



Housing: Homeless Prevention, Rapid Exit are programs aimed at ending homelessness

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Fast facts

- ▲ Hennepin County's Homeless Prevention program helped nearly 2,189 families and more than 477 adults between 2007 and 2008; 95 percent of families and 95 percent of single adults were stable for six months or more. The average cost was \$875 per family or \$610 per adult.
- ▲ Between 2007-2008, Hennepin County's Rapid Exit program helped more than 1,276 families and 451 adults leave shelter for permanent housing; 95 percent of families and 90 percent of adults remain out of shelter for at least six months after their cases are closed. The average cost is approximately \$1,100 per family and \$850 for adult households.
- ▲ One episode of homelessness for a family is estimated to cost \$5,000.
- ▲ People at risk of losing housing can call 2-1-1 for the United Way's First Call for Help for information about programs that may help. If you need legal help to keep your housing, call Legal Aid (Minneapolis residents: 612-334-5970) or HomeLine (suburban residents: 612-728-5767).

Closing the door on homelessness in Hennepin County

Hennepin County uses a variety of strategies and programs in an effort to end homelessness. Two of the county's programs, Rapid Exit and Homelessness Prevention, have drawn national attention for their innovative approach and cost-effectiveness. These approaches impact both the front and back doors of homelessness.

Homeless Prevention program helps keep families in housing

Homeless Prevention provides short-term financial help or legal assistance to help keep people in their existing housing. The target population for this program is people who normally can afford their own housing but are at risk of losing it due to an unforeseen financial crisis. The program is funded by a mix of state, federal and county funds.

Rapid Exit helps homeless families find and secure housing

Despite efforts to prevent homelessness, there are still people who lose their housing and end up at an emergency shelter or in secure waiting. Rapid Exit strives to get people out of shelters and back into stable living situations as soon as possible.

Rapid Exit is unique because it quickly and efficiently assesses the specific housing barriers that people must overcome and gets them immediately referred to services that address the issues. This helps get people out of shelters and into stable housing as rapidly as possible. Services are provided by nonprofit organizations. A citizen-based advisory committee assists in program planning and implementation. The program is funded by a mix of state, federal and county funds.

How much do the programs save?

One episode of homelessness for a family is estimated to cost \$5,000, which is mostly paid with county dollars. Homeless Prevention spends approximately \$610 to help an individual or \$875 to help a families maintain their housing. Rapid Exit spends less than \$1,100 to help a family and \$850 for adult households.

Why is Rapid Exit on the list of national best practices?

The Rapid Exit services are tailored to clients' needs. This is accomplished with a flexible provider system that:

- Offers the ability to quickly change services to respond to changing client needs.
- Uses a client assessment-and-referral process to assure that the "right" amount of services is provided.
- Focuses on outcomes, not processes or services.
- Allows for greater creativity in providing services.