

IN THE CITIES: WACO, TEXAS, ADOPTS 10-YEAR PLAN BASED ON COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS AND HOUSING FIRST APPROACH

WACO, TEXAS. The Waco, Texas, City Council this week gave final approval to the City's new 10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness, entitled "*Opening Doors, Unlocking Potential.*" The Mayor's Homeless Planning Committee, which developed a Housing First plan for the city of 114,000, was led by Mayor Virginia Dupuy, City Manager Bert Lumbrera, City of Waco Housing Director Jeff Wall, and representatives of Waco Housing Authority, Habitat for Humanity, Cooper Foundation, Compassion Ministries, Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center, Providence Hospital, Mission Waco, real estate, faith based organizations, and Baylor University.

According to a Baylor University study for the planners that was completed in January 2005, homelessness cost Waco an estimated \$7,610,000 annually, with a percentage of this figure derived from the City of Waco budget. Currently, Waco has an estimated population of six hundred homeless individuals; approximately one hundred of these are classified as chronically homeless. Every chronically homeless individual costs the community approximately \$39,000 per year.

United States Interagency Council on Homelessness Executive Director Philip Mangano was invited to join Mayor Dupuy and local partners for the announcement of the final plan. Department of Housing and Urban Development Region VI Director Cynthia Leon and Council Region VI Coordinator Sally Shipman also participated in the unveiling.

Under the leadership of the city's late Mayor, Dr. Mae Jackson, the City Council passed a May 2004 resolution authorizing the City Manager to endorse a ten-year planning process to end chronic homelessness. In January 2005, the Mayor's Homelessness Committee was formed along with five (5) sub-committees representing over 25 area agencies made up of members of the H.O.T. Homeless Coalition, community leaders, local business employers, W.I.S.D., hospitals, colleges, media, concerned residents, social agencies, and churches. Under Mayor Dupuy's leadership, the planners completed their work this spring.

USICH enews 7/21/05