



Otsego County Housing & Homeless Coalition

and

Otsego Human Service Network

**Ten-Year Plan To  
End Homelessness  
In Otsego County**

**2007 - 2017**

<p align="center"><b>Otsego County Housing &amp; Homeless Coalition</b></p> <p>Cindy Pushman, Chair  Rhonda Berdan, Coordinator  Cherise Henkel  Sally Lindsey  Marlene McCulloch  Marlene Hopp  Theresa Kelly  Gladys Pickering  Leslie Scheen  Dawn Allmacher  Alice Yeoman  Todd Cook  Troy Shank  Pete Amar</p>	<p align="center"><b>Otsego Human Service Network</b></p> <p>Barb Soffredine, Chair  Laura Weiss, Vice-Chair  Roxanne McLintock Secretary/Treasurer  Pete Amar, Coordinator</p> <p>In addition to the officers listed above,  there are more than 25 participating  agencies</p>
<p align="center"><b>Otsego County Affordable Housing Alliance</b></p> <p>Alice Yeoman, President  Michael Wood, Vice-President  Marlene Hopp, Treasurer  Phil Alexander  Rhonda Berdan  Cindy Pushman  Mary Sanders  Elizabeth Mench</p>	<p align="center"><b>10 Year Plan Advisory Board</b></p> <p>Peter Amar  Rhonda Berdan  Julie F. Delaney  Joe Hebel  Ken Homa  Jonathan Mays  Cynthia Pushman  Barbara Soffredine  Laura Weiss  Alice Yeoman</p>

**Project Staff**

Phil Alexander, MSU Extension – Otsego County  
Matthew Pearson

<http://www.otsego.org/homelessness>

## 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness in Otsego County

October 16, 2006

Our vision is simple: “All people in Otsego County will be in safe, affordable, permanent homes.”

We know that tonight some of our neighbors here in Otsego County will sleep in cars, abandoned buildings, tents, or at the Friendship Shelter. Others may be doubled up at a friend’s home. This will happen despite a highly developed homeless support system. Many more families are on the brink of homelessness. Every day, persistent poverty, untreated substance abuse, increasing unemployment, and domestic violence force our fellow citizens from their homes, and onto the streets or into shelters.

Homelessness as we currently know it is a relatively recent problem. In the 1980s, a decrease of affordable housing, de-institutionalization of the mentally ill, and cuts in federal housing funds caused widespread homelessness. Several factors have affected its growth over the past two decades.

- Affordable housing has become scarcer for county residents with low incomes
- Household income has not kept pace with housing costs
- Support services that offer family stability are harder to afford and find
- Household splits due to divorce, domestic abuse, etc.

How many homeless people are in Otsego County? We don’t know but we plan to find out. Indicators such as the number of people staying at the Friendship Shelter (see chart on page 4), informal surveys, and anecdotal observation provide a rough idea for us to use as a baseline figure. According to the Friendship Shelter, more than half of their clients are women and children. Thirty percent of the homeless have full or part-time jobs.

Our current homeless assistance system - including the Friendship Shelter, First Call For Help, and the Salvation Army – provides a roof for the homeless reasonably well. However, our current system is not very good at preventing homelessness, nor can it change the overall availability of affordable housing, incomes, and support services. These changes must come from outside the shelter system such as rental property owners, employers, housing developers, the criminal justice system, churches, educators, social services, elected officials, planning commissions, civic leaders, and other decision makers.

The task of ending homelessness is formidable but no more than the many other accomplishments by the people of Otsego County. We can end homelessness in ten years.

**The most economically efficient way to end homelessness is to prevent it!**

The Friendship Shelter  
Clients per year  
2000 – 2005

YEAR	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Combined Totals	Combined Total %
MEN	172	159	128	99	158	137	853	46%
WOMEN	91	85	91	73	95	105	540	30%
CHILDREN	78	73	99	47	60	107	464	24%
YEARLY TOTAL	341	317	318	219	253	349	1797	100%
RETURNS	36	25	18	12	7	9	107	5%
<b>OTSEGO COUNTY CLIENTS</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>34%</b>

**Our Plan to End Homelessness**

This plan changes how we deal with homelessness. Our current system evolved to manage homelessness – not end it. While this proposal cannot end poverty, nor always stop our neighbors from losing their homes, our plan ends the institutionalization of homelessness as we know it.

It starts with leadership. People who believe in the vision and have the determination to end homelessness in ten years must join forces and address this issue in a collective effort. Many of these leaders are listed at the beginning of this report. Other communities have done it and so can we. To show that our plan is working and to measure our impact, we need data. Baseline information is needed to make good decisions and monitor progress toward our investment in people and housing. We also need a custom roadmap that fits our unique local needs and assets. We will continue to bring public and private stakeholders to the table and create a guide that is focused on our vision of making sure all people of Otsego County have safe, affordable, permanent homes. In order to fulfill our vision, we will concentrate our efforts on three quantifiable outcomes:

1. fewer people entering emergency shelters
2. decrease the length of stay in shelters
3. more people entering permanent housing

Ending homelessness in Otsego County in the next 10 years and reaching our stated outcomes requires a three-prong attack. We need to plan for prevention, intervention, and fixing the system.

### **Close the Front Door – Prevention**

Prevention is the name of the game. Our current system ends homelessness for families every day – but they are quickly replaced with new people facing a housing crisis. We must stop new homeless from entering the system. Whether precariously housed or in crisis, early intervention with homeless prevention services saves money, families, and lives. We must address the root causes of homelessness in order to eliminate it. See Chart 3 in Appendix A.

**Outcome: Fewer people entering emergency shelters**

To prevent something from happening, one would know what causes it. The next best thing is to be able to predict in advance when, or to whom, it will happen. Having the ability to predict causes improves the odds of being able to design effective interventions.

Unfortunately, the causes of homelessness are not clear and prediction is thereby less certain.

### **Open the Back Door – Intervention**

Most county residents who become homeless use shelter assistance services for only a short time and don't become repeat customers. Chronically homeless individuals comprise less than 20% of all homeless, yet consume more than half of all shelter-related resources. Applying the "Housing First" approach (using shelters as a last option) for chronically homeless people means quickly providing these individuals with permanent supportive housing (housing with services) instead of spending years in the homeless system. Research shows this solution saves thousands of dollars annually, reduces the need for public services, and stabilizes lives. See Chart 1 in Appendix A. **Outcome: Decrease the length of stay in shelters**

### **Build the Infrastructure -- Fix the System**

Ultimately, homelessness will continue until there is an adequate supply of affordable housing. **Housing is considered "affordable" when a household pays no more than 30 percent of its income on housing.** More affordable housing doesn't work unless there is a "housing wage" to match housing costs. Incomes must be sufficient for the cost of rent or mortgage payments without sacrificing the other basic needs of food, clothing, health care, transportation, child care, and paying taxes. Services must be there for new and existing renters and homeowners to help them maintain safe, affordable permanent housing. Attempting to change the current homeless assistance system must take place within the context of larger efforts to help our neighbors who have low incomes.

One of the first action steps will be to identify system created barriers and develop strategies to minimize or eliminate them. By communicating directly with people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, this plan will create a consumer-based model that offers the housing options our target community members need. **Outcome: More people entering permanent housing**

#### Housing Wage

In Otsego County, a person working 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year must earn \$12.27 per hour in order to rent a two-bedroom apartment at the fair market rent of \$638.

### **3 Step Planning Process**

#### **1. Where Are We Now**

The 10 person Advisory Board has met monthly since June and identified the six top goals for the 10 year plan. The draft plan was widely distributed for review and feedback.

What we have done so far: An Advisory Board of key agency representatives was created by the Continuum of Care and the Otsego Human Service Network. See Appendix B. A planning grant was obtained from MSHDA. MSU Extension agreed to facilitate the planning process. Two focus groups were conducted with community leaders to gain their input on eliminating homelessness in Otsego County. Two other focus groups with residents of the Friendship Shelter provided insight of their first hand experiences. Members of the Otsego Human Service Network were asked for their input on ways to prevent homelessness. Personal interviews were conducted with law enforcement officials from the Sheriff's Department and the Gaylord City Police to gain their perspective of homelessness in Otsego County.

Existing plans, research reports, statistics, and surveys related to homelessness in Otsego County were collected and studied. Our web site [www.otsego.org/homelessness](http://www.otsego.org/homelessness) was created to share this wealth of information with all stakeholders. Links to state and national organizations related to ending homelessness provide easy access to best practices and other relevant information.

A joint resolution of support was signed by the Mayor of Gaylord, Vanderbilt Village Council, County Administrator, and the Township Officers Association. See Appendix C

#### **2. Where Do We Want To Be – Prioritized List of Goals**

Ultimately, we want to eliminate homelessness in Otsego County by 2017. The following six goals will move our community toward that reality:

Goal 1: Have current, accurate data on homelessness by determining the actual number of homeless people and determining how many low income housing units are available.

Goal 2: Have one umbrella group of agencies whose primary mission targets the homeless and near homeless. This will foster better collaboration and coordination of services.

Goal 3: Help people overcome their impairing personal challenges that may result in becoming homeless including bad credit, mental health, veterans, alcohol abuse, substance abuse.

Goal 4: Provide life skills training in a variety of formats to various target audiences to address topics such as social behavior, landlord/tenant relations, and personal financial management.

Goal 5: Create a Housing Ombudsman to help people find a place to live and cut the red tape.

Goal 6: Offer rent incentives so tenants can work off a portion of their rent / mortgage payment.

#### **3. How Do We Get There**

Implementation strategies will be developed during the first year of the planning process.

## **Background**

- a. Scope of the situation
- b. Clearly describe the new vision
- c. Changes that are needed to accomplish vision
- d. Define our strategic response

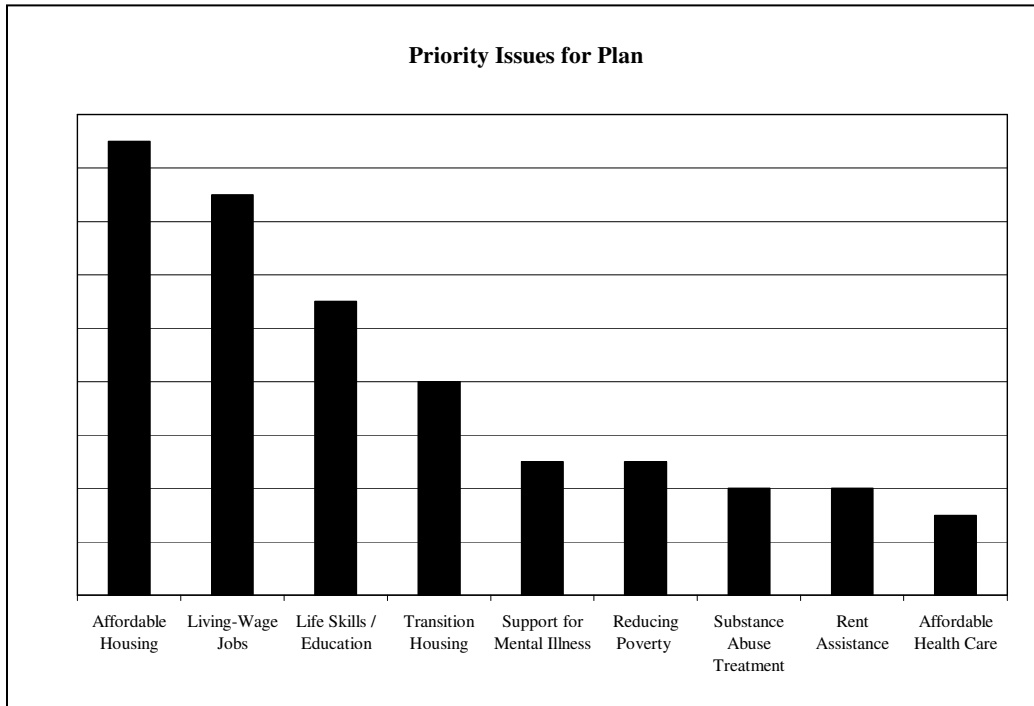
a. Scope of the situation: Our definition of homeless is an expanded version of HUD's to include those residing at the Friendship Shelter (the homeless shelter located in Otsego County); those doubling up with family or friends; those who have been ordered out of their homes for health or safety reasons; those displaced by a disaster such as a fire; those who have been evicted from their homes through a court order; or those residing in a place not designated as regular sleeping accommodations (car, tent, camper, etc.).

We don't know how many people are homeless in Otsego County. The following sources of numbers shed some light but caution should be used in how the information is used or in drawing conclusions. The most recent point in time survey was conducted on November 19, 2003. Forty-eight surveys were mailed to selected agencies and received a response rate of 56%. A total of 41 people were identified as being homeless and an additional 88 people were said to be doubled up. Possible duplication in counting, several responses of "unknown", and time of year should be taken into account when using this information. The COP-ESD reported a total of 144 students were considered homeless during the 2005-06 school year at Gaylord Community Schools, Johannesburg-Lewiston School, and Vanderbilt Area School. It was noted these figures are probably greatly under-reported due to the way the information is collected. Of the 349 people staying at the Friendship Shelter in 2005, about one third or 111 were residents of Otsego County. (See chart on page 2) Related statistics – although not purely homeless – such as housing figures from the 2000 Census, income and poverty estimates, Section 8 rent subsidy participants, and recipients of assistance from agencies such as First Call for Help and DHS also help describe the housing and homeless situation in Otsego County. In addition, it would be important to know how many people were denied services or on a waiting list. A more tangible baseline is needed to accurately measure the impact of our planned efforts.

### **Our Definition of Homelessness**

Those residing at the Friendship Shelter (Homeless Shelter); those doubling up with family or friends; those who have been ordered out of their homes for health or safety reasons; those displaced by a disaster such as a fire; those who have been evicted from their homes through a court action; or those residing in a place not designated as regular sleeping accommodations (car, tent, camper, etc).

Twelve issues related to homelessness were presented to the Advisory Board at their July 20 meeting. Each member received three dots representing 5 points, 3 points, and 1 point and asked to select the topics that the plan should focus on. The results are listed below.



The two highest priority issues are Affordable Housing and Jobs that pay a Living Wage. To some extent, these are currently being addressed by two existing organizations: The Otsego County Affordable Housing Alliance and the Otsego County Economic Alliance. Strong linkages between this 10 year plan and these two organizations must be developed.

Here is a quick description of what housing costs are in Otsego County and what level of income is needed.

According to “Out of Reach 2005 – Michigan” published by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, to be able to afford monthly rent payments of \$694 (median rent for Otsego County), wages need to be \$12.27 per hour for 40 hours per week to earn \$25,520.

The Otsego County Affordable Housing Alliance brochure lists the average home price in Otsego County is \$120,167. With a 30 year mortgage at 5%, the monthly mortgage payment is \$720. To pay for the mortgage, the yearly wages need to be \$28,000 and the wage earner would need to earn an hourly wage of \$13.50.

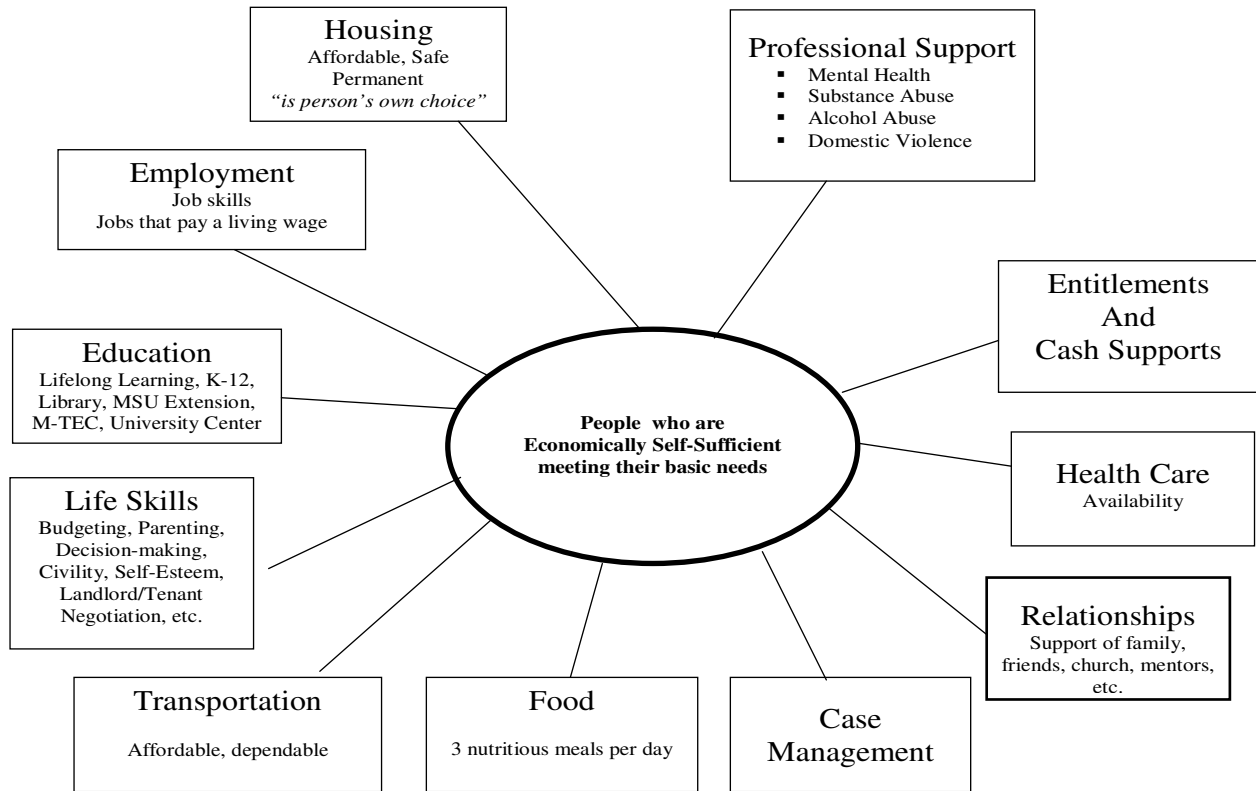
“If housing were inexpensive, or people could earn enough to afford housing, very few individuals would face homelessness.”

Martha Burt

What Will It Take To End Homelessness?



b. Clearly describe the new Vision: “All people in Otsego County will be in safe, affordable, permanent homes.” As we shift from managing homelessness to eliminating homelessness, we discovered 11 primary components in order to be self-sufficient which includes having affordable, safe, permanent housing. The Advisory Board created the following chart to communicate this holistic approach:



This diagram illustrates the complexity and how homelessness is intertwined with many every day factors. The cause and effect relationship related to homelessness appears to be a two-way street. The common phrase “2 paychecks from becoming homeless”, explains how a family trying to stretch its money to cover expenses, may be unable to pay the rent or mortgage payment if an unexpected crisis should arise. Likewise, making sure each element listed in the above graphic is being met will reduce the risk of becoming homeless.

c. Change needed to accomplish vision: As noted throughout this report, a shift from managing homelessness to eliminating homelessness needs to be embraced and operationalized. Recent organizational structure changes with the Continuum of Care and the Otsego Human Service Network will greatly enhance the implementation of the 10 Year Plan.

**Paradigm Shift**

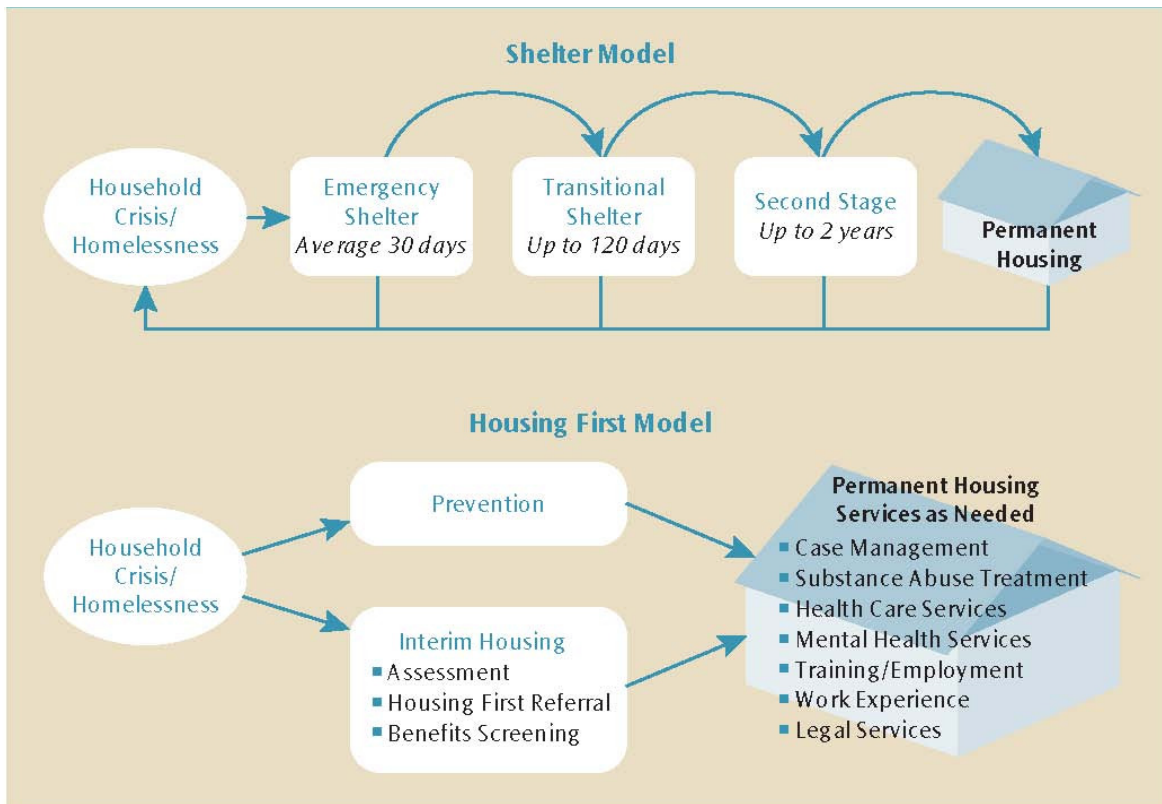
**To end homelessness, a different approach must be taken. People should be placed in homes as rapidly as possible and then linked to available services.**

## Housing comes first, then services

The Housing First methodology is one option to keep people housed or to return them to permanent housing as quickly as possible if homeless. The Housing First model incorporates the following critical elements:

- There is a focus on helping individuals and families access and sustain rental housing *as quickly as possible* and the *housing is not time-limited*;
- A variety of housing assistance, case management and supportive services are delivered primarily *following* a housing placement to promote housing stability and individual well-being;
- Such services are time-limited or long-term depending upon individual need;
- Housing is not contingent on compliance with services – instead, participants must comply with a standard lease agreement and are provided with the services and supports that are necessary to help them do so successfully.

When homelessness is not prevented, we must rely on the homeless assistance system. Although emergency shelters are a necessary stop gap measure to ensure people are not literally sleeping on the street, it is not an ideal environment for individuals, families and children. Recognizing this, many communities are reorganizing their response to homelessness. Below is an example of a community that completely reorganized its homeless assistance system from an emergency shelter and transitional housing model to a “Housing First model”



Source: Adapted from “Getting Housed, Staying Housed: A Collaborative Plan to End Homelessness,” Chicago Continuum of Care.

“Housing First” is an approach that guides a set of interventions designed to help people transition more rapidly out of the shelter system; it includes crisis intervention, re-housing as quickly as possible, follow-up case management, and housing support services to prevent the reoccurrence of homelessness. Once a family is in housing, they are more responsive to interventions and support that lead to better outcomes. (Promising Strategies to End Family Homelessness. June 2006)

Another change that needs to take place is the perception of homelessness in Otsego County. We must increase our outreach efforts to raise awareness, dispel myths, and garner support to end homelessness.

The level of public awareness and concern about homelessness is probably low. It may not even be on the “radar screen” for many local officials. This observation is based on the recent public forums, the county’s visioning project “One County – One Vision”, countywide survey, personal interview, and MSU Extension’s issue identification process. Another source of public opinion can be gleaned from NEMCSA’s Northeast Michigan Community Need Assessment conducted in 2000-01. Selected results for Otsego County from this report are as follows:

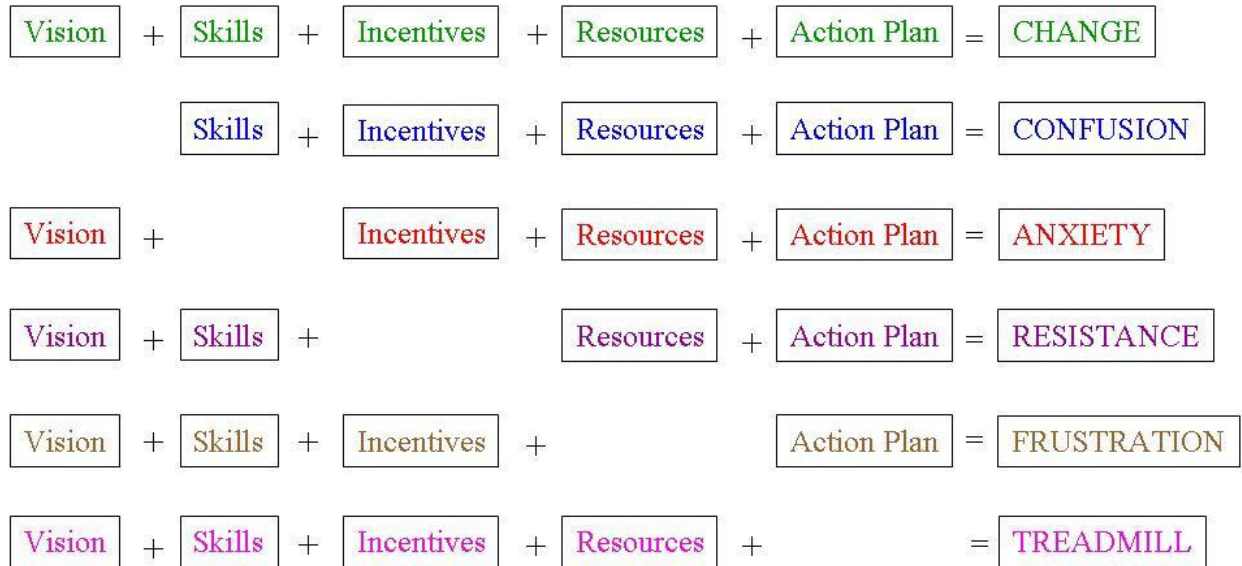
	Yes	No	Other
a. Are one or more shelters for the homeless available in your community?	87	20	25
b. Is the use of a homeless shelter provided at little or no cost to the homeless?	66	19	47
c. Are the housing needs of the homeless being met in your community?	46	35	51
d. Is the quality of homeless shelters in your community good?	56	22	54
e. Are shelters for the homeless conveniently located in your community?	7	70	55
f. Do most of the homeless in your community know where and how to access a shelter?	39	35	58

Keep in mind that this study is based on surveys from 1,172 clients / recipients of NEMCSA services – not the general population. There were 132 people from Otsego County who participated in the survey.

Some people may assume that since we have a homeless shelter the problem is being addressed. It may also be that homeless people aren’t as visible in rural communities. Regardless, a lot of time and energy is needed to implement the 10 Year Plan and much depends on the importance and urgency of this issue.

In order to bring about the desired change – an end to homelessness – it is necessary to understand the change process as outlined in the following chart. When one of the five essential components is missing, the result will be something other than positive change. Another way to look at this matrix is to find the end result listed in the far right column and determine what must be corrected. For example, if there is resistance, we need to focus our attention to providing appropriate incentives.

### THE CHANGE PROCESS



d. Define our strategic response:

Our first step has been to gather existing local data, identify potential partners, obtain research reports and plans from other communities. In other words, find out what already exists so we don't reinvent the wheel. A plethora of research exists and many of the reports are available at our web site. Once we've located the information, we need to study it in order to apply the knowledge here in Otsego County. Without falling into the trap of "paralysis of analysis", we need time to review the resource materials to find the ideas, best practices, and proven strategies that fit our local situation. At this point, we have more questions than answers. A crash course in Homelessness 101 would be helpful so that we make decisions based on facts and research-based strategies. Much of the information that we've collected can be summarized in a statement from the National Coalition for the Homeless Fact Sheet #11 on Rural Homelessness. **“Ending homelessness in rural areas requires jobs that pay a living wage, adequate income supports for those who cannot work, affordable housing, access to health care, and transportation.”**

How to get from point A to point B is the real question that we're faced with. Creating a plan that moves us from ideas, to action, to results is the challenge. Our plan must spell out what we need to do and how to do it in an efficient and effective manner. Creating a 10 year plan will require more than 3 or 4 months of effort. The necessary preliminary steps may take an additional 6 – 12 months.

As a result of this planning process, we have already merged the Advisory Board with the Continuum of Care to create a synergistic approach. Committees of the Continuum of Care are in place that address many of this plan's main goals. The Otsego County Affordable Housing Alliance is also now under the umbrella of the Otsego Human Service Network. These changes should provide improved effectiveness and efficiency in ending homelessness. Multi-county and regional collaboration is being explored.

Communicating with key stakeholders as well as the general public will be important to keep the community aware of the progress being made toward eliminating homelessness in Otsego County. Our web site at <http://www.otsego.org/homelessness/> provides easy access to our updated plan and a convenient way to share information. Contact information is listed in Appendix B. Outreach also includes communicating with people experiencing homelessness and those at risk of becoming homeless. Including homeless representation in planning, decision-making, and implementing the goals of this Plan will greatly increase the success of our efforts during the next ten years. Implementation of this plan depends on stakeholder cooperation and long-term involvement.

### **Selected References**

Ending Chronic Homelessness: Strategies for Action, Department of Health and Human Services, March 2003.

Good ... to Better ... To Great: Innovations in 10-Year Plans to End Chronic Homelessness in Your Community, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Out of Reach 2005: Michigan, National Low Income Housing Coalition.

Promising Strategies to End Family Homelessness, National Alliance to End Homelessness, June 2006.

Rural Homelessness, NCH Fact Sheet #11, National Coalition for the Homeless.

Strategies for Preventing Homelessness, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, May 2005.

Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Placer County, 2004.

The Ten Essentials: What Your Community Needs to Do to End Homelessness, National Alliance To End Homelessness.

What Will It Take To End Homelessness?, Martha R. Burt, Urban Institute, September 2001.

**Prioritized Goals**

In order to accomplish our vision of “All people in Otsego County will be in safe, affordable, permanent housing”, the following prioritized goals were established on August 15, 2006 by the Advisory Board. Goals 1 and 2 were considered “a given” – we have to do them in order to be able to accomplish the rest of the plan.

**Goal 1**

Have current, accurate data on homelessness by determining the actual number of homeless people and determining the number of low income housing units available in Otsego County. Make the information available on our web site. Use the data to inform others about homelessness, make decisions based on facts, and measure impact resulting from implementing this 10 year plan. *How will this goal end homelessness in 10 years?*

Action Step	Person in Charge	Date to be Started	Date to be Completed
Utilize HMIS-Friendship Shelter CMH First Call for Help	Rhonda Berdan, System Administrator	Oct 1, 2006	Nov 1, 2006
Collect and publish data related to the number of monthly evictions, people served by The Salvation Army, people receiving rental assistance, and the number of homeless students as reported by the COP ESD.			
Conduct a point in time street count	Rhonda Berdan, C of C coordinator		Nov 2007
Determine the number of low income housing units including Section 8	Alice Yeoman, OC Affordable Housing Alliance		Jan 2007
Keep our web site up to date			

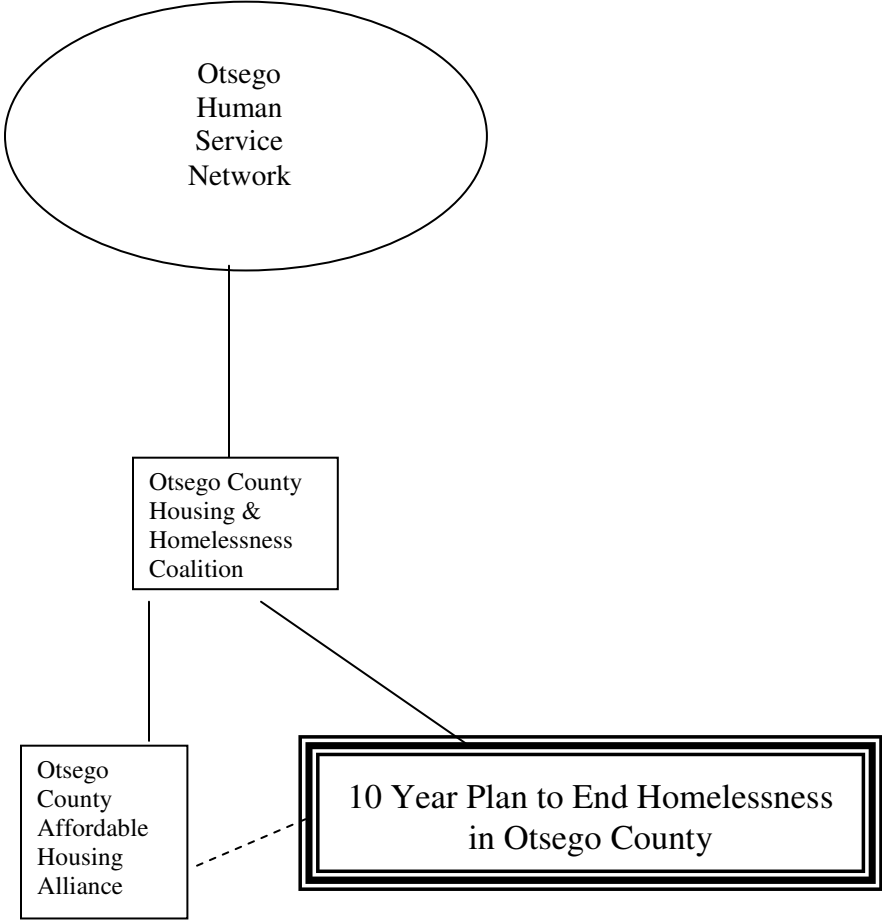
Goal 2

Have one umbrella group of agencies whose primary mission targets the homeless and near homeless. This would foster collaboration and coordination of services and provide a convenient link to the County Master Plan and funding sources such as MSHDA and DHS.

*How will this goal end homelessness in 10 years?*

Action Step	Person in Charge	Date to be Started	Date to be Completed
Restructure the C of C so it is a workgroup of the OHSN	Cynthia G-P	Oct 5, 2006	Oct 5, 2006 <b>Completed!</b>
Make the OCAHA a workgroup of the C of C w/i OHSN	Alice Yeoman, OC Affordable Housing Alliance	Oct 3, 2006	Oct 3, 2006 <b>Completed!</b>
Assign the implementation of the 10 year plan to the C of C	Chair of the CofC Cynthia G-P	Sept. 26, 2006	Sept. 26, 2006 <b>Completed!</b>
Connect the 10 year plan with the County's updated Master Plan	Cynthia G-P		
Expand membership of the C of C to include the jail, schools, corrections, youth, Otsego Memorial Hospital, former homeless clients.			
Create a process to monitor, review, refine, and evaluate the 10 year plan.			
Develop a mechanism to hold individuals and agencies accountable for following through with action steps.			
Provide an annual progress report			
Mesh the goals, projects, and outreach efforts of the organizations listed in Appendix A to eliminate duplication.			
Develop implementation strategies for years 2007-12		October 2006	June 2007

# End Homelessness in Otsego County Organizational Chart



One of the immediate successes resulting from the 10 Year planning process was to restructure the organizational chart so that all the key players were under one umbrella.

See Appendix B for information on how to contact each of the organizations.



Goal 3 [192 Points]

Help people overcome their impairing personal challenges that may result in becoming homeless including bad credit, mental health, alcohol abuse, substance abuse. Capitalize on community assets by using existing mainstream services more effectively.

*How will this goal end homelessness in 10 years?*

Action Step	Person in Charge	Date to be Started	Date to be Completed
Financial Fitness workshop series and limited one on one consultation.	Alice Yeoman, Northern Homes & OC Affordable Housing Alliance	Classes are now in session  Next session begins Oct 2006	Ongoing
Links > MSHDA & IDA \$3 to \$1 match	Todd Cook Michigan Works!		
Expand existing Youth programming & Foster Kids	Alice Yeoman willing to assist.  Contact 4-H		
Ruby Payne Poverty workshop	Linda Cronk		
Integrated Treatment	Joe Hebel		2008
Who's doing what? Inventory & increase awareness of existing programs. See Appendix A and expand this list. (this action step ties in with Goals 1 & 2) NEMSAS annual Plan	OHSN Barb Soffredine and Pete Amar	Nov 2006 Tie in with allocations offered by the OHSN	Oct 2007
	Dennis Priess		

Goal 4 [185 Points]

Provide life skills training in a variety of formats to various target audiences to address specific needs such as social behavior, landlord/tenant relations, personal financial management, decision-making and self-esteem.

*How will this goal end homelessness in 10 years?*

Action Step	Person in Charge	Date to be Started	Date to be Completed
Tie in with Getting by in a Just Getting by World and also tie in with foster care	Linda Cronk		
All county youth emphasis FS, Foster Kids, Vista, Junior Achievement	Alice Yeoman willing to assist  Contact 4-H		
Love & Logic	Jenny Gadberry COP-ESD		
Landlord/renter forum	Alice Yeoman willing to assist  Contact District Court		
Landlord registry	Alice Yeoman, OC Affordable Housing Alliance		
“Life Skills” MSHDA-Marlene Hopp UC@G M-TEC > home maintenance 4-H	See Goal #6  Contact Jack Thompson at the University Center		

Goal 5 [166 Points]

Provide direct / personal assistance for people seeking safe, affordable, permanent homes in Otsego County. “Realtor-like” to help renters find a place to live. Create a Housing Ombudsman that would directly assist people looking for affordable, safe, permanent housing in Otsego County by connecting/matching finding with available housing stock; Assist with negotiations between tenant and landlords to help prevent evictions; Assist homeless and at-risk homeless through the maze of housing resources, services and programs; Help landlords screen tenants; and Help landlords qualify for housing services and programs. This position could possibly also be the point-person for implementing the 10 Year Plan.

*How will this goal end homelessness in 10 years?*

Action Step	Person in Charge	Date to be Started	Date to be Completed
Landlord/Tenant relations	Alice Yeoman willing to assist		
Talk with Leslie Sheen 11 counties	Alice, OCAHA Rhonda	Oct 3 Oct 5	
Explore 3 county collaboration			
Obtain sample job description and salary range			

Goal 6 [110 Points]

Rent Incentive: Tenants work off a portion of their rent by fixing or repairing the rental unit.

*How will this goal end homelessness in 10 years?*

Action Step	Person in Charge	Date to be Started	Date to be Completed
Apply for MSHDA grant	Cynthia G-P	RFP 9-28-06	
Eviction prevention	Alice Yeoman willing to assist		
Prevent Utilities shut off	Alice Yeoman willing to assist		

The following proposed goals were either re-directed to another agency or they were felt to be beyond the scope and capacity of this project. While these issues are important, the Advisory Board felt that implementation was unlikely:

1. Reduce the number of Otsego County residents living in poverty. Poverty is a major cause of homelessness in Otsego County.
2. Programs that target run away / throw away youth.
3. Help those about to be evicted. See Chart 2 in Appendix A.
4. Increase the number of jobs that pay living wages which are necessary for housing to be affordable. Refer this to the Otsego County Economic Alliance.
5. Improve the job skills and level of education of employees so they can qualify for higher paying jobs. Several existing
6. Assess the supply number of safe affordable, permanent housing units available to low-income people. Establish a baseline number and assess the need for additional units.
7. Increase the number and dollar amount of subsidies for housing in Otsego County

During the next several months, the Advisory Board is committed to upgrading its action plan using the SMART approach for goal development.

#### SMART

- Specific (clear, easily understood, addresses a single issue)
- Measurable (set quantifiable benchmarks or outcomes in order to measure success)
- Achievable (focus on processes you can control or have influence on. Make sure action steps align with goal attainment)
- Realistic (seek quality outcomes over quantity, pick goals you know you'll be able to support)
- Timely (make sure realistic timeframes are utilized and that longer term goals are supported by short term action steps)

The Advisory Board will also connect with other groups and agencies in Otsego County as well as regionally to explore possible joint efforts and avoiding duplication. Some goals and action steps may be referred to other organizations for implementation. The Advisory Board will use "Good ... to Better ... to Great: Innovations in 10-year plans to end chronic homelessness in your community" by the United State Interagency Council on Homelessness as a guide to evaluate the planning process and its content. A 39 item checklist is being used to evaluate the 10 Year Plan. One aspect that should be addressed is the cost benefit of each project listed in the Plan.

## Idea List

Many things will change during the life of this ten year plan. Government support programs may end, be modified, or new ones created. The local economy and housing market and other external conditions will influence the number of homeless people in our county. This 10 Year Plan must anticipate and plan for these and other changes.

Perhaps a list of additional options to consider incorporating into this plan and action steps would be useful. Here are some suggestions from a variety of sources:

1. Traverse City - idea for youth (this needs more details)
2. Free medical clinic for homeless – (not taking their meds) cause and/or effort
3. Rental inspection to make sure rental units are safe and sanitary
4. Affordable Housing Resource Fair (for general public): include renters – not just for “ownership” and not just agency networking
5. Work with Habitat For Humanity to build a two family house. One family would serve as the mentor and one would be the mentee. After one year, the mentor keeps the house and the mentee becomes the mentor in a second house.
6. Create a neighborhood with community services to assist the homeless transition into permanent housing. Similar to the incubator concepts for businesses.
7. Conduct an annual community forum focused on homelessness issues
8. Adapt the strategies and best practices from other communities to fit our county’s situation.
9. Create a standardized formula to measure homelessness over time state-wide.
10. Identify organizations that provide programs / assistance for each box in Appendix A – Chart 3.

Planning Consultant:

Phil Alexander

MSU Extension – Otsego County

800 Livingston Blvd., Suite 4A-2

Gaylord, MI 49735

(989) 732-0272

[alexan17@msu.edu](mailto:alexan17@msu.edu)

**Timeline for Creating and Implementing the Plan  
2006 - 07**

<b>2006</b>	
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 10 person Advisory Board created</li> <li>▪ Applied for planning grant from MSHDA</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Web site created <a href="http://www.otsego.org/homelessness">http://www.otsego.org/homelessness</a></li> <li>▪ Focus groups with 15 key community leaders</li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Joint resolution of support by all 4 units of local government</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focus groups with 11 residents of the Friendship Shelter</li> </ul>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Presentation at the County Board of Commissioners' meeting</li> <li>▪ Summary of draft plan distributed to key stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Affordable Home Night sponsored by Countryside Building Services and Wells Fargo</li> </ul>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Joint meeting with the Advisory Board and Continuum of Care</li> <li>▪ Submit final plan to MSHDA</li> <li>▪ Focus group with former residents of the Friendship Shelter</li> <li>▪ Develop implementation strategies for 2007-12 using SMART</li> </ul>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Poverty Simulation and Ruby Payne Workshop</li> </ul>
December	
<b>2007</b>	
January	
February	
March	
April	
May	
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Present the updated Plan with detailed implementation steps for each goal to be accomplished in the first five years</li> </ul>

## Appendix A FLOW CHARTS FOR OTSEGO COUNTY'S HOMELESS OR NEAR HOMELESS

**Chart 1 - Homeless** – Those residing at the Friendship Shelter (Homeless Shelter); those doubling up with family or friends; those who have been ordered out of their homes for health or safety reasons; those displaced by a disaster such as a fire; those who have been evicted from their homes through a court action; or those residing in a place not designated as regular sleeping accommodations (car, tent, camper, etc).

**Chart 2 - Danger of Homelessness** – Those facing eviction; those facing foreclosure, forfeiture, or tax crisis; those with shut-off notices or current disconnection of basic utilities; those with an order to vacate their home for health or safety reasons by a governmental body; those experiencing domestic violence; or those with existing housing which is unlivable (not defined by a governmental body).

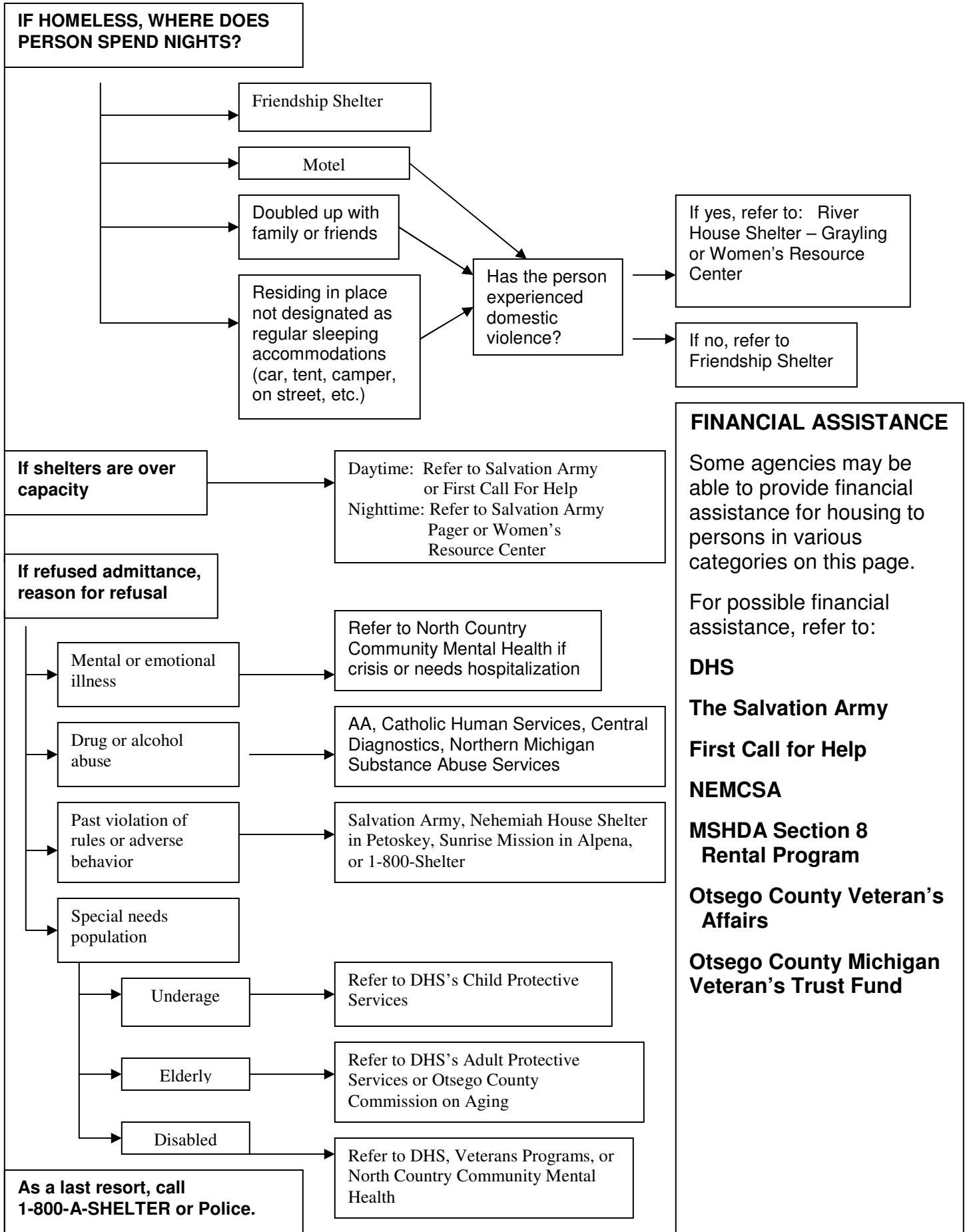
**Chart 3 – Preventing Homelessness** – Eleven key factors that are essential for all people to self-sufficient.

AGENCY  Linked to agency's web page	CONTACT PERSON	TELEPHONE NUMBER <small>(Unless otherwise indicated, all numbers have 989 prefix)</small>
<b>Alcoholics Anonymous</b>		732-0085
<b>American Red Cross</b>	Dave Gutierrez	343-1353 1-800-691-6059
<b>Catholic Human Services</b>	Nancy Morgridge	732-6761
<b>Community Mediation Services:</b> Dispute resolution	Judi Doan	732-1576
<b>Compass:</b> Youth and family guidance	Lisa Slupecki, Director	356-3474 or 1-800-292-3003
<b>Counsel and Advocacy Law Line:</b> Legal advice for seniors and low-income population		1-888-783-8190
<b>Credit Counseling Center</b>		732-2260
<b>Department of Human Services (DHS)</b> Emergency services, child and adult protective services/ emergency financial assistance		732-1702
<b>Dial –a-Ride</b> Otsego County Bus System	Theron Higgins	731-1204
<b>First Call For Help:</b> Information & referral to emergency financial assistance	Gladys Pickering	732-8929
<b>Food Pantry</b>	Connie Squires	732-8929
<b>Friendship Shelter (Homeless Shelter)</b>	Rhonda Berdan	732-5960
<b>Michigan Problem Gambling Helpline</b>		1-800-270-7117
<b>Gaylord City Police Department:</b>	Joe Fitzgerald, Chief	732-1777
<b>Gaylord Public Schools:</b> Assistance to homeless and at-risk-of-homeless students	Kurt Soltman, Homeless Liaison	705-3080 Ext. 1002
<b>Goodwill Industries</b>		
<b>GreenPath Debt Solutions</b>	Kristen Kipina	732-2260
<b>Habitat for Humanity</b>	Mike Wood	732-6070
<b>Health Department</b> Northwest Michigan Community Health Agency		732-1794
<b>Johannesburg-Lewiston High School:</b> Assistance to homeless and at-risk-of-homeless students	Mary Kay Millbocker, Homeless Liaison	732-1773
<b>Legal Services of Northern Michigan</b> Legal advice for low-income persons	Stacie Hancock	705-1067

<b>MSHDA Section 8</b> Rental assistance/ rental subsidization	Theresa Kelly	1-888-645-9993
<b>Michigan State Police – Gaylord</b> May Day Fund for stranded motorists	Blake Davis, Lieutenant	732-5141
<b>MSU Extension – Otsego County</b> Parenting, food & nutrition, life skills	Phil Alexander	731-0272
<b>Michigan Works!</b> Employment assistance	Todd Cook	732-3886
<b>Narcotics Anonymous</b>		732-0085
<b>Nehemiah House Shelter - Petoskey</b>	Mike Walker	1-231-347-0363
<b>North Country Community Mental Health</b> Third Level Crisis Center	Fred Henthorne	1-800-834-3393
<b>Northeast MI Community Service Agency, Inc (NEMCSA):</b> Emergency financial assistance	Leslie Scheen	1-866-484-7077
<b>Northern Homes Community Development</b>	Alice Yeoman	1-866-637-1834
<b>Northern Michigan Substance Services</b>	Sheryl Dey	732-0864 1-800-686-0749
<b>Otsego County Affordable Housing Alliance</b>	Alice Yeoman	1-866-637-1834
<b>Otsego County Land Use Services – Planning and Building Department</b> Health and safety code violations/inspections	Richard Edmonds	731-7420
<b>Otsego County Commission on Aging – advocacy &amp; referral</b>	Loretta Miller	732-1122
<b>Otsego County Housing Committee</b> Home improvement loans & emergency repairs	Marlene Hopp, Director	731-7570
<b>Otsego County Housing &amp; Homeless Coalition</b>	Cynthia Pushman	732-1702
<b>Otsego County Literacy Council</b>	Jackie Skinner	731-0680
<b>Otsego County MI Veteran Trust</b> Emergency relief	Clarence Ralston, Chair	731-7576
<b>Otsego County Ministerial Association</b>	Adam Wolfgang	732-7727
<b>Otsego County Sheriff’s Department</b>	Jim McBride, Sheriff	732-3555
<b>Otsego County Veteran’s Affairs</b> VA benefits, soldier relief, transportation	Marlene Hopp, Veterans’ Counselor	731-7575
<b>Otsego Human Service Network</b>	Pete Amar	731-5295
<b>River House Shelter</b> (Women’s domestic violence)	Rhoda Hacker	348-3169 1-888-554-3169
<b>Salvation Army:</b> Emergency financial assistance	Ron Chavey	731-5959
<b>Statewide shelter referral information</b>	Eileen Poole	1-800-A-SHELTER or 1-800-2-743-5837
<b>Straits Regional Ride</b>	Chris Carr	1-866-731-1204
<b>Substance Abuse Hotline</b>		1-800-442-7315
<b>Sunrise Mission - Alpena</b>		356-1227
<b>Team Outreach Community Meal</b>	Jonathan Mays Matt Soderquist	989-370-1379 989-614-1380
<b>Third Level Crisis Center</b> 24 hour crisis intervention, information, and referral		1-800-442-7315
<b>Transition House – prisoner re-entry program</b> (Goodwill Industries)	Cherise Henkel	732-3216
<b>United Way</b>	Natalie Davis	732-8929
<b>U.S.D.A. Rural Development</b> Home improvement grants and loans	Troy Shank	345-5470 1-800-944-8119
<b>Vanderbilt Area School:</b> Assistance to homeless and at-risk-of-homeless students	Jeffrey Liedel, Homeless Liaison	983-2561
<b>Women’s Resource Center</b> Domestic violence shelter & supportive services		731-0918 1-800-275-1995

Last Revised: October 15, 2006





**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Some agencies may be able to provide financial assistance for housing to persons in various categories on this page.

For possible financial assistance, refer to:

**DHS**

**The Salvation Army**

**First Call for Help**

**NEMCSA**

**MSHDA Section 8 Rental Program**

**Otsego County Veteran’s Affairs**

**Otsego County Michigan Veteran’s Trust Fund**

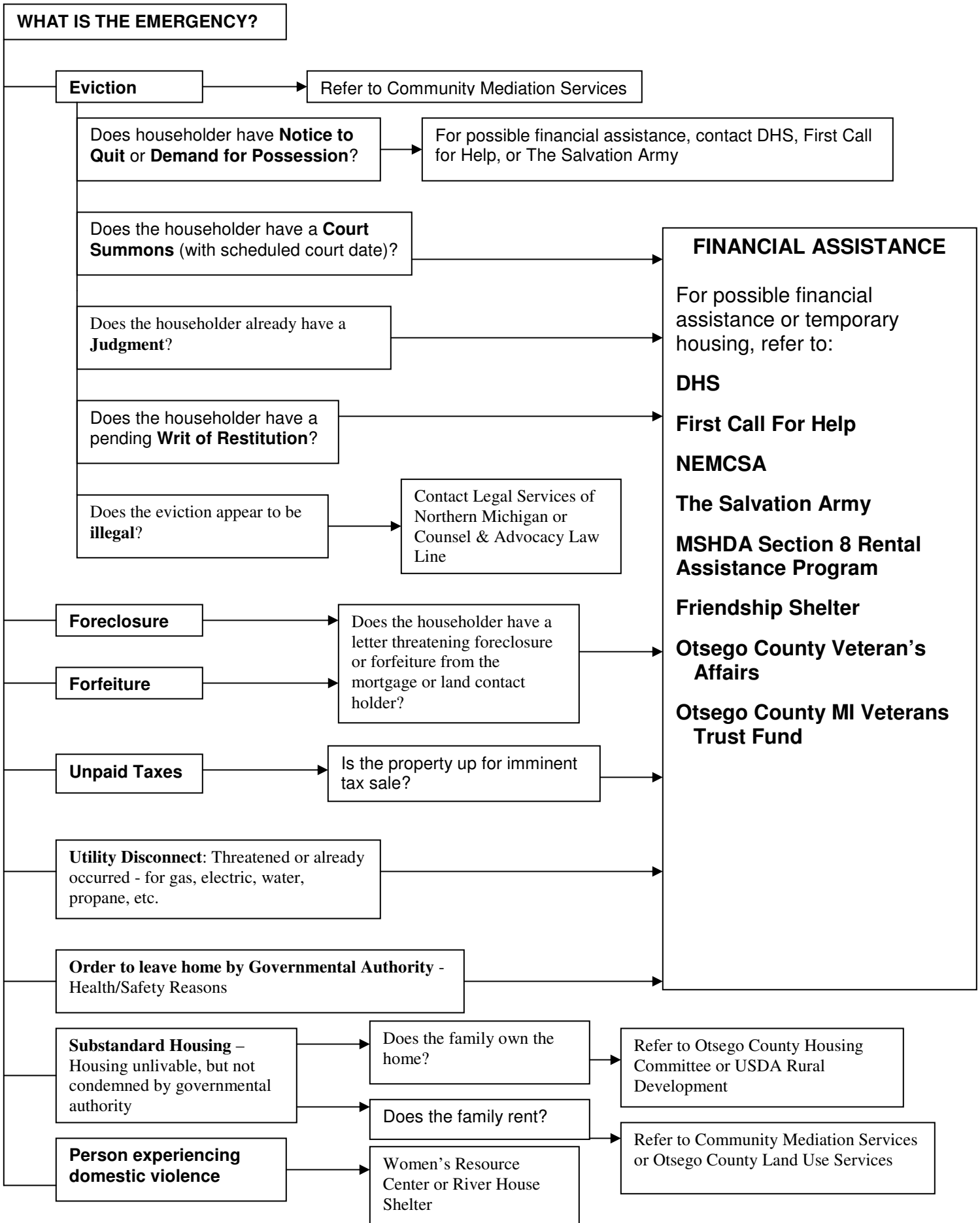
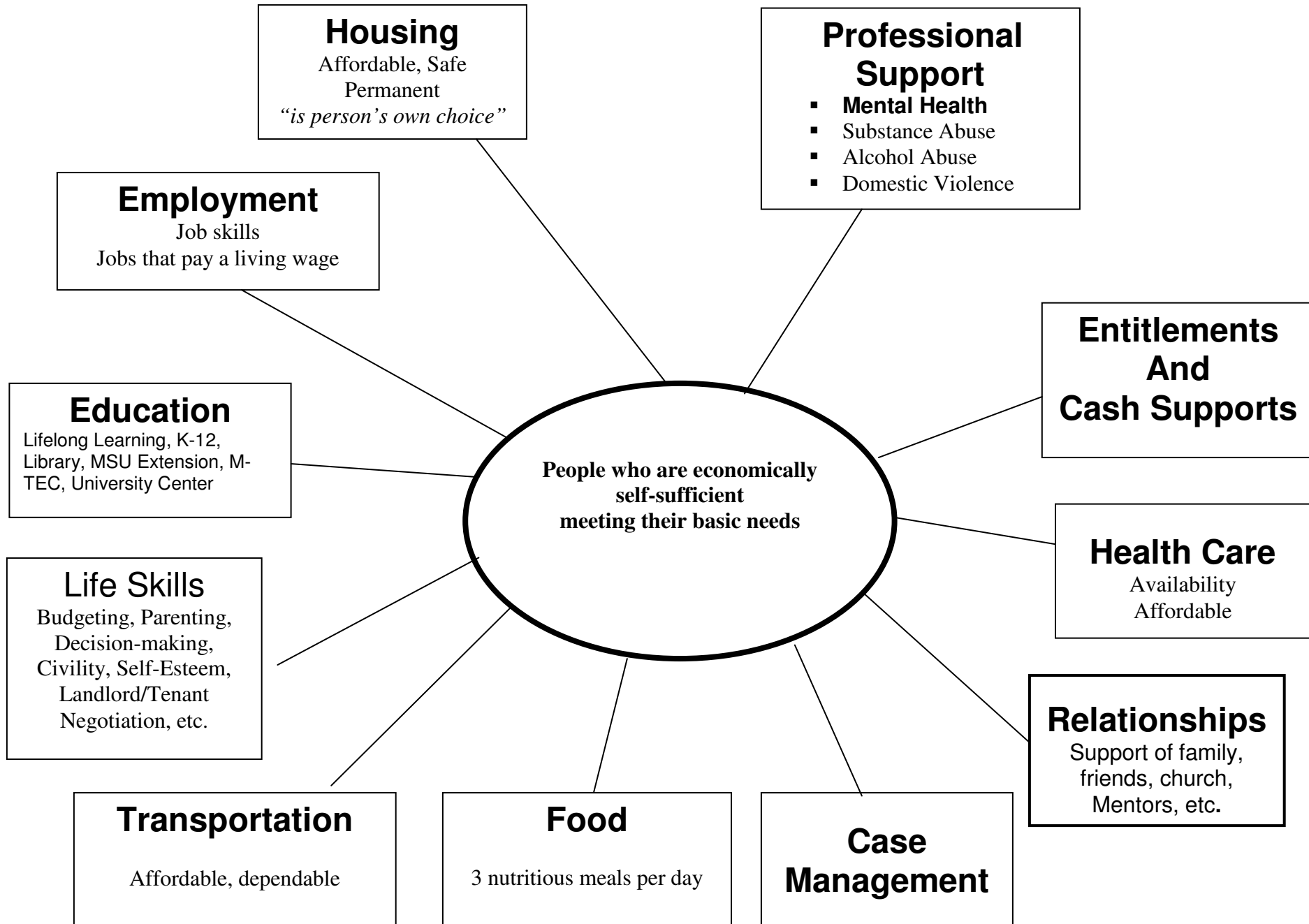


Chart 3 Prevention – Close the Front Door



Appendix B

**Otsego County 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness  
Advisory Board Members**

Peter Amar,  
Otsego Human Service Network Coordinator  
(989) 731-5295 [peteamar@foxfarmconsulting.com](mailto:peteamar@foxfarmconsulting.com)

Rhonda Berdan, Director (Otsego County Housing and Homeless Coalition Coordinator)  
Friendship Shelter  
(989) 732-5960 [friends@chartermi.net](mailto:friends@chartermi.net)

Julie F. Delaney  
Attorney/Referee- 46<sup>th</sup> Circuit Trial Court Family Division Supervisor  
(989) 731-0210 [jdelaney@circuit46.org](mailto:jdelaney@circuit46.org)

Joe Hebel, Program Support Services Director  
North Country Community Mental Health  
(231) 347-0740 [jhebel@norcocmh.org](mailto:jhebel@norcocmh.org)

Ken Homa  
Director of Housing Services, Goodwill Industries, Inc.  
(231) 995-7736

Jonathan Mays (Otsego County Ministerial Association)  
Jacob's Well  
(989) 370-1379 [jonmays7@yahoo.com](mailto:jonmays7@yahoo.com)

Cynthia Pushman (Otsego County Housing and Homeless Coalition Chair)  
Director, Otsego Crawford Department of Human Services  
(989) 731-3108 [pushmanc@michigan.gov](mailto:pushmanc@michigan.gov)

Barbara Soffredine  
Otsego Human Service Network Chair  
(989) 732-5990 [soffredb@charter.net](mailto:soffredb@charter.net)

Laura Weiss (Otsego Human Service Network Vice-Chair)  
Business Liaison, Michigan Works!  
(989) 732-3886 [weissl@miworks-nemc.gen.mi.us](mailto:weissl@miworks-nemc.gen.mi.us)

Alice Yeoman (Otsego County Affordable Housing Alliance Chair)  
Northern Homes Community Development Corporation  
(231) 582-6436 [alice@northernhomes.org](mailto:alice@northernhomes.org)

Appendix C  
Joint Resolution of Support to  
End Homelessness in Otsego County

Whereas, safe, affordable, permanent housing is an essential component of strong families and communities; and

Whereas, the number of homeless in Otsego County has increased over the past two decades; and

Whereas, the citizens of Otsego County shall not ignore homeless people in our county; and

Whereas, treating people who have already become homeless is far more expensive than preventing homelessness; and

Whereas, breaking the cycle of chronic poverty and homelessness requires new ideas and innovative action; and

Whereas, the collaboration of government and human service agencies, housing providers, educational institutions, and individual citizens will have a greater impact than working independently; and

Whereas, our respective Boards are dedicated to ending homelessness in this county

Therefore, we the undersigned leaders of Otsego County support and endorse the creation of a 10 year plan to end homelessness in Otsego County.

\_\_\_\_\_  
John Burt, Otsego County Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Edward Posgate, Vanderbilt Village Council President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gladys Solokis, Mayor of Gaylord

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Wagar, Otsego County Township Officers Association Chairperson

July 18, 2006