

## ***IN THE CITIES: ATLANTA'S COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS SHOWS RESULTS AS CITY ADDS \$20 MILLION IN NEW REVENUE TO BLUEPRINT IMPLEMENTATION***



*ATLANTA, GEORGIA.* As reported here last week, Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin and Commission Chair Horace Sibley recently convened the Regional Commission on Homelessness to hear reports from federal, state, and local partners on progress in implementing Atlanta's regional Blueprint to End Homelessness. United States Interagency Council on Homelessness Executive Director Philip Mangano addressed the meeting. This e-story features research results from one of Atlanta's new initiatives.

The City's Forensic Assertive Community Treatment Team (FACT) initiative presented the Commission with new annual data on the effectiveness of efforts to engage persons with mental illness and cost-benefit analysis showing more than \$1,114,000 savings to the criminal justice, psychiatric hospital and shelter systems. The City of Atlanta and Fulton County Jail staff, which for some time had noticed the steady rise in the number of individuals with serious mental illness, co-occurring substance abuse disorders and homelessness cycling in and out of these facilities, worked with Georgia Rehabilitation Outreach which secured funding the Metro Regional Office of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases (MHDDAD).

According to the 2003 homeless census survey, approximately 14,800 homeless individuals are in Fulton County, of whom 4,884 (33%) were seriously mentally ill. In 2003 an estimated 3,000 individuals with serious persistent mental illness and/or co-occurring substance abuse were incarcerated in Atlanta. Upon release, these individuals are not equipped to negotiate the often complicated processes for support services or matriculate to mental health centers and end up in a cycle of homelessness and recidivism.

Specific findings from the tracking of those referred into the program indicated the following: The number of jail days decreased by 78%. This represents more than \$400,600 savings to the criminal justice system. State hospital admissions and days decreased by 79% and 89% respectively. This represents a savings of \$1,245,012 to the state hospital system. 71% of the consumers were homeless at the time of enrollment. 62% were placed in housing. Based on these and other findings, in FY 2006 -2007, Georgia Rehabilitation Outreach plans to establish a second FACT Team to meet the growing demand for this service blend.

Through the United Way of Atlanta, the Regional Commission on Homelessness provided rental assistance to consumers with no income or income inadequate to pay for housing. An advisory committee, comprised of representatives of the City of Atlanta Jail, Fulton County Jail, Regional Commission on Homelessness, State Office of MHDDAD and citizens of the community, was formed at the start of the project

and met quarterly to help monitor and analyze performance as well as help troubleshoot problems within the collaboration.

In other recent Atlanta Blueprint developments, the City announced that increased tax revenue from a successful City redevelopment program will allow now Atlanta to contribute \$20 million to its implementation efforts to end chronic homelessness. The Atlanta City Council authorized the diversion of funds from the Westside Tax Allocation District, one of five special zones. Commission Chair Horace Sibley said the funds, which are in addition to \$17 million in private resources raised for the Blueprint, shows its commitment to the goal and "virtually assures that we'll end chronic homelessness on schedule."

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