

Springs Village, photo courtesy of Burbank Housing



Sonoma County's 10-Year Homeless Action Plan: Year One Report

Sonoma County Continuum of Care Planning Group

July 2007

Introduction

In January 2007, the Sonoma County Continuum of Care Planning Group approved an ambitious 10-Year Homeless Action Plan with 4 general goals and 92 action steps ranging from homelessness prevention to addressing chronic homelessness, from developing needed housing to the plan's organizational requirements.

Six weeks later, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors endorsed the 10-Year Plan, thanking the hundreds of participants for their efforts in documenting the need and determining pathways to success.

This document offers the first annual progress report on Sonoma County's 10-Year Homeless Action Plan. In the following pages are listed dozens of actions that have taken place since the planning process began in July 2006, as well as their impact on the homeless-dedicated housing stock. It is our intention to produce an annual progress report every July.

One outstanding highlight of 2006-07 is the addition of 86 new permanent supportive housing (PSH) units – 11% of our 10-year goal. An additional 73 PSH units will open in the coming year, keeping us on track to open an average of 76 units per year in keeping with our 10-year goal of 756 more PSH units. In combination with 39 new PSH units in the previous year, the 125 PSH units added since the 2005 Homeless Count accounted for a significant portion of the reduced number of homeless counted in 2007.

Other highlights of 2006-07 include:

- The hundreds of homeless people who are receiving mental health services in shelters and drop-in programs, courtesy of the Mental Health Services Act.
- The expansion of medical services at Catholic Charities' Family Support Center into the 1½-day per week Santa Rosa Free Clinic.
- Expansion of shelter services in Cloverdale, Sonoma, and Guerneville.
- Development of a system-wide outcomes assessment program to enable us to better describe our successes.

This is an impressive beginning. It is our hope that documenting these accomplishments will serve to inspire and energize our colleagues for the years ahead.

*Jenny Helbraun Abramson
Sonoma County Continuum of Care Coordinator
July 2007*

10-Year Plan Goal	2007 Accomplishments
1) Homeless Prevention - Reduce the number of people becoming homeless	
Following discharge from public institutions – by 80% over 10 years	The Sonoma County Health & Human Services Coordinating Committee agreed to document county agencies' homeless prevention efforts and to identify gaps as an initial step in leading county-wide discharge planning efforts.
Through loss of tenancy – by 5% annually	Community Action Partnership (CAP) has begun offering one-on-one financial education along with its HCA Fund rental assistance activities. Future and ongoing funding for the HCA Fund has been secured by the donor and his heirs.
Reduce the risk of future homelessness among Sonoma County's low-income population.	CAP has integrated its homeless prevention programs to link its Fair Housing program clients with rental assistance and tenant education.
	Sonoma County Human Services Commission developed two Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites at Jewish Family and Children's Services and the Petaluma Library. They did 227 Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) returns and brought in \$382,222 into Sonoma County, offering financial education along with the tax assistance.
	United Way has applied for federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) funds to bring COTS' Kids First program to the entire county's homeless family programs. The Outcomes Assessment Team is designing system-wide outcome for homeless children.

10-Year Plan Goal	2007 Accomplishments
2) Stabilizing Resources for Chronically Homeless	
For street homeless	Over 2006-07, COTS conducted street outreach to 170 individuals, 50 of whom have utilized services of the Mary Isaak Center. 3 beds are held for referrals by police; planning dedicated beds for court-referred homeless. Outreach staff responded 54 times to concerns arising from the community and initiated contacts with 14 businesses.
For 386 homeless living with mental illness	As of May 2007, the Mental Health Services Act-funded Community Intervention Team had conducted 227 assessments at 9 emergency shelters and 3 day service programs; 33 individuals qualified for public mental health services and 7 had begun treatment since January 2007. Mental health offices have reopened in several locations around the county.
	The Continuum of Care (CofC) Coordinator & Gale Brownell have met with numerous West County service providers to see who might do what to provide services for mentally ill and other homeless. They and other CofC participants have begun meeting regularly with the Russian River Interfaith Coalition to develop plans. The Housing Development Committee proposed to Sonoma County Housing Authority and Sonoma County Mental Health that their 2007 Shelter Plus Care applications focus on housing the West County's mentally ill homeless.
For 584 homeless with chronic substance abuse	The CofC-funded Community Turning Point transitional substance abuse program increased the percentage of homeless moving from treatment to permanent housing to 44%, and expects to reach 50% with new client retention strategies by 2008.
	The Homeless Count compiled new data on homeless people who would qualify for Drug Medi-Cal funded services, with the idea of creating outpatient Drug Medi-Cal extension substance abuse clinics in transitional housing.

10-Year Plan Goal	2007 Accomplishments
For homeless in jail	The Court Homeless Protocol collaborative is waiting for word on several grant proposals that will likely enable them to divert repetitive misdemeanor offenders from jail to housing and treatment. An Advisory Board is now being organized.
For homeless veterans	<p>The CofC Coordinator has met with numerous vets organizations prior to launching CofC-based planning. The July Continuum of Care Planning Group (CCPG) meeting will host a discussion with Veterans Administration Clinic on outreach to veterans.</p> <p>North Bay Veterans Resource Center began working with the Community Housing Development Corporation of Santa Rosa (CHDC-SR) on a “veterans’ village” to provide transitional and permanent supportive housing for homeless veterans.</p>
Primary health care for homeless	Medical services at Catholic Charities’ Family Support Center were expanded into a 1½-day per week Santa Rosa Free Clinic. The free clinic provides assessment of medical conditions and acute treatment, with referral to a primary medical home at Southwest Health Centers. This arrangement provides an immediate intake without the long wait typical to obtain appointments at community health centers. In the coming year, the Santa Rosa Free Clinic hopes to expand to services 3 days a week.
<i>3) Develop Homeless-Dedicated Housing to Address the Demonstrated Need</i>	
Advocacy to create and preserve needed housing	<p>The CofC Coordinator has met with City of Santa Rosa staff and initiated meetings with staff of Healdsburg and Rohnert Park.</p> <p>The CofC Coordinator (and others) wrote to the Governor on behalf of AB 2034</p>
Emergency Shelter	<p>The Shelter Referral Work Group met twice, once with Volunteer Center staff to discuss 211 and best interface with County I&R programs. The group has proposed annual gatherings of shelter staff with I&R volunteers during their trainings.</p> <p>The Russian River Interfaith Coalition operated a 22-bed winter shelter, and is planning for both women’s and men’s winter shelters at different church sites.</p> <p>There was a significant expansion of seasonal shelter beds and overflow/voucher beds, brought about by the City of Santa Rosa and the County of Sonoma approving resolutions enabling the City- and County-owned shelters to expand occupancy by 15 percent on the worst nights, as well as new availability of motel vouchers in some areas without shelters.</p> <p>The Sonoma Shelter project is out to bid. Construction should take place in the fall; to open by December.</p>
Transitional Housing	<p>The Housing Development Committee (HDC) is planning a Transitional Housing Planning Summit in November 2007.</p> <p>The CofC Coordinator & Gale Brownell have met with numerous West County service providers to see who would be interested in operating transitional housing. They and other CofC participants have begun meeting regularly with the Russian River Interfaith Coalition.</p> <p>IFSN was awarded EHAP-CD funding to purchase the Meadow Lane (Glen Ellen) property, which will allow a second house on the property to be used as transitional housing.</p> <p>The Victory Studios project in Healdsburg is moving along, and 5 units have been set aside for transitional housing at the new Eden Housing development there.</p> <p>Construction drawings for the expansion of Wallace House shelter and transitional units are out to bid and due July 30th. The operator is also temporarily using 3 cabins at the former Fero Motel as transitional housing.</p>

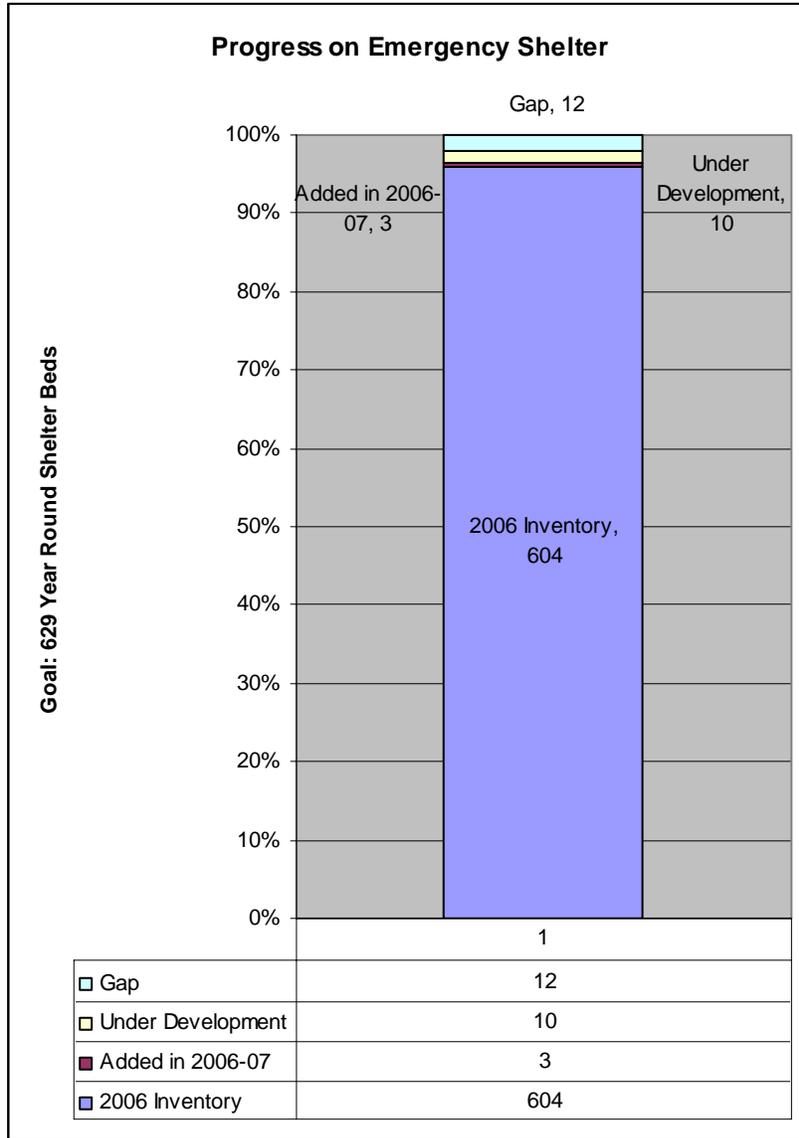
10-Year Plan Goal	2007 Accomplishments
Permanent Supportive Housing	<p>86 new permanent supportive housing (PSH) units came on line since 10-year plan goals were established in 2006. With the re-designation of other PSH beds, in the past year 99 additional beds for chronically homeless individuals came on line.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Shelter Plus Care beds have been created for chronically homeless with severe mental illness; • IFSN opened 6 PSH beds at Powderhorn for chronically homeless, largely mentally ill; • A new CofC Samaritan project with 6 new PSH beds for chronically homeless persons was awarded. • Larkfield Oaks and Olive Grove opened 10/2006; The Arbors opened 1/2007. Monte Vista opens August 2007. 35 new PSH set-aside units came on line in new Burbank Housing developments. 14 of these PSH units are now occupied by chronically homeless persons; 6 more will be occupied by July (total: 41 PSH/20 for chronically homeless). Also, 14 beds at Boulevard Apartments are now occupied by chronically homeless individuals. • The balance of new units came from expansion of existing Shelter Plus Care projects and more mentally ill homeless individuals being housed through Project Hope. <p>The Housing Development Committee (HDC) regularly invites housing developers to attend and encourages new partnerships. HDC participants are examining State Multi-Family Housing Program service packages as a model for creating local PSH supportive services packages for each subpopulation. The HDC & senior advocates have convened a discussion of ways to create 19 units of PSH for seniors.</p> <p>Vida Nueva is now set to open in early 2008, providing 24 units of permanent supportive housing for families.</p> <p>CHDC-SR & Burbank Housing are moving forward on a project in Guerneville to include up to 17 PSH set-aside units. CofC/RRIC discussions are taking place re: a technical assistance and strategic discussion to determine who can own and operate supportive housing along the River.</p> <p>North County Housing Group has obtained agreements for 5 PSH set-asides in the new Eden development.</p>
Independent, very low income housing for homeless	<p>Burbank Housing is in discussions re: including 40-50 unit SRO development in the Railroad Sq area; this could serve (in part) homeless people who are capable of living independently without intensive services</p> <p>North County Housing Group has obtained agreements with Eden Housing for 5 farm worker housing units within the Eden development.</p>
Ensure long-term stability of formerly homeless people	<p>Employment services are now being offered to approx. 25 mentally ill homeless per year, approximately 10 of whom are chronically homeless individuals.</p>

10-Year Goal	2007 Accomplishments
4) Manage for Results	
Obtain Community Support for the 10-year Homeless Action Plan	The 10-Year Plan was endorsed by the Board of Supervisors on February 27, 2007.
	The process of circulating 10-Year Homeless Action Plan and its housing goals among jurisdictional planning and housing staff has begun in Santa Rosa, Healdsburg.
	The CofC Coordinator presented 10-year plan to Santa Rosa Community Development Committee and began discussions with other funders.
Measure outcomes for homeless people	The CofC Outcomes Assessment Team has almost completed design of a system-wide outcomes assessment program, with a key performance benchmark each for each component of the homeless services system. The group will make a presentation at the July CCPG meeting, and will convene discussion at Funders Roundtable regarding Outcomes Assessment Plan.
	As mentioned above, United Way has applied for SAMHSA funds to bring COTS' Kids First program to the entire county's homeless family programs; system-wide measurement would be part of the project. The CofC Outcomes Assessment Team continues to consider a key outcome and performance benchmark for homeless children.
	<p>The Outcomes Assessment Team's outcomes were used in evaluating CofC-funded programs for this year's CofC competition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of permanent housing beds for chronically homeless individuals increased by 99, in part by addition of new beds, and partly through reassignment of existing beds. • 82% of persons in PSH retained their housing for more than 6 months. • Nearly 70% of persons served in CofC-funded TH and supportive services programs delivered in TH exited to permanent housing. • 28% of homeless persons were employed on exit from Sonoma County CoC projects. In the most recent APRs, this represented a 6.3% aggregate increase from entry to exit. <p>The next step is to evaluate the Homeless Management Information System's capacity to provide baseline and ongoing data on key measurements.</p>
Refine Plan goals and action steps based on continual data-gathering	The Sonoma County Task Force for the Homeless conducted the 2007 Homeless Count produced a report in May. The CofC Coordinator has requested specific data sets from Count data analyst to recalibrate 10-year plan goals.
	The Homeless Management Information System is purchasing report-writing software.
	CofC Steering Committee plans an in-depth Count debriefing in the early fall to consider best options for the 2009 Count.
Manage Continuum of Care to support 10-Year Plan goals	For the first time, an impartial CofC Evaluation Committee scored and prioritized projects in the 2007 CofC competition. The scoring system reflected 10-Year Plan priorities and system-wide outcomes, with a minimum performance threshold and policy for projects scoring below threshold. The CofC Steering Committee reviewed and confirmed the Evaluation Committee's recommendations for project priorities.

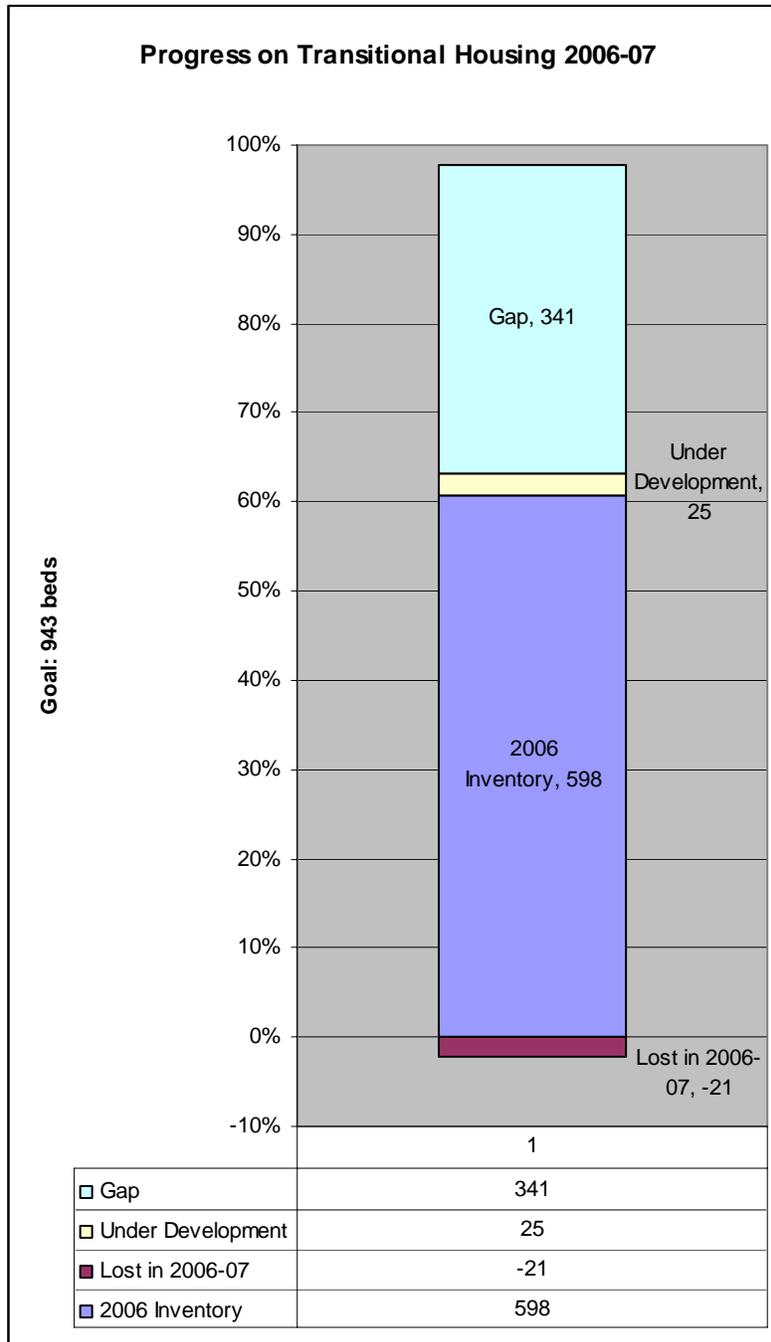
10-Year Goal	2007 Accomplishments
4) Manage for Results	
<p>Establish working groups to accomplish Plan goals</p>	<p>A new, representative CofC Steering Committee (a 10-member governing board with 4 dedicated seats and 6 elected seats) was elected April 2007 and seated May 2007.</p> <p>The following new work groups were initiated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation Committee • Shelter Referral Task Group <p>Advance recruitment and consultation has taken place on the following working groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention Council • Mental Health/AOD Services Committee (one co-chair has agreed, and the committee will be established by fall 2007). • Homeless Veterans Committee (consultations have been held with already-established veterans working groups) • West County Housing & Services Planning (consultations have been held with West County agencies; CofC reps are participating in the Russian River Interfaith Coalition). • The Basic Housing Assistance Planning Group will be set up at July CCPG meeting. <p>In depth interviews were also held with homeless individuals during the Count.</p> <p>The new CofC Steering Committee assigned representatives to the following CofC working groups:</p> <p>Housing Development Committee – Nancy Gornowicz HMS user group and policy group – Mark Krug Outcomes Assessment Task Group – Robert Judd Court Homeless Protocol Planning group & Health Care for the Homeless Collaborative – Georgia Berland</p>
<p>Ensure homeless service providers are prepared for change and growth.</p>	<p>Robert Judd has agreed to convene the planned Coordinated Training Initiative over the summer, to include subjects such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent Supportive Housing Technical Assistance Initiative • Regular, ongoing staff training/networking • Conferences to showcase best practices including volunteer mentorship, tenancy education, working with traumatic brain injury, and other service innovations • County-wide volunteer jobs fair

Sonoma County Homeless Housing Inventory Update					
	Goal	2006 Inventory	Added in 2006-07	Under Development	Gap
Emergency Shelter beds	629	604	3	10	12
<i>% of goal</i>		96%	0.5%	2%	2%
<i>Comments</i>	Goal is for year round beds; no goal has been set for seasonal or overflow beds. Goal does not include 110 treatment beds needed.	(+12 seasonal beds)	22 seasonal beds were added in Guerneville, and 40 overflow beds were added in Santa Rosa.	City of Sonoma Shelter to open winter 2008	Remaining year round shelter needs are in Healdsburg & Guerneville.
Transitional Housing beds	943	598	-21	25	341
<i>% of goal</i>		63%	-2%	+3%	36%
<i>Comments</i>			Several shared family housing facilities were closed, more than offsetting a gain of 49 beds.	New transitional facilities are set to open in 2008, in Cloverdale & Healdsburg.	Most remaining need is in North County, Sonoma Valley, and the Russian River area.
Permanent Supportive Housing units	1,162	406	86	73	597
<i>% of goal</i>		35%	7%	6%	51%
<i>Comments</i>		These units include 556 beds.	These units include 86 beds.	These planned units include 204 beds.	Our goal is to bring an average of 76 units on line each year.

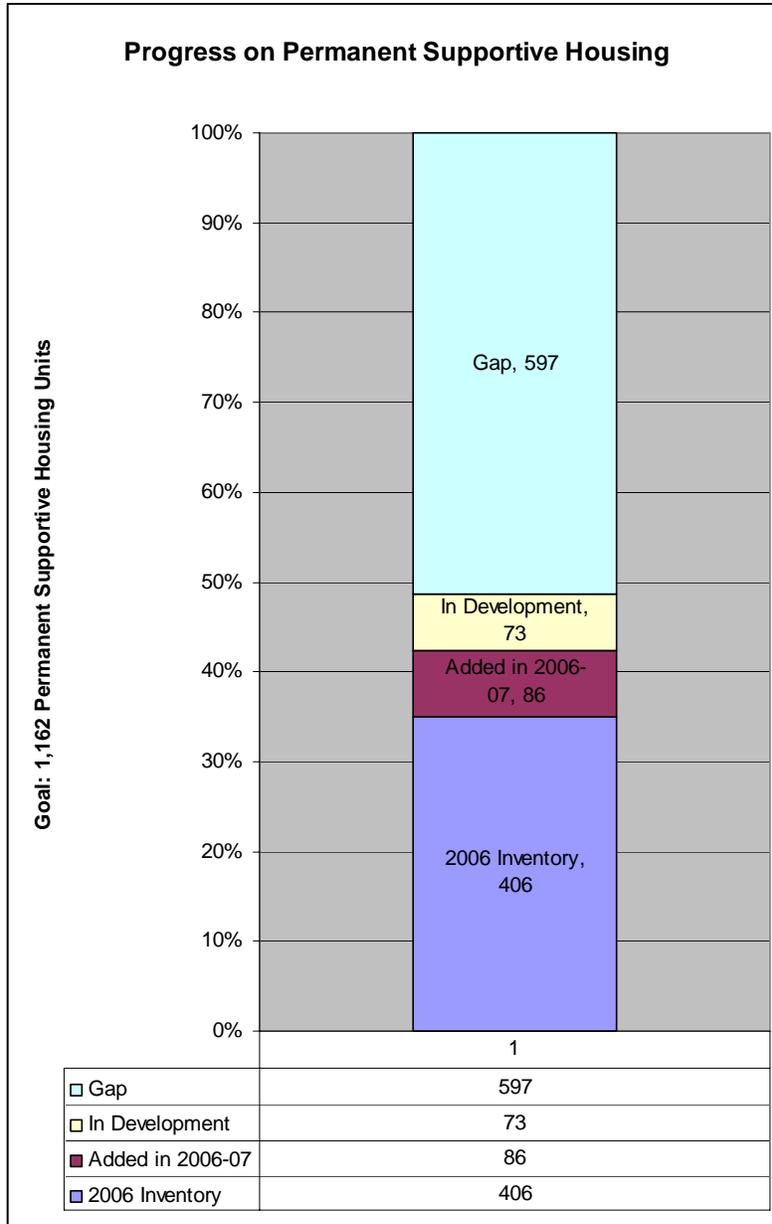
Tables follow describing the status of each housing component.



- The 10-year plan set a goal of 629 year-round emergency shelter beds. Reallocation of shelter beds yielded 3 additional year round beds from existing facilities.
- These figures do not include:
 - Seasonal beds, which increased from 12 to 34 in the winter of 2007 with the opening of the Guerneville Winter Shelter. No system-wide goal has been set for seasonal beds.
 - Increase of overflow beds on the worst nights at existing shelters, from 45 to 85 spaces, following the City of Santa Rosa's and the Board of Supervisors' resolutions allowing a 15% increase in occupancy on the worst nights. No system-wide goal has been set for overflow beds.
 - An estimated 110 "gateway" beds needed to address initial mental health and substance abuse treatment needs.
- Remaining shelter need is in North County and the Russian River area.



Despite the opening of 49 new beds, overall 21 Transitional Housing beds were lost over 2006-07 due to closure of a number of shared family housing facilities. Many providers are rethinking how family transitional housing is provided, as it is very challenging for several families to occupy one common living area.



- The 86 new permanent supportive housing units added over the past year have brought Sonoma County's total to 43% of our goal. They represent 11% of our 10-year goal.
- Units now in development will address nearly half the need in the next year.