One Voice

A Report on Homeless Shelters in New Hampshire and Vermont

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Prepared by:

Nickolas Barber
Margaret Goldstein
Kelsey Clark
Nina Brekelmans

Contact:
Nelson A. Rockefeller Center, 6082 Rockefeller Hall, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH 03755
http://rockefeller.dartmouth.edu/shop/ • Email: Ronald.G.Shaiko@Dartmouth.edu

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following analyses are the product of all research and data collected by a group of Dartmouth undergraduate students working in the Policy Research Shop at the Rockefeller Center from October 2009 to May 2010. Most of the data was collected through interviews with shelter directors and state officials from Vermont and New Hampshire. Shelter director interviews were standardized to cover aspects of shelter management: services, intake procedures, occupancy, facilities, staff, partnerships, rules, finances, strengths, areas of improvement, and success measurement. While information provided by shelter directors varied, there was a great deal of overlap among responses, revealing common themes and concerns among the organizations. With this information we hope to provide an honest, thorough, and objective perspective on shelters in New Hampshire and Vermont. Directors may utilize this information to reflect on their own shelters and collaborate with others in order to improve the services and outcomes for homeless individuals.

1. INTRODUCTION

This project came into being in October of 2009 after Sara Kobylenski, executive director of the Upper Valley Haven, contacted the Tucker Foundation at Dartmouth College with a proposal. As the Tucker Foundation is focused on service as experiential learning, the proposal was forwarded to the Policy Research Shop at the Rockefeller Center, which is focused on policy analysis and is geared toward the research-intensive nature of the proposal; the Policy Research Shop quickly adopted the proposal and a team of PRS student researchers was assembled to begin work. The task placed before the PRS students was to gather data and conduct research on homeless shelters across New Hampshire and Vermont in order to construct as complete a picture as possible of the current state of homeless shelters and to begin to explore best practices for the field.

A large portion of the research was completed through interviews with executive directors or other representatives of shelters. While not every shelter we identified was interviewed, all were contacted through at least one request. We conducted a total of 28 interviews with shelter directors, focusing on several different aspects of day-to-day management. If available, shelter websites were referred to as a starting point for data collection.

While a vast amount of data was compiled, the data are not without gaps. Since data were collected through self-reported, semi-structured interviews, some aspects of the shelters may not have been mentioned or were not specific enough for categorization, and are therefore not specifically captured in this analysis.

Shelter director interviews were divided into the following subheadings: services, intake procedures, occupancy, facilities, staff, partnerships, rules, finances, strengths, areas of improvement, and success measurement. *Services* are the programs offered by a shelter and often include case management, substance abuse recovery such as Alcoholics

Anonymous (AA), and vocational training. *Intake procedures* examine the process for entering a shelter for a resident and the requirements for entry. *Occupancy* identifies the number of beds available and guests' lengths of stay. The *Facilities* dimension looks at the different aspects of the shelters' physical composition and how much privacy guests are afforded. *Staff* examines the number and duties of staff members at the homeless shelters as well as administrative structures in each facility. *Partnerships* include the different ways in which shelters use other agencies and community resources in order to enhance what they offer residents and to continue operations. *Rules* focus on the requirements shelters place on residents in order for them to be a part of the shelter. This commonly includes setting a curfew or requiring residents to complete chores. *Finances* include the sources of revenue for shelters along with expenditures and fundraising. *Strengths* and *Areas of improvement* are the self-reported areas that shelter directors feel are their shelters' strengths and weaknesses. *Success measurement* is the way that shelters evaluate their entire programs and effectiveness. Success means different things to various shelter directors, but many responses could be generally categorized as either evaluating the programming offered in the shelters or how residents fare after leaving the shelter. The following is an in-depth report of the data gathered on these different dimensions of shelter operations and how they vary across the many shelters in New Hampshire and Vermont.

2. SERVICES

Homeless shelters across New Hampshire and Vermont seek to do more than to simply house and feed their residents. Every single shelter offers some form of case management that helps connect shelter residents with the resources available to them that will aide in the search for more permanent housing. In addition, nearly one-half of shelters offer a variety of programming that provides long-term benefits for residents. These classes include life skills such as budgeting, time management, nutrition, and parenting. Other classes teach work place skills that will prove invaluable in obtaining and maintaining employment. Some shelters are able to offer mental and physical healthcare to residents; others are able to pursue preventative measures that seek to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place, potentially through one-time financial assistance or landlord/tenant mediation. Nevertheless, no shelter can offer every service, and most shelters avail themselves of resources available in the community. Some seem to have a strong focus on a single aspect of services, such as case management, while others seek provide a wide variety of programming options. A shelter's size and resources affect what services it can provide to its residents.

Shelter case management takes distinct forms at different shelters, but all share several basic aspects. Case management attempts to manage and provide for each resident's individual needs and connects him or her to available resources within and outside of the shelter. There is some variation as to the intensity of the case management and the importance it receives within the shelters' programming. In many shelters, but not all, case management is mandatory. On one end of the spectrum are shelters that focus intensively on the individualized aspect of case management and meet as often as twice

daily. On the other, there are shelters that use case management less often and employ it merely as assistance to residents – for example, helping with applications that residents wish to pursue.

Meals are offered at many of the shelters; however, the form of the meals varies. In some instances, meals are prepared for the residents. In other shelters, the residents cooperatively make group meals, and in still others food is provided and individuals cook what they would like for themselves and their families.

Transportation assistance is offered at a just over 20 percent of shelters. This helps residents get to their jobs, interviews or services, especially in rural areas. It should be noted that a lack of transportation might be related to the availability of public transportation in urban shelters.

Many shelters offer classes and programs to teach specific skills. Of these, most offer what we categorized as "life skills" classes. These classes vary among shelters, but some standard offerings emerged such as nutrition, budgeting, resume writing, and time management. There are also innovative classes such as a class on being a good tenant. Classes on parenting are also commonly available in shelters that have any sort of class programming. There is also a focus on basic job skills and vocational training that can help residents maintain employment. GED (General Education Development) classes are also offered at some shelters to make residents more marketable in their job searches. While these life skills classes are quite broad in their scope, they are all focused on improving the lives of the residents in the long term.

Some shelters run a clothing program for their residents to ensure that they have the basic clothing necessities, which is especially important in the Northeast in the winter months. Other shelters meet residents' needs as they transition into more long term housing by providing furniture.

A few shelters offer limited and often one-time financial aid to residents and at-risk individuals in the community. These are discretionary funds and are sometimes treated as a loan. They seem to be used with the intent of preventing a person from becoming homeless, like providing fuel assistance in the winter, or to help with large barriers that exacerbate homelessness, such as a fine preventing someone from getting his or her driver's license back.

The number of shelters offering physical and mental health services is approximately equal, with a little less than a quarter of shelters offering such services. Most that offer health services offer both types, but a few offer only one or the other. Physical well-being is an obvious necessity, but metal health problems could be a contributing factor to homelessness. Mental health services allow shelters to identify homeless individuals eligible for state services and other resources.

Substance abuse recovery programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) are available at approximately 20 percent of the shelters. Helping

residents to overcome their problems with substance abuse is often important in addressing the root causes of their homelessness.

Slightly over 15 percent of shelters offer some sort of child or youth programming. These sorts of programs seem especially important in family shelters. They help children through this difficult time in their lives and provide them with enrichment they would likely not receive otherwise. Of perhaps equal importance is that these programs grant parents time for other programming, a job hunt, or just some alone time.

3. INTAKE PROCEDURES

Understandably, shelters vary in the extensiveness of their intake procedures and initial evaluation of clients. A select few admit virtually anyone – including sex offenders, intoxicated individuals, or individuals with a history of domestic violence – as long as they are not violent or disruptive and abide by the shelter's rules. Others have a similar attitude of openness but impose a limited number of restrictions or make evaluations on a case-by-case basis. On the other end of the spectrum, shelters also can hand-select their guests and weed out potentially difficult or disruptive individuals. They look for people that will not cause problems, have a positive and proactive attitude, and are a good fit for the program and for interacting with existing guests. Many of these shelters do not accept individuals recovering from substance abuse, while others evaluate the degree to which the problem is under control before accepting the prospective guest. Two shelters that rely heavily on volunteers find themselves limited in whom they can accept into their programs.

Several shelters use only the basic HUD-HMIS (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Homeless Management Information Systems) intake forms and gather a limited amount of information about guests. For those with more lengthy procedures, conducting interviews is a common practice, not only to help with intake procedures but also to begin structuring a case management plan. One shelter conducts an initial phone screening, a 45-minute basic information interview, as well as a second interview with the Executive Director. Many shelters conduct criminal background checks, but mental health examinations are much less frequently employed. A limited number of shelters request prospective guests provide letters of reference. Nearly all programs require guests to sign a contract or an agreement regarding rules and responsibilities. One shelter takes a photograph of every guest that enters and retains guest photographs and records, allowing staff to track their former residents after departure.

A few shelters use waitlists as a way to deal with their overwhelming demand. Generally, the basis for selecting names as space opens up is by need – favoring families, pregnant women, and more vulnerable individuals.

While the use of databases among shelters is not explicitly included in our interview template, a few shelters discussed their means for recording intake information and, eventually, turning these data into reports and measurements of shelter success. One system that seems particularly effective is the Service Point online database. This secure

program covers the data points required by HUD, generates reports automatically, and, if desired, can be used for data sharing among shelters to increase collaboration and information sharing.

4. OCCUPANCY

Occupancy in shelters varies greatly depending on the facilities available and the purpose of the shelter. Among all shelters, the mean capacity is 30.9 guests. Shelters serving only individuals generally have a greater range of stay times for their guests, and on average house more guests each night. All shelters serving only individuals have an average capacity of 23.3 guests, while that of emergency shelters serving only individuals is even higher. Family shelters, on the other hand, have a slightly lower average capacity at 20.8 guests. Despite the similar capacities, these numbers do not reflect the privacy of the shelters. Family shelters often consist of separate apartments for each family; therefore, while up to six people may reside in each apartment, these residences are separated and therefore more private. On the other hand, some of the individual shelters serve as few as eight people; however, these residents may all stay in the same space with little to no privacy.

Similarly, there are differences between transitional and emergency shelters. Transitional shelters have an average capacity of 14.75 guests, while emergency shelters house an average 40 guests nightly. Additionally, some shelters admit to serving more guests than allowed by official fire limits; in these cases, shelters did not have enough capacity to serve everyone who needed shelter that particular night.

Across all shelters, however, many programs have an average length of stay for guests of between three and six months. Some transitional shelters, however, have average stays of up to two years. Many emergency programs have such a wide range of guests' lengths of stay – ranging from one night to many months – that finding an average is difficult and not necessarily accurate.

When interviewed, several shelters mentioned that the average length of stay has increased in the last two years with the current economic crisis. Some shelters place limits on lengths of stay in the shelter. In general, however, these timetables are flexible and depend on the behavior of the guest. In one shelter, for example, guests stay for 21 days and then apply to a committee of the shelter's Board for an extension; in another, limits on stay are extended if the guest is actively looking for work and is making progress with the shelter's programs.

Graph 1: Maximum Nightly Occupancy of Shelters

Occupancy in Shelters
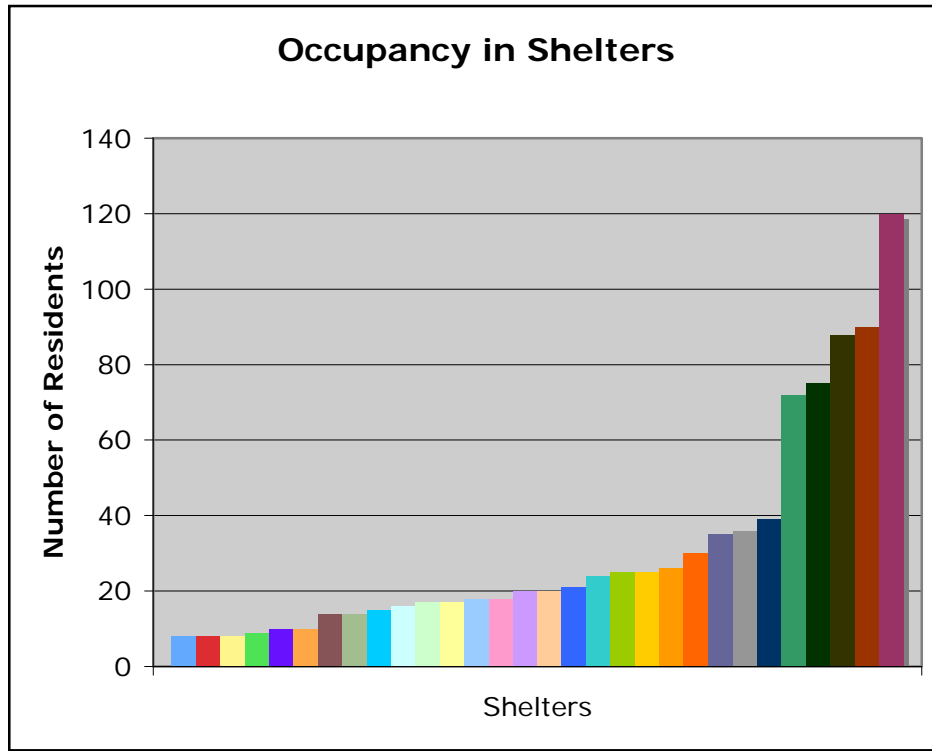
5. FACILITIES

Facilities vary based on whether the shelter is emergency or transitional. In addition, it is often the case that within the shelters, room set-ups change depending on whether guests arrive as families or as individuals. The emergency shelters for individuals largely have dorm-style accommodations with little privacy. Often these arrangements consist of multiple bunk beds in one large room, with a shared bathroom. These shelters, however, are often split into separate wings, one for men, one for women, and, at times, one for families. Emergency shelters (or wings of emergency shelters) for families typically have more privacy than those serving only individuals. Even these residents, however, often share bathrooms, usually with other families.

On the other side of the spectrum, transitional shelters overall have a more residential feel. Transitional shelters often have residents in single or double occupancy rooms, with families grouped together in an apartment or wing of the house. Additionally, many times these residents have access to a kitchen, living spaces, and computers. Transitional shelters focus on providing facilities above and beyond beds and baths. One shelter provides a chapel for quiet reflection, while another shelter offers an exercise area. A couple of shelters make an effort to make their residence child-friendly, with the provision of play rooms and outdoor areas with children's toys.

6. STAFF

Staff is often limited in the shelters. Of the shelters who self-reported the breakdown of their staff, 18 of 25 shelters have less than five full-time workers. Given the high operational costs that many shelters mentioned while interviewed, the smaller staffs across the spectrum of shelters is likely a measure to keep salaries—and therefore budgets—low. Despite the small budgets many of these shelters work with, many shelter directors have developed creative ways to maintain the shelters on comparatively small budgets.

Many use volunteers extensively, mostly for providing meals but also for overnight watch, teaching parenting classes, or fundraising. A small number of shelters are almost entirely volunteer-run, while others do not rely on volunteers at all for day-to-day shelter operations, saying that continuity and expertise of staff are important for guests. Most volunteers come from the surrounding community, in some instances with large groups of high school and college students contributing time. Some shelters have made extensive use of the college campuses surrounding them. Many shelters benefit from reaching out to these students, who then provide a strong volunteer base. One shelter provides an internship position at the shelter for a college student. In the past year this shelter had over 600 volunteers, who logged a total of 18,000 hours.

Many shelters have people overnight to watch over the shelter guests. Most use shelter staff members, who work during an overnight shift, while some use volunteers. One shelter exchanged an apartment in return for that resident's work on overnight staff six days a week. While many shelters—particularly transitional—choose to have staff live on-site, others have found overnight shifts more effective.

Additionally, some shelter staffs have specific qualifications or expertise to assist them in their day-to-day jobs. In one shelter, six of nine staff members had master's degrees, while in another shelter all but one staff member had been previously homeless, giving them a particularly relevant insight into their jobs.

While not much data was collected regarding shelter Boards of Directors, it appears that many shelters utilize this mechanism to increase the support system and resources available. Board involvement and responsibilities may vary, although in at least one shelter, the twelve volunteer board members are extremely active, handling nearly all aspects of shelter management and participating in an optional mentoring program available for guests.

Graph 2: Full-Time Staff Members Employed at Shelters

Full Time Staff

Five or More 28%

Under Five 72%
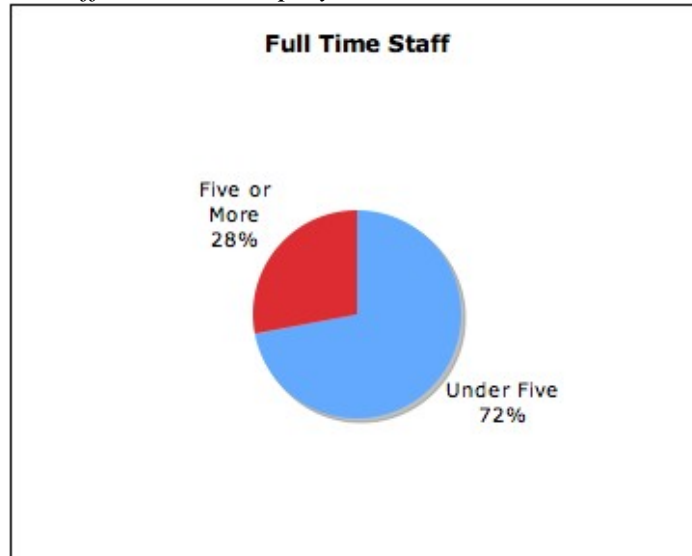
7. PARTNERSHIPS

Being well connected to the community is important for all shelters, regardless of size or segment of the population served. Most shelters reach out to a variety of different types of organizations for partnerships, using them in diverse ways to enhance their services.

Many shelters partner with local non-profits in their communities in order to serve their clients better. This collaboration, in many cases, helps guests receive access to medical services (in many cases including dental, eye, prenatal, and delivery care), counseling, substance abuse treatment, family support and education, childcare, and other support services. Referrals to other community resources are vital to shelters' ability to provide comprehensive services.

One organization that has formalized these ties is Harbor Homes, Inc. It is officially affiliated with six other non-profit agencies dedicated to strengthening the community, ranging from supporting the elderly and disabled, to an HIV/AIDS Task Force, to mental health and treatment for alcoholism. The Bridge House, on the property of the Whole Village Family Resource Center Complex, has 14 social service agencies onsite. In a slightly different use of a local non-profit partnership, the Middlebury Transitional Care Coalition uses a partner agency to handle all of its intake procedures and case management, allowing the shelter to be almost entirely volunteer-run.

Some shelters have joined regional coalitions with other homeless services and housing agencies, holding regular meetings in order to collaborate and provide mutual support. These coalitions include: a working group of representatives from care providers and state agencies in Burlington that meets weekly; a group of 16 diverse organizations in the Upper Valley that meets every other week to discuss housing issues; Community

Resource Networking, with monthly meetings; the Addison County Housing Coalition, with monthly meetings; groups of collaborating local churches; the Manchester Continuum of Care; and the Greater Nashua Continuum of Care.

Governmental agencies on the federal, state, and municipal levels play important roles in many shelters' operations. These governmental entities may include local police departments, welfare offices, town governments or public housing authorities, among others. In New Hampshire, interactions often center on the Bureau of Homeless and Housing Services at the Department of Health and Human Services. In Vermont, regular interactions may occur with the Agency of Human Services or Office of Economic Opportunity. Additionally, interaction with governmental agencies is required to receive HUD money and other funds.

Shelters fortunate enough to have colleges, universities or other large educational institutions nearby often take advantage of these resources. Some rely on these communities for staff and volunteers; for example, Middlebury students provide about 40 percent of the volunteers that serve the Middlebury Transitional Care Coalition. Others use them as educational centers to benefit their clients. The Crossroads House uses Exeter Adult Education to provide GED tutoring and testing, while The Friends Emergency Housing Program uses the University of New Hampshire's Cooperative Extension Program to allow guests to attend a six-week cooking program or other life skills classes.

Additional partnerships include ties to local businesses for donations or for helping guests to obtain volunteer or employment positions. Churches are also vital partners, as are local grocery stores or other agencies that provide food. Other efforts may also include engaging local clubs or Boy and Girl Scouts troops. Uniquely, the Crossroads House partners with the COAST (Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation) Trolley to provide free transportation to its shelter guests. The Carey House has recently started an "Adopt-A-Room" program, in which local faith and service organizations replace furniture and decorate a guest bedroom, and then continue to maintain the room's condition through quarterly check-ins.

Graph 3: Important Partnerships Reported by Shelters (includes at least partial data from 27 shelters)
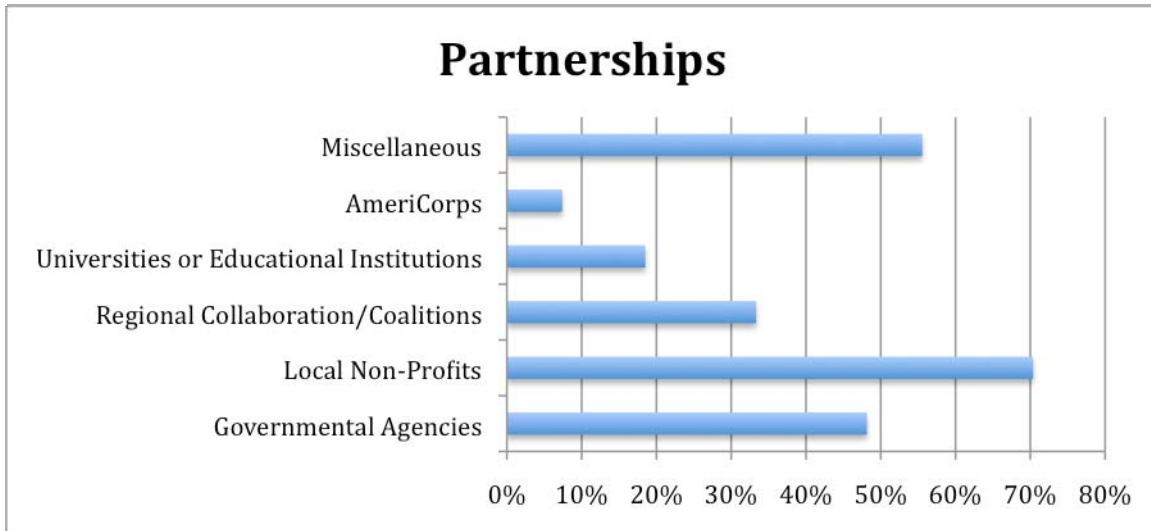
8. RULES

While complete program rules and guidelines for all shelters were not available, it became very clear, through the interviews, that shelters exert varying degrees of control over guests' lives and went about implementing rules with different approaches. This may be associated with differences in philosophy – a paternalistic approach versus a "family support approach" (see the book *Parenting in Public*). Nevertheless, rules are clearly an important part of any communal living environment and are often necessary to ensure the safety and comfort of all.

While shelters overwhelmingly prohibit alcohol and illegal drugs on site, shelters have different policies regarding their use during a period of stay. At several shelters, the consumption of such substances at any time during a guest's stay at the shelter is grounds for eviction. Some are a bit more lenient and allow room for relapses as long as the individual is progressing in other respects. On the other hand, a limited group of shelters allow individuals under the influence to be admitted to the shelter as long as their behavior is not disruptive or inappropriate. One shelter, while technically dry, uses a "crisis bed" to manage these guests.

A large number of shelters require that guests participate in case management and other prescribed programs to make active progress toward achieving their goals in order to continue their stay at the shelter.

A majority of shelters require guests to perform chores around the shelter or, at a very minimum, clean up after themselves and keep their rooms orderly and clean. One shelter, while requesting that guests clean up after themselves, also employs a cleaning staff. Most shelters also explicitly call for respect for other guests, staff members and/or volunteers as a basic rule of the program.

Nightly curfews are extremely common among the shelters. These are generally between 9:00pm and 11:00pm. Additionally, a few shelters employ "quiet hours" or set bedtimes for child guests. Several also employ other restrictions on schedules, such as a set wake-up time in the morning, limited access to the kitchen, specific sign-in hours, or limited visiting hours.

Slightly less common is the practice of charging some guests for program services. In most of these programs, this is limited to guests with a steady income and is often flexible. Some establish charges as a percentage of one's income (usually between 10 and 30 percent), while others have a fixed price per day or per week (ranging from three dollars a night to 80 dollars a week). Other shelters, while not charging a fee to guests, seek compensation from welfare offices or other referring agencies.

Similarly, several shelters require guests to save a portion of their income in order to prepare for the future and independent living. Again, these policies often vary depending on the person and the circumstances, although most programs with set requirements request savings of between 30 and 75 percent of one's income.

A select few shelters explicitly state a requirement for guests' maintaining proper personal hygiene. A limited number of shelters set limitations on television viewing, either in programming or hours or both. One shelter is entirely TV-free, with the exception of Sunday evenings. An equally small number of shelters require staff control of prescription medications. Others, in an attempt to deal with this issue, provide safes for medications in each guest's room.

While some shelters employ room checks as a common practice and most others reserve the right to conduct them, one shelter allows guests to lock their doors and maintain total privacy of that area. Many shelters serving children mention the parents' responsibilities to care for and supervise their children and use appropriate parenting and discipline techniques.

Some shelters have fixed "write-up," "point deduction," or warning policies that dictate when violations result in eviction. Often, more serious offenses may result in eviction at the first violation. Other shelters, however, made these difficult decisions more leniently, on a case-by-case basis, and only when absolutely necessary for the safety of all shelter guests.

9. FINANCES

Revenue streams and operational costs comprise an integral part of shelter operation. In the interviews, funding was overwhelmingly expressed as an area of difficulty for the shelters. Most shelters operate on a budget in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, with revenues coming in around the same amount. Based on self-reported information and figures available online, at least 12 of 21 shelters receive over 60 percent of their revenue from donations from individuals and businesses, while nine receive over 20 percent from a combination of federal, state, and municipal funds. The shelters that collect fewer donations from individuals and businesses either have significant contributions from government grants or rely on program services revenue. The shelters that collect money from program services on average receive 26.5 percent of their total revenue from these sources. In addition, while many shelters receive significant funding from individuals, businesses, and others in the surrounding community, two shelters explicitly mention having trouble raising money locally. For the shelters and others who have not had success in the past with grassroots fundraising, the interviews suggest that a large amount of money can be raised by engaging the community. Working to expand this fundraising option could be prudent.

Shelters do use large fundraising events to raise money, such as one shelter's golf tournament and auction. For those shelters that disclosed their nightly costs per person, these costs averaged from $12.50 to $20.00, with one transitional shelter spending $74.50 per person per night.

While most shelters receive relatively little money from the state, one shelter receives 46.9 percent of its revenue from state funding entities, while another shelter recently received a $400,000 grant over two years from the state. On the other hand, four shelters interviewed receive no federal or state funding. One of these shelters does not qualify because of its religious foundation, while another mentioned that they refuse such funds to avoid having to cope with governmental regulations.

Overall, financial resources are overwhelming allocated to program services, which use an average of 73.6 percent of the expenses. Another significant, though much smaller, cost is shelter administration, which across all shelters averages around 10 to 12 percent.

10. STRENGTHS

When directors were asked to comment on particular best practices that may have been unique or particularly noteworthy of their shelter, directors' responses were categorized into abstract markers, noteworthy (in-shelter) practices, and post-shelter measures. Not every response is included in this list, particularly if it was repetitive of another general comment or theme. Some shelter directors noted strengths in terms of abstract environment descriptions. These abstract measures are things like providing guests with social capital, respect, love, and support. There are also specific internal administrative practices that directors feel are noteworthy and contribute to the success of the shelter. Some of these are specific examples like no television, individual case plans, or case

management. The noteworthy aspect of shelters, according to other shelter directors, was the ability to continue offering support to guests, as they desire, after they leave. Below are several examples of strengths that were compiled from the interviews.

10.1 Abstract Measures
- Providing guests with social capital
- Respect
- Loving, caring atmosphere in the shelter
- Quality of staff-guest interactions
- Very well known in community; lots of community support
- Good reputation
- Staff *truly cares* about the guests

10.2 Shelter Practices
- Volunteers who are consistent (return day after day)
- Individual case plans
- Excel in case management, support, outreach
- Case workers link guests to other agencies for housing, employment, services
- Create home-like environment that doesn't *feel* like a shelter
- No television
- Physical appearance and upkeep of shelter facility

10.3 Post-shelter Markers
- Ability to come back to the shelter for resources; pantry, clothes closet, case managers
- Exit support packet
- Aftercare program to continue supporting clients
- Former guests come back to serve dinner or work with clients
- During exit interview, set up long-term plan for success

11. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

At the end of each interview, shelter directors were asked to comment on an aspect of the shelter that could use the most improvement. These issues were divided into practices and logistics, local and state factors, funding, and larger (homelessness) issues. Aftercare and services for graduated guests were frequently mentioned as areas needing improvement. Post-shelter services were emphasized because directors are concerned with guests' independence and stability after leaving. Long-term care would decrease the number of guests that have to return to shelters in a cyclical pattern. Directors commented on the importance of improving services such as childcare, public transportation, and low-income housing in order to improve the likelihood that former shelter guests will find a job and remain stable. At the end of the day, shelter directors are trying to pinpoint the most cost effective areas that can be improved upon and integrated into shelter practices on a day-to-day basis. They are also aware that in order for the cyclical problem of

homelessness to be mitigated, several state and local issues need to be addressed. Most of the shelters are constantly full, with waitlists. This suggests that there need to be changes on a systemic level in order to serve the homeless who are "waiting" for shelter.

11.1 Practices and Logistics
- Childcare services
- Mental health services/substance abuse recovery programs
- Admissions services need to be improved (need more solid criteria for admission)
- Need better exit interview or satisfaction survey; Expansion of discharge summary
- Want to move to a longer period of follow up/ support after the program: need better tracking and measurement tools
    - Do guests want to leave this part of their past behind them, and therefore not keep in touch?
- Website/use of technology and internet for the shelter
- Limited space (long waitlist); can't meet the need

11.2 Local and State Factors
- Build better community connections
- Public transportation for guests: if guests don't own a car then they are stranded and don't have a way of getting around and going to find a job
- Outreach workers and shelter relationship; municipal welfare does not respond to requests
- Shelter and state relations need to improve
- Not enough low cost/transitional housing for after the shelter
- Not enough Section 8 vouchers
- Mutual problem solving, support and collaboration among shelter directors

11.3 Funding
- Not enough money to continue operations and services
- Want to open food shelf more days of the week (but cannot because of expenses)
- Want to expand services offered and hire more staff
- Directors spend too much time fundraising, can't implement other changes and programs
- Physical plant (not enough money for restoration/repairs)

11.4 Larger Issues
- Shelters are overwhelmed; according to point in time count, shelters are housing only 1/3 of the homeless population
- People staying in the shelters longer than they should
- In family shelters, are you supposed to accept substance abusers? Is this a threat to the safety of the children? Should sex offenders be accepted to shelters?

12. SUCCESS MEASUREMENT

The methods for success measurement vary significantly across the shelters. Certain shelters have detailed and rigid measurement tools, while others rely on "softer," abstract markers. There were numerous comments from directors about the hope and need for improved success measurement.

Several shelters base their success measurement on the independence of guests after the shelter. This post-shelter independence and stability of guests can be measured in different ways and to a differing degree. Some shelters keep track of independent living six months after exit from the program. If guests maintain this independent living, it is considered a success. Some shelters do not maintain contact with guests long-term, but simply take note of whether or not guests have secured permanent housing upon exit.

Another method of measurement is done based on guest feedback at the time of departure from the shelter. This is done in the form of exit interviews, exit surveys, or informal conversation. The content of these exit assessments varies in most circumstances and, in several cases, are not detailed or consistent.

Another way that success is measured (typically not numerically, but more casually) is the degree to which guests continue some type of connection with the shelter. For example, if younger guests continue to utilize after school homework programs that are connected with the shelter, or if a guest were to maintain contact with a case manager or staff member, those cases are seen as successes.

Some shelters measure success based on the weekly progress of shelter guests. If guests are doing well in certain programs, such as searching for jobs, maintaining sobriety, or taking classes, then this is measured as a success. Certain organizations that focus on providing shelter for substance abusers measure success in number of guests who maintain sobriety. Another way of success measurement is meals served or beds occupied.

12.1 Measures for guests during shelter stay
- Guests meeting weekly goals (checked off with case worker); guests staying focused and motivated to achieve goals
- No one goes hungry, people are fed and sheltered
- Number of meals served
- Guests staying sober
- Success is different for each client, very individualized
- Information recorded in database; tracking success of each guest
- Quarterly review of individual case plans

12.2 Post Shelter Measures
- Independent living six consecutive months after having left the program
- Moved to permanent housing

- Attendance at reunion picnic
- Follow up after one, three, and six month periods
- Aftercare: a five-year program offering regular visits and phone calls to families that want to continue work with their advocate; includes annual Christmas program.
- If participants (especially kids) come back to use after-school programs
- Exit interviews / Exit card / Client Satisfaction surveys
- If someone completes the program, secures employment, leaves and is at peace with themselves and with the community
- If women leave with life skills, a job, and a home to care for children
- Keep in touch casually

13. CONCLUSION

Over the course of this project we have attempted to interview and collect information from as many homeless shelter directors in New Hampshire and Vermont as possible, as well as from state representatives who are working in this field. We hope that this information reflects the collective realities of homeless shelters in both states and serves as a resource for directors to understand better the shelter system as a whole. This information is intended for the directors to be able to reflect on their own shelters in the context of other shelters, as well as to collaborate with and to understand the views of other shelter directors.

These shelters share a common goal of serving the homeless population to the best of their abilities. We have identified many general common trends among them, but, overall, there is a tremendous diversity in nearly all aspects of the shelters, including the programs, operating procedures, and populations served. While the scope of this study did not permit us to identify which strategic plans or methods of operations are most effective, we have documented the diversity of programs and tried to highlight practices that are particularly innovative.

This report is meant to be a "growing" document. Any additions or suggestions are always welcome and should be directed to the Policy Research Shop at Dartmouth College. We hope that this is just the beginning of a much larger collaboration and growth process, and that this group of shelter directors is able to unite to express collectively one common voice in support of the homeless population.

APPENDIX I: SHELTER REPRESENTATIVES INTERVIEWED

Bancroft House	Bob Gorgone Director
Brattleboro Area Drop In Center	Melinda Bussino Executive Director
The Bridge House	Catherine Bentwood Director
Burlington Emergency Shelter	John Stewart Acting Executive Director
The Carey House	Susan Lunt Director
The Committee on Temporary Shelter	Mary Anne Kohn Program Director
Crossroads House	Chris Sterndale Executive Director
The Friends Emergency Housing Program	Jean Tewksbury Program Director
Good Samaritan Haven, Inc.	Kimberly Woolaver Executive Director
Greater Nashua Interfaith Hospitality Network, Inc.	Laurie Skibba Network Director
Harbor Homes, Inc.	Peter Kelleher President/Chief Executive Officer
Helping Hands Outreach Ministries, Inc.	Chris Everett Executive Director
The Homeless Center for Strafford County	Jan Walsh-Grande Executive Director
Laconia Area Land Trust	Linda Harvey Executive Director
Marguerite's Place, Inc.	Lianne Bower

Director of Operations

McKenna House   Lorrie Dale
                                                Shelter Director

The Middlebury Transitional Care Coalition   Douglas Sinclair
                                                Executive Director

Monadnock Area Transitional Shelter   Joan Foucher
                                                Board Member

Morningside Shelter   Paul Capcara
                                                Executive Director

My Friend's House   Robert O'Connell
                                                Executive Director

Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter   Lisa Christie
                                                Executive Director

New Generation, Inc.   Kelsi Deters-McCarthy
                                                Executive Director

New Horizons for New Hampshire, Inc.   Michael Tessier
                                                Executive Director

Northeast Kingdom Youth Services   Hope Lakus
                                                NKYS Supervisor

Seacoast Family Promise   Pati Frew-Waters
                                                Network Director

Tri-County Community Action Program   Joie Finley Morris

Tyler Blain House   Mark Labonville
                                                House Manager

The Upper Valley Haven   Sara Kobylenski
                                                Executive Director