

In our community, between 3,100 and 4,300 people – including an estimated 450 to 612 children – experience a crisis that results in homelessness during a single year. Many more men, women, and children live in households earning between 0 and 30% of area median income (up to \$21,160) and therefore are at risk of homelessness, especially as the cost of housing outpaces wages. A recent poll by Fannie Mae indicated that almost one-third of Americans have worried at some point that they would become homeless. Forty-four percent of Americans have taken in a friend or family member who would otherwise have become homeless. Thousands more volunteer in our community to serve meals, provide shelter in their congregations, participate on non-profit boards, or just make a personal connection with someone in need.

**Homeward** serves as the regional voice on homelessness and related human services for the Richmond region. As the regional planning and coordinating agency for homeless services, Homeward's mission is to prevent, reduce, and end homelessness by facilitating creative solutions through the collaboration, coordination, and cooperation of regional resources and services. In 2006, Homeward was tasked by the Richmond region to develop a unified vision to prevent and end homelessness in our region and, in this process, to restore hope and dignity to our region's most vulnerable residents. Launched in January 2008, the Ten Year Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Richmond Region calls for a transformation of our region's continuum of homeless services to focus on increasing the housing stability of our most vulnerable residents. Homeward works with regional public and non-profit service providers to fill gaps in the community's services for residents with very low income; to enhance the housing stability and quality of life for these residents; and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of programs serving the individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Our goal is to develop enduring solutions rather than moving the problem around—from street to shelter and back again.

Homeward fulfills its mission through three core areas of focus:

#### Educating the Community for System Change

- Homeward pursues and provides public education about homelessness and the service delivery system in our region through trainings, presentations, publications and online resources.
- Homeward develops the community partnerships needed to implement systemic change as part of the Ten Year Plan.

#### Serving as a Community Catalyst for Change in Service Delivery

- Homeward coordinates services by identifying gaps in the system and facilitating agency or program collaborations.
- Homeward provides technical assistance to public and non-profit service providers working with individuals and families experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

#### Identifying Needs and Trends

- Research and Evaluation - Homeward serves as the central resource for real-time community-level data, including documented service outcomes. Findings are provided to public and private service providers and policy makers in the region.
- Homeward Community Information System (HCIS) - Homeward provides coordinated case management and analyzes client, program, and system level outcomes through a web-based, secure database.