment point system to assess and weigh correlates of homelessness
  - Head of Household (HOH) is under 22 yrs. old
  - Four or more moves in past year
  - Severe household discord (subjectively determined)
  - Shelter stay in past 3 months
  - Recent return from institutional setting
  - Two or more of individual factors as child:
    - Experience of Homelessness
    - Foster care
    - Physically, sexually or emotionally abused
    - Moved four or more times
    - Family received Public Assistance

## **Targeting/Assessing Risk or Threat to Housing Stability**

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- Risk Assessment score of *seven* or more points, **and**
- Income under 30% area median income (AMI), **and**
- 200% Federal Poverty Level (FPL), **and**
- Geographic specificity to capture areas where high entrants into shelter system come from (clustered areas of high poverty)

## **Eligibility Criteria for Services**

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Research Question:

Did a homeless prevention program reduce shelter entry?

# **Data Informed Analysis of a Homeless Prevention Program**

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**4,594** Unduplicated Families

**1,037**  
Unduplicated  
Single Adults

**HOMEBASE  
INTERVENTION**

**5.4%**  
Entered  
Shelter

**94.6%** Did Not Enter Shelter (one year after enrollment)

# **FY 17 Outcome Data**

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- Shelter costs approximately \$73,000 per family (\$168 per night). In FY 17, the average length of stay was 434 days in a NYC shelter for families
- Shelter costs approximately \$38,000 (\$95 per night) for a single adult. The average length of stay was 397 in a NYC shelter for single adults
- In FY 17, HELP USA's Homebase programs cost 9.3 million dollars
- Homebase cost per family is **\$1657**

# **The Cost Effectiveness of Homeless Prevention**

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- Messeri, O’Flaherty & Goodman’s (2011) research on the effectiveness of Homebase finds that for every one hundred family units enrolled, shelter entry falls between **10% to 20%**
- Rolston, et. al (2013) established a **8.9%** reduction of shelter entry of family units enrolled in Homebase (and a reduction of length of stay for those who entered shelter)

# **Foundational Evidence to Support Homeless Prevention Activities**

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# In FY 17, 5631 Unduplicated Family Units Received HOMEBASE Services

Not every family unit would have become homeless without intervention  
But some did (303 became homeless):

If **20%**  
became homeless

**1,126**  
total families  
would have  
experienced  
homelessness

**823**  
more than with  
Homebase

Savings of  
**\$45.4M**

If **15%**  
became homeless

**845**  
total families  
would have  
experienced  
homelessness

**542**  
more than with  
Homebase

Savings of  
**\$26.7M**

If **10%**  
became homeless

**563**  
total families  
would have  
experienced  
homelessness

**260**  
more than with  
Homebase

Savings of  
**\$8.0M**

If **8.9%**  
became homeless

**501**  
total families  
would have  
experienced  
homelessness

**198**  
more than with  
Homebase

Savings of  
**3.8M**

- Can we positively say that homeless prevention caused a decrease of shelter entry and reduced length of stay for those who entered shelter?
  - Or did HELP's Homebase program *probably* or *possibly* lower shelter entry for some clients (by some %)?
  - What other variables might effect shelter entry rates?
    - Right to shelter on demand
    - Unemployment or loss of income
    - Domestic violence
    - Shelter conditions?
    - New rental subsidy for people residing **in shelter**

## **Data Informed Analysis of a Homeless Prevention Program**

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- Homelessness prevention is less expensive and has shown to be effective in American localities and countries including Germany and England (Culhane, Metraux, & Byrne, 2011)
- Homeless prevention must be expanded from its current and limited program design, which most often enrolls people who are at the most imminent, emergent risk of homelessness, in order to catch people “further upstream” (Shinn, Baumohl, & Hopper, 2001)

## **So, why invest in Homeless Prevention?**

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