Homelessness in Bloomington, Indiana:
A Preliminary Ethnographic Study of Martha’s House

The Criminal Justice Methods Working Group

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PART I. INTRODUCTION

Stephanie C. Kane, Ph.D.

The Criminal Justice Methods Working Group entered into a collaborative arrangement with Martha’s House in February 2009, by invitation from its Executive Director, Bobbie Summers. This community-based research effort is the central outcome of the spring 2009 Department of Criminal Justice, graduate course in research methods; it is, also, offered as part of Indiana University’s commitment to service-learning. We originally thought that we might work with inmates in the jail itself but the process of obtaining entry was prolonged and, in the end, unsuccessful. We first met Bobbie Summers on January 31st, while carrying out participant observation at a community meeting sponsored by the community activist group “Decarcerate Monroe County”. That day, as people contemplated the construction of a new, expanded jail and social service campus in our city, we heard a great deal about the structural integration of homelessness, poverty, and incarceration, and we heard from people who have been trapped by, or excluded from, social systems and institutions. We were happy when Bobbie Summers expressed interest in the team’s capabilities as ethnographic researchers-in-training who might help her organize, develop, and ultimately write about the challenges she and her staff face trying to provide safe shelter and counseling to our city’s homeless people.

This report is the result of those efforts. We began field work on February 18th, when Bobbie Summers gave us our first introduction to and tour of Martha’s House. The city’s website describes it in the following way:

Martha’s House is a 28-bed homeless shelter located in Bloomington. We provide a safe overnight shelter with the necessary professional social services to help men and women obtain self-sufficiency. In addition to case management services that are provided, our residents receive help to find employment, life skills (such as personal hygiene), assistance with opening a bank account, access to community services, aid in learning the bus system, and help to acquire affordable housing.
It is important to note that Martha’s House is the only place in town where an adult man can find shelter with no strings attached. (The Backstreet Mission has eight beds available for men who are willing to tolerate or who enjoy religious preaching. Middle Way House provides shelter for women and their children who are the victims of domestic violence. Stepping Stones provides transitional housing and services for homeless youth.) Also of relevance is the relationship between the shelter and the neighborhood of which it is a part: McDoel Gardens Historic District. Although not impervious to the tensions involved in hosting a site that invites the gathering of those at the margins of society, on the whole, the neighborhood cultivates tolerance. As Paul Ash, a neighbor who gave Holly Sims and I a tour gave us to understand, since the 1920s when most of the McDoel Gardens homes were built and an industrial base was thriving (stone, cabinetry, followed by RCA), neighbors lived side by side with transient encampments of the Gentry Brothers Circus which used to set up their tents in what is now the parking lot of McDoel Church; in just east of there, hobos who used to hop on...
to the boxcars of the Monon Railroad. As our tour guide reminded us, homelessness (like racism) amidst social stability is not a new phenomenon here in Bloomington.

Figure 2. Urban homeless encampment. Photo by S. Kane

On the evening after our first visit to Martha’s House, we returned to introduce ourselves to the current set of clients next door in the Community Kitchen. After struggling a week or two with logistics, especially where it might be best to encounter and interview homeless clients, team members began fieldwork which continued through April 2nd. All in all, we prepared for and then carried out research for a total of 7 weeks, which resulted in one or two interviews per week per person. For the most part, team members went individually or in small groups to Martha’s House after 4:00 PM when the shelter opened to clients; at other times of day, they visited one of the social service agencies that work with the shelters, public housing, and Section 8 housing. They also interviewed other people who were connected with the homeless in one way or another, including potential employers and landlords and neighbors who are active in the McDoel neighborhood association.
The report is based on 23 of these semi-structured interviews which the students arranged and carried out independently. Each followed their own leads and interests to find interviewees. During the data collection phase, we periodically exchanged ideas so as to develop and distinguish our themes in relation to each other. We trained our data collection and organization to address homelessness as it relates to the practical needs of the homeless and their service providers, and at the same time, leaned toward a scholarly understanding of the ways in which poverty and criminal justice are intertwined.

We began this project as the global economic crisis subjected all support systems to question. We live in a time of uncertainty. Even before the national, economic meltdown, Bloomington’s support services were already underfunded: 58 is the city’s most recent available (City of Bloomington 2009) estimate of the number of chronically homeless people who might need city resources is (see also Smith and Smith 2001). Given the dispersal of unsheltered, homeless people over a wide rural area, the estimate most likely underestimates the actual number. Even in 2007, when it looked like federal funding for those who lived in poverty, including veterans, would continue to decrease, the city predicted a dramatic increase in homelessness in the near future. Without the energy, spirit, and capabilities of service-providers and the homeless people themselves, it would be difficult not to find things bleak.

As the Criminal Justice Methods Working Group reports here, the stresses of underfunding put extraordinary burdens not only on the homeless, but also burdened those trying to provide a safety net for them during hard times and who help them transition into independence. As the numbers of people, counted and uncounted, continue to rise, it will become more and more necessary to understand and confront the complex issues of homelessness in our town so that we can find ways to improve and extend services, especially in hard times. Each of the ethnographers approach a different aspect of our town’s homelessness, each writes in their own style, and each includes a different mix of their first-hand exchanges in the field and analyses from the scholarly literature. Not including the introduction, the report is divided into three parts: the first presents the perspectives of homeless persons; the second service providers; and the third, appendices. Erick Boeber opens Part II, with a passionate essay exploring feelings about and the material circumstances of homelessness in our historical moment, distinguishing the new from the chronic homeless. Crystal L. Murry follows with an essay that combines the sociological literature with our ethnographic interview data which explores how the stigma of incarceration creates obstacles. Summarizing U.S. laws criminalizing drug use and drawing from interview data, Simeon Sungi argues that drug and alcohol addiction, although not uncommon problems among homeless persons, is best treated as a medical, not criminal justice issue. In Part III, Thomas Burns, Jr. and Holly Sims represent the commitment and frustrations of those providing funding and housing, and discuss the specific ways that attempts to help the homeless are undermined by onerous and sometimes impractical
rules and procedures that govern the relationship between federal and local governments and the shelters.

We hope that the report is useful and we thank all the participants who took part in our study. Although many remain unnamed here in order to protect their privacy, their assistance is greatly appreciated and their stories are highly valued. We extend a special thanks to all the Martha’s House staff for their help coordinating this project and assisting with recruiting participants. Special thanks to Bobbie Summers, Tanya Rakhimkulova, Marilyn Patterson and Paul Ash, Dr. Clark Brittain, and Sarah Begley.
Part II: The Predicament of Homelessness

A. The Newly Homeless

Erick Boeber

As many individuals in a position to help the homeless have never actually lived an appreciable period of time without the comforts of a home, work and the dignity of feeding ourselves without the aid of charity; it is not only interesting but vital that we ponder the situation of the homeless not only from the critical perspective of the outsider, but also introspectively as to what might have been had our lives not gone as untroubled as they presently have.

When one considers the homeless, he or she may conjure images of scruffy men in subway tunnels and storm drains who sip at rotgut or solicit people for spare change, or maybe hobos on a train who ride in boxcars, running from something we will never know and resigning themselves to a life without roots and without substance. What many do not consider, though, is that few of the homeless actually fit into a category so extreme, and fewer still have “settled” into the homeless lifestyle as a permanent squatter or resident of the street.

Many of the homeless have fallen between the cracks of society, and remain in a limbo where they are in and out of public institutions, in and out of jail, or trying to get employment where there is little or none to be had. Applying for housing will lead to an endless cycle of forms and runaround from which there is only the short reprieve of rejection or a temporary stay, and eventually, when they’re back on the street, it must start all over again. The runaround isn’t something that we can blame on any single policy or institution, but is rather just a product of bureaucracy and the nature of strained, overburdened public services. Many of the homeless are walking on eggshells in all categories of their lives. Do they use their bus ticket to be on time for a meeting with a probation officer or do they use it to get across town to try and secure work? If they make too much, it means that some government services will be cut, so they have to stay below the poverty line in order to remain eligible. They can be thrown back in jail on a whim, and can lose their job at any moment, especially now that there are many more individuals who have more training, a higher education, and no criminal background. As jobs are becoming increasingly scarce for everyone, more people are taking the low-road in the working world, which in turn tightens the vice yet another notch upon the under-classes. Upon interviewing or casually speaking to the residents of Martha’s House, they will profess that they’re “hanging in there” or that “it’s just another day, trying to get back on my feet”, as are many individuals. In the predicament of homelessness, however, people need to make some heroic efforts and need a whole lot of luck to achieve any sort of stable and permanent station from which they can make educational, fiscal, and emotional gains.
The plight of the newly homeless: often times fresh out of jail with alimony or child support payments that have been racking up; with no money, a criminal record, and a maze of forms, personal issues, and selective public institutions to face. The challenge can be too great for many, and so newly homeless men and women slowly resign themselves to living either a transient existence out in the cold, or spending the rest of their days in the cycle of jail time, poverty, and the frustration of treading the waters of their own failures.

Study after study has been funded and carried out by universities and scholars of the social sciences in an attempt to identify the causes of crime and social distress, but in reality we know that, in the case of the homeless, it means no money. With no money, there’s no home. With no job, there’s no money. With no skills, there’s no job. While one may argue that this model fails to take into account the poor decisions made by those in economic peril and those who’ve made numerous visits to jail or prison, a vast number of people living on the streets are not the violent or drug addled menaces that many of us regard the homeless to be.

With the growing economic crisis, homelessness won’t be a problem purely for the uneducated anymore. The steel mills have closed, manufacturing has been outsourced, and now with the decaying auto industry cutting jobs left and right, there is little left to do for those without degrees or the increasingly difficult-to-obtain journeyman status. Even students here at the university who are receiving their college educations major in generic categories such as business and psychology. What kind of business they’ll tend to or what kind of job they may get is just as much a mystery to them as it is to anyone else. And as such these students go into the working world with zero experience and a pocket full of wishes, often taking positions further down the ladder then they’d originally expected. Even those attending high-priced graduate programs for medicine and law go forth with their sheepskins in hopes of fame and fortune and are stunned to learn that unless someone in the family has their own practice or firm, they will be given a phone and a cubicle from which to cold-call potential clients or that they’ll be working in an understaffed inner city clinic making less than an established RN elsewhere. As the economy tightens downward, the filth rolls downhill, and it’s ultimately those who’ve washed dishes or cooked for minimum wage that will be left without a seat when the music stops playing. With the outsourcing of once decently-paying working class jobs, it is now that we don’t only see winos panhandling in the street, but rather the nuclear family hunkering down in the van for the night as there’s nowhere else for them to go.

Though we may regard such stories as tales of humanitarian woe, there’s still the need to look out for number one. And the concern for where individuals’ tax-dollars are being funneled into is certainly valid, but what decades of the decay of American industry have made clear is that the problem of poverty has not corrected itself. We can only sweep the under-classes beneath the rug for so long, before our societal problems only
continue to mount. The recently passed stimulus bill, at best, may re-invigorate the consumer sector to a degree, but it will not catapult America forward and rid us of our education deficit or bring back the jobs that we’ve given away. It won’t even provide expanded services for those who are already homeless or provide sufficient funding for the housing authority. There is little or no help on the way, and though many of the issues contributing to America’s (and the world’s) economic crisis are seeded deeply and go beyond the scope of simple homelessness, it is clear that the problem of people being out of work, out of money, in trouble with the law, and eventually at the whims of an ill-prepared safety net will get substantially worse before it gets better.

In the meantime, what’s most pressing beyond the ubiquitous personal problems and debts are the lack of skills associated with the homeless. The gross majority of them do not possess degrees, formal technical training, or even high school diplomas. A GED is a relatively high standard for most of the homeless individuals whom we’ve talked to, and it’s clear that a GED doesn’t get anyone very far. So be it as it may that America no longer has an abundance of factory or raw-materials processing jobs any longer, the individual must obtain the skills that he or she needs to, at the very least, be able to secure a human standard of living. One-hundred percent of the residents of Martha’s House that this author spoke to had goals to further their education, and they all had an understanding beyond that of most college students of just how competitive and how difficult it can be to secure any kind of work, not to mention work that pays enough to let someone live by any acceptable standard while paying off his or her debts. Their education goals were reasonable, typically trying to secure a GED, or for those that had that, an associates from Ivy Tech. . . a far cry from the level and quality of education that those in a position to make a difference in the lives of the homeless will almost certainly have. It can be hard to connect and identify with those with whom we have little in common, and it’s all too common to simply echo the societal mentality-at-large that the homeless need to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, because it’s easier said than done when you can’t afford boots. Two years at Ivy Tech is laughable for law and Ph.D. students, but for those who’ve never made it out of the 10th grade, it’s a veritable mountain to climb. For those of us in a position of relative safety, casting stigma upon these individuals and critiquing their position in life is nothing other than taking the easy way out. Regardless of our initial reactions and opinions, we cannot deny that the homeless problem won’t disappear without much more substantial action being taken to lend a helping hand to those who desperately need it. We cannot deny that the problem will grow in the coming months and years, engulfing those who are not only on the fringes of society, but those who may be closer to many of us than we’d care to consider.

And that’s not to say that avenues of help don’t exist for the homeless. Organizations certainly do exist, and they’re filled with some of the most caring and helpful people any group dedicated to the improvement of the lot of the impoverished could want, but the existing networks of funding and help are also a rough-to-tread mire that can take
months of long waiting simply to arrive at a dead-end. The present bureaucratic structure, as you’ll learn as you read further, tends to be self-defeating, as those who need help because those who want to help cannot spend all the money allocated by those who designate the pathways and rules of proper distribution.
B. I Have a Felony?: Misconceptions about the Homeless and their Criminal Records

Crystal L. Murry

This section addresses the issue of homelessness and stigma in the United States. It also focuses on homeless at the local level (i.e., Bloomington, Indiana). Before presenting our team’s findings on the subject, I present a brief review of the scholarly literature. Section one provides an overview of homelessness at the national level. The second section is an ethnographic report on homelessness and stigma of Martha’s House residents.

A Brief Review of the Scholarly Literature: Over the past three decades, homelessness in the United States has steadily been on the rise (NLCHP, 2009). The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty estimates that approximately 3 million individuals, on average, experience homelessness each year (NCH, 2009; NLCHP, 2009). The Center posits that approximately 1.3 million of those homeless individuals are children and the remainder includes both families and single individuals (NCH, 2009). Scholars and academic researchers alike argue that homelessness is a function of failed institutional policies (De Venanzi, 2008). However, the NCH (2009) and the NLCHP (2009) attribute homelessness to a number of social conditions that have since been ignored by the government. These conditions include the following: the lack of affordable housing, inadequate incomes, the lack of healthcare, dilapidated school systems, blocked vocational opportunities, the reduction in social services available to the homeless, and most importantly, stigma. Therefore, this ethnographic report seeks to examine poverty and homelessness in Bloomington, Indiana. More specifically, this report seeks to breakdown traditional stereotypes of the homeless populations by challenging misconceptions about stigmas often attributed to the homeless.

Previous research has clearly shown that perceptions of the homeless are varied in that some perceptions are sympathetic while others are apathetic. According to De Venanzi (2008), perceptions of the homeless can be explained using the purity-pollution concept and the normal-stigma concept. De Venanzi (2008) argues that individuals who are not viewed as clean or pure are thought to be polluted and those who are polluted are not normal; therefore, they are stigmatized. He argues that the purity-pollution and the normal-stigma concepts are a part of society’s conventional norms. Cleanliness (i.e., purity) is generally valued and, from the point of view of the person in question, acknowledges that one accepts societal norms. In contrast, pollution (i.e., poor hygiene) is indicative of those who reject conventional norms. Similarly, De Venanzi, (2008) writes that, “Pollution is a matter of aesthetics, hygiene or etiquette, which only becomes grave in so far as it may create social embarrassment. The sanctions include social sanctions, contempt, ostracism, gossip, perhaps even police action” (as cited in Douglas, 2000, p. 92). In other words, poor hygiene often refers to not belonging and not belonging puts individuals at risk of being ridiculed, criminalized, and ultimately stigmatized for their situations (De Venanzi, 2008).
Negative perceptions of the homeless populations and stigmas of homelessness are far from new (Phelan, et. al, 1997). In fact, Phelan et al. (1997) administered a series of surveys to non-homeless individuals and found that the homeless bear the brunt of society pointing its finger at them for getting themselves into a predicament that would result in the loss of a home. They found that the homeless are often viewed in a more negative light than the vagrant poor. Thus, they argued that although perceptions of the homeless include thoughts of individuals being mentally ill and financially irresponsible, they found that homelessness and mental illnesses are not necessarily dependent on one another and neither are perceptions about them. In other words, they found that homelessness had little bearing on negative treatment or negative perceptions. Their findings revealed that there were differences in the perceptions of the mentally ill versus the homeless in that the mentally ill automatically received a more negative (i.e., dangerous) label and homelessness creates some sort of social distance. In addition, although, the researchers revealed some interesting findings in reference to stigma, they did not focus on stigmas of criminality and incarceration.

Although most empirical studies on homelessness focus on homelessness as a state of being, few if any focus on the intersection of stigmatization, criminality, and homelessness. Some studies reveal that common perceptions of the homeless include being viewed as vagrants, drug abusers, violent, mentally ill, and criminals; even though, most research has not found evidence to support these perceptions (Knecht & Martinez, 2009; Phelan, et. al, 1997). Additionally, homeless individuals with criminal records are not only stigmatized but they are viewed by some as culturally deficient, disadvantaged, and more likely to commit crimes. As a result of these stigmas and isolation of the homeless population, individuals with criminal records are less likely to have second chances (Burns Interview, February 25th).

A study by Snow et al. (1989) reveals that although the public views homeless men as dangerous others, they are no more violent than anyone else. Their findings reveal that in the event that a homeless man is incarcerated, the offense will most likely be minor and primarily consist of public intoxication. Hence, their findings refute the notion that the homeless are violent and suggest that criminality occurs when individuals are in environments conducive of crime (i.e., the streets). Hence, these researchers provide a number of policy implications for reducing the degree to which homeless populations are stigmatized by acknowledging that previous incarceration may have more negative implications than positive ones.

Moreover, despite having little to no evidence to support negative perceptions of the homeless, the mere fact that society stigmatizes these individuals creates a wealth of problems in itself (Hartwell, 2004; Phelan, et. al, 1997). These stigmas perpetuate quite a few stereotypes as they are applied to the homeless population, and for the most part, these stigmas are no more than a mechanism for continued shaming. Our team’s ethnographic research at Martha’s House shows how the stereotyping process takes
place at the local level. We interviewed several individuals who were homeless as well as those who work with homeless populations on a daily basis.

The Ethnography of Homelessness and Stigma: After speaking with Martha’s House residents, I found that nearly all of the individuals with whom I spoke had some type of encounter with the criminal justice system. However, the majority of their offenses were not violent despite public perceptions that say or think otherwise. In fact, instead of most residents having violent offenses, I found that some of the interviewees had felony convictions for child support, driving under the influence (DUI) charges, and drug related charges. For instance, and to my surprise, some of my interviewees are Army and Navy veterans. These individuals have served in the military for our beloved country for quite a few years, yet they are recipients of so few resources. These individuals are homeless. They are victims of the economy’s recent downturn. Hence, they are victims of downsizing, unemployment, substance abuse, and a flawed criminal justice system. Other interviewees were expecting mothers and newly homeless individuals. Therefore, below, I summarize the life histories of four interviewees with whom I came in contact while at Martha’s House. Their names have been changed to protect their identities.

Scott

Prior to his current homeless situation, Scott was employed, successfully managed his household, and paid his bills on time for years until he was laid off. Consequently, this one setback (i.e., job loss) was connected to him losing his home, transportation, and retirement savings. For the most part, Scott was independent for more than 51 years of his adult life, but that’s no surprise considering he’s a military vet. Now, what is a surprise is his current homeless state. He informed me that this instance of homelessness has lowered his self-esteem on some many levels that he questions and contemplates his reason for living and the purpose of his life. Although, little attention has been paid to this area of research (i.e., the psychological impacts of homelessness) a number of homeless residents are or have at some point in time been depressed, ashamed, and embarrassed about their situation. Consequently, some people turn to drugs and alcohol which ultimately fuels and feeds any addictions that they may have. Scott was like some of those people and as a result, he was battling an alcohol addiction which resulted in a number of DUIs after his job loss.

Jessie

Jessie is also a military vet, but he is no stranger to the criminal justice system. In fact, he informed me that he had a felony charge on his record for not paying child support. This isn’t the ideal criminal charge, but nonetheless, it is a felony charge. Jessie was ordered to back pay child support for his children, including the years that he was married to his ex-wife. His child support order was based on what the judge thought he should make as opposed to what he actually made. As a result, his child support
payments accounted for approximately $1600 per month or $400 per week, which is more than he was actually making within a month’s time.

Roseanne

Roseanne is by no means a stranger to the homeless lifestyle since she has been in and out of shelters since her teenage years. At the present, she is unemployed and pregnant with a criminal record for dealing and possessing cocaine. She is also a high school drop out and she has been diagnosed with ADHD, but she has never received treatment since treatment is so costly.

Martin

Martin was for the most part extremely pro-social prior to getting involved with drugs. He was married to the love of his life, his wife and they two daughters together. He was gainfully employed, a homeowner, and a car owner. He was truly living the American Dream, but once he was introduced to drugs by his friends in his mid to late twenties he began to make a wealth of bad decisions. He neglected his responsibilities as a husband, father, and provider, and as a result, his wife filed for a divorce. After the initial separation leading to the divorce, his drug use was running rampant and he developed an addiction to illegal substances. Subsequently, he began to indulge in alcohol as well.

Like his drug use, my last interviewee’s alcohol use was quite problematic. He neglected his responsibilities with his employer by calling in constantly for days off of work. He admitted that he used to party so much with his friends that he was physically unable to get up and go to work because of the hangovers. As a result, his employer fired him and his lack of employment resulted in the lost of his apartment which lead to him being homeless. Similarly, his alcohol use was linked to him receiving a criminal record in the form of DUs and having his driver’s license suspended.

Despite, his circumstances, Martin appeared to be optimistic about the direction his life was going in. He considers the trouble that he got in because of his drug and alcohol addictions a blessing because otherwise he may not have changed habits. He does not appear to be resentful, but rather humble about his situation that he’s in. He admits that he made poor choices, but he’s willing to take responsibility for his own actions and he’s looking forward to pursuing the next chapter of his life.

Each of these interviewees came from different walks of life, yet some of their stories are remarkably similar and their obstacles are the same. Homeless individuals with criminal records face quite a few restrictions and roadblocks that exacerbate the stigmatizing processes that all homeless people face thereby making their transition to a new life exceptionally difficult. I found that stigma can be of great hindrance to the homeless population since the stigma of the word “felon” or “felonies” can have a huge impact on an individual’s quest to being independent. I found that interviewees with
criminal record rarely find decent employment that is if they are given the opportunity to find it. Therefore, this process of prematurely labeling homeless individuals for their past actions makes those individuals with criminal records continue to pay for their crimes well after they have served their sentences. In most instances, individuals who have criminal records not only find it extremely difficult to obtain employment, their housing options are often rather limited.

Similarly, other interviews of those in the caring profession revealed that some employers choose not to hire individuals with criminal records primarily because they fear they may lose business in the event the public finds out (Burns Interview, February 25th). He found that individuals with criminal pasts are often not eligible for social service programs for education (i.e., financial aid) and other forms of government assistance (i.e., public housing, Section 8, welfare services, etc.) (Burns Interview, February 25th). He also found that in addition to the stigma of homelessness, one particular class of ex-offenders, i.e., sex offenders, are prohibited from using public resources such as the public library and the Shalom Center. This restriction, in turn, reduces the likelihood that the offenders will find employment. The label 'sex offender' does not disclose the actual crime committed. Some sex offenses may include an individual urinating in a public area or indecent exposure, but in the popular imagination, all sex offenders are lumped together in one category. Thus, while people tend to think that when individuals have felonies on their records, they are dangerous, the residents that we spoke with seemed to have minor, non-violent (i.e., child support, alcohol and substance abuse offenses).

In sum, there are a number of reasons why individuals are homeless (NLCHP, 2009), but often times, people automatically assume some individuals choose homelessness as a lifestyle (Phelan et. al, 1997). Some people fail to realize that employment, underemployment, or the lack thereof fuel a number of social problems that exist in the United States today (NCH, 2009; NLCHP, 2009). The homeless population and the residents at Martha’s House face a number of obstacles to get back on their feet. For that reason, we as a people need to stop being so judgmental about a population that we know so little about. Finding employment is one of the key difficulties that most homeless residents face (NLCHP, 2009), so we need to assist them in their quest for independence. We should not judge them because after all, many Americans may be only one pay check away from being homeless themselves. What's more, the stigma of previous incarceration and a criminal record greatly increases community disenfranchisement and homelessness (Hartwell, 2004). Therefore, “...policy makers should be aware of this consequence when they are rethinking drug policy and allocating resources among social service institutions (Hartwell, 2004, p. 94). There is a need for more funding to be directed towards social programs such as homelessness and there should be more efforts to reduce fear mongering in reference to all the homeless population, even the homeless individuals who have made serious mistakes. Please take the Homeless Assessment Test to check out your understanding (see Appendix A).
C. Drug Addiction is a Healthcare and not a Criminal Justice Issue

Simeon Sungi

The United States declared a War on Drugs in 1981 and the perceived remedy was incarceration. Congress henceforth enacted several laws as a reaction to this war. These enacted laws included: The Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984, The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 and the 1988 amendment that expanded and increased federal penalties for drug use and trafficking. Despite these measures, statistics show that there was a 93% increase in drug possession cases (Goldkamp, 2000). Furthermore, the U.S. spends $15 billion in federal funds and $33 billion in state and local funds to finance the War on Drugs (Blumernson & Nilson, pp. 37-38). As a result federal prisons now house nearly 300,000 drug offenders (Massing, 2000). Arguably, several studies indicate that drug addiction is a multidimensional disease and not merely a matter of criminal behavior (Hora et al., 1999, p.464).

Our research uncovered some factors related to the question of why individuals use drugs and why some eventually become addicts. Lack of employment is cited as the number one factor. A loss of a job has a great impact on a person’s life. When you lose your job, you lose your home, because you are unable to pay the mortgage; you may lose your car because you are unable to make the monthly car payments, and so on. Loss of employment strains relationships, as couples start thinking about how they will support their families. “Scott”, a participant in our study, states that after losing his job and realizing that he was homeless after being independent for more than 51 years of his adult life, he lost his self-esteem and turned to drugs as a way of releasing his stress (Murry, C. Interview). Drug addiction, therefore, becomes a means and not an end, which incarceration cannot help compensate. “Paul”, a participant in this study, stated that some drug addiction cases are caused by what he termed “self-medication”. Since most homeless individuals lack health insurance, they tend to self-medicate to cure whatever illness they perceive themselves to be suffering. This leads to drug addiction becoming a health care issue (Sims, H. Interview). A good example is “Ringo” who became addicted to pain killers while trying to cure his back pains (Boeber, E. Interview). Our research further found that drug addiction is an element of the stigma associated with homelessness in Bloomington. As discussed by Murry above, most of the residents in Martha’s House had been convicted of drug offenses and because of their criminal records; they were unable to get gainful employment.

Incarcerating drug offenders is aimed at deterring future drug offenders; however, it fails to accomplish this goal. As research shows over 50% will recidivate with similar offenses within two to three years of their release from prison (DOJ, 1999). As our research has shown, drug addiction has underlying causes that incarceration does not remedy. The traditional adversarial system of justice, designed to resolve legal disputes is ineffective at addressing alcohol and drug abuse (AOD). To this effect, research has shown that many features of the court system contribute to AOD abuse instead of curbing it. Traditional defense counsel functions and court procedures often reinforce the offender’s denial of AOD problems because the offender may not be assessed for AOD use until months after arrest. The Criminal Justice system is deemed an
enabler of continuing drug use because few immediate consequences for continued AOD use are during incarceration. And even when the referrals to treatment are made, they occur months or years after the offense and there is little or no inducement to complete programs (DOJ, 1999). These views echo a medical practitioner I interviewed, Dr. Clark Brittain, who has practiced medicine for over 20 years, argues that drug addiction is not a legal problem and incarceration does not cure it. Rather, early diagnosis that identifies a drug related problem prevents an individual from becoming a chronic drug abuser. Hence, prevention of drug-related crimes through treatment of the underlying disease of addiction is the only viable alternative.

These findings are supported by established professional organizations, such as, The American Medical Association (AMA) (Jefferson, 2000, p.52), The American Bar Association (ABA), The American Psychiatric Association (APA) (APA, 1994), and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Massing, 2000, p.52), who all have called drug abuse a disease which requires treatment and have thus adopted the medicalization theory of drug abuse. If drug addiction is a disease, then no amount of jail time or any other traditional criminal justice sanction will prevent the addict from repeating the drug abuse behavior (Rosenblum, 2002, p.3). “Joe” a participant that I interviewed who had been a cocaine addict for some years and had just got out of prison a few days before our encounter stated that he does not think that his incarceration has rehabilitated him. He still feels like he might relapse into using drugs, although he honestly does not want to go back to using them. The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), a component of the Executive Office of the President that is tasked to establish policies, priorities and objectives for the Nation’s drug control program, contends that “drug dependence is a chronic, relapsing disorder requiring specialized treatment”(ONDCP, 1996). Another participant in our research, “Martin Luther” explained the reasons why he became a drug addict, reporting that the initial separation leading to his divorce exacerbated his drug addiction (Murry Interview, March 12). His reason for continued drug use corroborates the APA’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) which states that recurrent substance use results in failure to fulfill major roles and obligations at work, school, or home (Hora, 1999, p.464).

Another interviewee, “Sue”, told me that she was incarcerated after being convicted for a drug offense. She states that she did not receive any rehabilitation for the six months that she served her time. Therefore, the time she spent in jail had no relationship with her drug addiction in the sense of changing her drug abuse behavior. “Incarceration without treatment is fiscally irresponsible and not an adequate solution for drug related crimes” (BAAB, 1992). The National Drug Control Report states that in 2000, forty four federal institutions offered residential substance abuse treatment, and in 1998, nearly 34,000 inmates participated in Federal Bureau of Prison treatment services (National Drug Control Strategy, 2000). Drug offenders participating in these federal treatment programs are 73% less likely to be re-arrested and 44% less likely to use drugs than those who do not participate in treatment (Simmons, 2000).

There are several reasons why jails and prisons are not effective places for drug addiction treatment. First, treatment providers have limited resources. Thirteen percent of the prison population supports this premise (Simmons, 2000, p.62). Generally, drug addicts need
simultaneous psychiatric and substance abuse treatment, and most prisons do not have adequate treatment for either disorder (Long, 1998). Second, providing incentives for inmates to take advantage of prison treatment programs has proven difficult (Rosenblum, 2002, p.6). Third, it is not possible to separate inmates enrolled in treatment from the general prison population, which exposes the inmates involved in treatment to the negative influence of their fellow prisoners (Simmons, 2000, p.254). Fourth, because the length of an inmate’s sentence is most often shorter than the time needed for treatment to successfully overcome addiction, the chance of successful rehabilitation is diminished (Ibidem p.254).

In brief, drug addiction is not a police problem; it never has been and never can be solved by police officers. It is first and last a medical problem, and if there is a solution it will be discovered not by police officers, but by scientific and competently trained medical experts whose sole objective will be the reduction and possible eradication of this devastating problem (Volmer, 1936, pp. 117-118). Treatment is therefore the most effective means of preventing recidivism for drug offenders.
Part III: Bureaucratic Conundrums of Service Provision

A. Providing Care with Insufficient Federal Funds: Limits and Possibilities for the City

Thomas Burns, Jr.

Before gathering data for the current study, I had many assumptions about homelessness and the provision of social services to the homeless. Coming from the Department of Criminal Justice at Indiana University (IU), I am familiar with the struggles of poverty, so I had presuppositions about the difficulty of gaining self-sufficiency while experiencing homelessness; especially in the current economic recession. However, I had no idea that difficulty existed for social service providers who are trying to help the homeless gain self-sufficiency. Like any profession, there is a lot more to it than meets the eye, and work in the social services is no different. In providing social services to the homeless, economic and bureaucratic complexities create several obstacles. These obstacles contribute to the stress of providing for homeless clients whose lives are typically already burdened by strife. These obstacles decrease the effectiveness of social service providers’ abilities to assist their clients in gaining independence.

Managing Martha’s House: Bobbie Summers, Executive Director
Our research group began to understand the difficulties of social service provision on our first visit to the adult homeless shelter in Bloomington, Indiana: Martha’s House. A phone interview with its executive director, Bobbie Summers (February 19, 2009), provided me a description of her position and the positions of the other social services providers in and outside of Martha’s House. As the executive director, Ms. Summers, or “Bobbie” as everyone calls her, can be found there daily doing a variety of administrative tasks to keep the shelter in optimal condition. In one particular task crucial to keeping the shelter going, she writes grants with the assistance of the City of Bloomington’s Housing and Neighborhood Development Department (HAND). In late March of 2009, Bobbie referred me to Marilyn Patterson, the program manager of HAND.

Money for Martha’s House: Marilyn Patterson, Program Manager
I interviewed Patterson on May 30, 2009 at her office in City Hall. Patterson is the program manager of HAND. There, HAND’s basic mission is to help citizens find assistance in buying a home, resolve concerns about housing code violations or rental grievances, and to organize neighborhood associations (City of Bloomington, para. 1). In her “very busy job,” Patterson’s specific duties as the program manager include: 1. Acting as a liaison to the social service community to help secure funding that goes into social service. She works directly with Bobbie Summers by providing technical
assistance for grant writing and also monitors the funds that are given to Martha’s House. 2. Acting as a loan officer for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) as well as the Jack Hopkins grant. As an “entitlement city,” one with a population of at least 50,000, Bloomington receives federal funds from HUD (City of Bloomington Common Council, p. 1). Patterson reports that 95% of what she does comes from federal grants. 3. Lastly, she acts as a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing counselor. HUD is a federal program who’s “mission is to increase homeownership, support community development and increase access to affordable housing free from discrimination” (HUD, para. 1). In her work with HUD, Patterson does delinquent, default, reverse mortgage, rental and homeless counseling. In default counseling Patterson says that she has “saved a lot of homes.” In fact, when I Googled “default counseling” Patterson’s name was the first out of the 2,860,000 results (as of April 25, 2009).

Unfortunately, over the years the federal government has reduced its funding of HAND, leaving the agency with less to allocate to the City of Bloomington. With the current economic recession it has been worse. Over the time Patterson has been with HAND, she reports having seen a ten percent reduction in federal funding. If she could change anything about her occupation, it would be to receive more federal funding. In addition to that, Patterson would also like to have more voice in where the federal funding goes. At present, city employees are barred admission from the citizen committees that decide how to spend the federal funds. In a preliminary meeting with Bobbie Summers in early February, Bobbie spoke of a woman who called to Martha’s House upset that she could see the residents outside the shelter. With this type of negative attitude present in the community, it is not unfeasible that this type of attitude is represented on the citizen committees that direct funding.

As a liaison to the social service community, a loan officer, and a housing counselor, Patterson has a depth and breadth of knowledge of the financial inner workings of the provision of services to the homeless. If she as well as other City Hall employees who have such close interaction with social services had a voice in fund allocation, they might be able to improve the situation of homelessness in Bloomington.

While Patterson is a city employee who works outside of Martha’s House, by having some control over Martha’s funds, she has an effect on its ability to function. This affects both physical conditions and operations there. To better understand that condition and its impact, it was necessary to talk to one of the men and women who interact with the homeless daily.

‘Mother’ of Martha’s House: Karen Riden, Resident Advocate
In addition to the case managers and administrative personnel, Martha’s House has three resident advocates employed there: Louis Levato, David Rezendes, and Karen Riden. Working alone, they trade off on two shifts managing Martha’s House when the
residents are present (4 PM–12 AM or 12 AM–8 AM). They work most closely with the residents. Their duties include in-take—managing new residents, and assigning and supervising chores. The resident advocates also make sure the residents take care of themselves by requiring residents to take showers, administering medication, and when necessary, conducting breathalyzer tests. Resident advocates do chores as well, for example, laundry, changing bedding, and making sure residents’ belongings are properly stored.

I got the opportunity to talk to one of the resident advocates, Karen Riden, on March 5. She was introduced to me by Bobbie Summers just as she was starting her 4 PM shift. At the time, Martha’s House was very busy with residents hustling about doing chores, eating, showering, using the telephone, and much more. According to Riden, 4 PM to 10 PM is generally the busiest part of the day. Amid what seemed chaos to me, Riden saw a normal everyday situation. It was her job to manage 28 people within the small facility, a set of tasks that she conducted while I interviewed her. Needless to say, the interview was interrupted several times.

Riden began working for Martha’s House in 2007. Her earlier career as a software programmer did not prepare her for the mass of interpersonal interactions that she now experiences as a resident advocate. She’s learned that multitasking with people is much more difficult than multitasking with computers. For one thing, dealing with people involves managing their feelings. Though challenging, Riden is comfortable in her position and said that it is much more rewarding helping people than working with computers.

To control the social environment of Martha’s House, Riden takes on the role of hall monitor. As her job title suggests, also acts as the “sounding board” for resident complaints. Her third role at is the dorm mother, which some residents take quite literally. One young resident continually popped into the office during the interview identifying her as “Mom”. “She seemed to take pride in the title, and acknowledged that she was proud of the residents when they attained self sufficiency. This attitude is very motherly, indeed.

Riden voiced her opinion about the economic situation of Martha’s House. She thinks that Martha’s House was in need of funds for staff as the 28 bed facility can be hectic. Riden has had help in the past from IU student volunteers, though, they are too temporary. Once the volunteers become familiar with the organization and management of Martha’s House, their semester-long commitment ends and they depart. An extra hand as a paid staff member would help out immensely in helping organize the residents’ chores, medication and other needs.

In addition to extra staff, Riden thought that Martha’s House could use funds for more space. Martha’s House occupies only half the building; the other half is the building that
contains Community Kitchen. Therefore, everything must be very efficient. There are only two bedrooms and two bathrooms for the 28 residents who reside in Martha’s House. To even do the simplest tasks that most people take for granted, such as taking a shower or making a phone call, the residents have to put their names on a signup sheet. Riden reasons that if someone can make it with the rules and regulations of Martha’s House, then that person can make it in the outside world. Riden added that personalities not conducive to this rigid structure sometimes have difficulties, but she tries to make those individuals feel at home.

Riden’s perspective on the crowded condition and lack of space in Martha’s House calls for funding for more staff to alleviate the stressful job of the social services providers and more breathing space for the struggling residents. The funding seems to exist as the key underlying issue in both Patterson and Riden’s perspectives.

**Discussion:** There are two perspectives in the current study. One offered by a City Hall employee who wishes to provide more funds to the social services community, but cannot because the federal budget decrease. While in 2008 $47.1 billion was budgeted for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, there was approximately a 15% decrease in projected funding for 2009 ($40.1 billion) (White House, graph 1). Alternatively, a resident advocate at Martha’s House who works very closely with the homeless experiences the lack of funding for social services. She sees the immediate need for funding. This begs the question “where is the money?” Well, the solution may be Indiana University.

**The IU Connection:** As Bobbie acted as a liaison for me, a graduate student at Indiana University, to talk to Patterson and Riden, perhaps she may make a stronger connection between Martha’s House and IU. While IU volunteers may be only temporary and possibly even of little use, the student population has a formidable combined wealth. The recent Homeward Bound walk on April 26, 2009 rose over $38,000 for social service providers including Amethyst House, Area 10 Agency on Aging, Centerstone, Community Kitchen, Hoosiers Hills Food Bank, Martha’s House, and more (Homeward Bound, table 1). Of the $29,692.43 raised by walk teams, at least $2,093 was raised by groups identifiable as teams comprised of IU students (e.g., Alpha Chi Omega, Alpha Phi, College Internship Program, Criminal Justice Student Association, IU Psychological & Brain Sciences, Pi Kappa Alpha, Social Work Seniors!, SPEA START). In addition, of the 677 official participants, at least 162 of them were on teams associated with IU (about 24%).

Indiana University has been generous in the past to Martha’s House. In an interview with the in-shelter case manager, Tanya Rakhimkulova (February 25), she informed me that the IU School of Optometry once made a donation that filled her entire office. The package included shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs, toilet paper, sponges, mops, printing paper, laundry detergent, and deodorant. As Tanya said,
Martha’s House is always in need of donations, especially products related to personal hygiene. As residents are not allowed to share soap or shampoo to avoid the spread of germs, these products are particularly welcome.

Besides the prestigious and wealthy departments on campus other programs have a lot to offer as well. The very department from which this report is written has the Criminal Justice Student Association which works with the Midwest Pages to Prisoners project, administers toy and canned food drives, and partakes in events like the Homeward Bound walk and the Jill Behrman Run for the End-Zone (Indiana University, para. 1). This association is organized by undergraduates for undergraduates who want to work in the community and learn more about criminal justice issues. If this type of initiative can be harnessed by Martha’s House, perhaps the students could help ease funding constraints placed on the homeless and social service providers alike.

There is insufficient federal funding right now. This lack constrains city governments, but is felt most keenly by those who need it most, the homeless. In order to survive this difficult time other sources of funding and donations must be explored. Therefore, as many students have both the initiative and the means, I propose that relationships with a network of Indiana University student groups be further developed.
B. HUD: The Federal Government’s Response to Homelessness

Holly Jo Sims

The decision making process on issues relating to homelessness begins at the national level in Washington, D.C. Congress decides how American taxpayer dollars are spent when they create annual national spending budget. This yearly budget allocates one whole sum to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The purpose of HUD is to help increase home ownership, support community development and increase access to affordable housing that is free from discrimination (HUD, para.1). It is responsible for distributing the entire awarded sum to all the counties across the U.S. Each county is then responsible for putting the money to practical use by extending it to agencies whose mission is to help those in need of a home or other forms of financial assistance.

The purpose of my interviews with different housing agencies was to investigate how the actual amount of HUD funding compares to the actual existing need within specific communities. Most importantly, how is the awarded money being spent through everyday practice at the county level and under what conditions? These questions are important when trying to understand why so many people remain without a home despite the availability of federal assistance at the local level.

To understand the consequences of funding and the distribution process nationally, and the chronic homelessness problem in Bloomington in particular, it is necessary to return to the question of how Congress uses tax payer money to fund HUD. While the homeless are counted when compiling U.S. Census data, the actual numbers are not made public (www.seattlepi.com). The federal government’s last attempt made to count and publicly report the number of homeless people in the U.S. was done in 1990. The project was called ‘S-Night’ and consisted of two phases. The first phase was called, Shelter Phase, in which personnel called community shelters and asked for a head count to be taken between the hours of 6:00 PM March 20th until 12:00 AM on March 21st, 1990. The second part of the study entitled, Street Phase, lasted from 2:00 AM until 4:00 AM March 21st, 1990. This phase consisted of taking more head counts, only this time personnel went to predetermined street locations, bus depots, train stations, and restaurants where homeless in the area where known to congregate. Lastly, from 4:00 AM until 8:00 AM on March 21st, 1990 a head count was taken of those individuals leaving abandoned buildings in city centers (Wright & Devine, 1992). According to my interview with personnel at an affordable housing agency, the fact this study was conducted in relatively arbitrary manner and only over the course of one 24 hour period, the actual number of homeless people have been seriously underrepresented by the results. Miscounting individuals who are actually experiencing homelessness distorts the entire process of determining and making visible the needs of specific communities. Without having a sound idea of the housing problems of individual
communities it will remain impossible for the federal government to make sure enough subsidized housing is available for those that are in need.

Public housing and Section 8 are the most common and typically the largest publicly funded affordable housing types designated to help those that are experiencing homelessness or who are in danger of becoming homeless. The federal government officially owns Public housing units while Section 8 housing units are located within privately owned rental properties. The Bloomington Housing Authority (BHA) is contracted by HUD to maintain public housing units and is also responsible for delegating Section 8 housing to those individuals who qualify.

The BHA is contracted by HUD to maintain the Public housing property in Bloomington, Indiana. In Monroe County there are 310 public housing units. The amount of funding needed to maintain the property stays fairly consistent. Problems arise, however, as a result of some of the terms and conditions attached to placing and keeping people within the available units. For example, no single individual can be placed in a housing unit with more than one bedroom: HUD considers this ‘over housing’. The consequence of the over housing rule is that housing units to remain empty even when homeless people need them. While sitting in the waiting room of a public housing agency, I witnessed several individuals being turned away because they were single and no more one-bedroom apartments were available. I was later informed there were actually three, empty two-bedroom units available. Due to HUD’s over housing rule, however, they would remain empty until the acceptable family configuration appears.

While maintenance costs are fairly consistent, the amount of money allocated for this purpose varies. HUD grades housing agencies on how consistently they collect rent from tenants living in the public housing units. If rent is collected consistently from every tenant, every month, BHA will earn an ‘A’ rating. The more inconsistent the BHA is with collecting monthly rent, the lower the grade. Thus grade level determines public housing funding level. Following this tortured logic, the more tenants have difficulty paying rent, the more difficulty BHA has collecting it, the less funding will be available.

Thus, the grading scale can actually work to perpetuate homelessness rather than help those individuals who are in need. The federal grading practice leads to problematic BHA rules such as the following: Any tenant who goes two months without paying rent, must be evicted. An employee of a public housing agency expressed serious concern over this rule: “Why kick people out who cannot afford $50 a month for rent? Where are they going to go? By kicking people out who cannot pay, you just create more homeless individuals.” Not collecting rent, though, results in a low grade from HUD and loosing money that is needed to maintain public housing property. Public housing agencies are then forced to kick people out of their homes even if it is against the best judgment of agency employees.
Section 8 housing is administered differently. There are over 400 private property managers in Monroe County who allow for qualifying individuals to be placed in an apartment on their property. HUD determines how much money is needed to help pay monthly rent for private rental property by calculating the Free Market Rent (FMR) rate. It is a standard rule of HUD that any particular individual within any given county should be able to afford 40 percent of the available rental property. The FMR calculation is used to determine what rent price per month correlates with the 40th percentile ranking. For example, the FMR in 2009 for a one-bedroom apartment in Monroe County is $548 per month. This indicates that 40 percent of the one-bedroom apartment rental properties in Bloomington should cost $548 or less a month to rent. However, HUD does not include any newly constructed residences, which in Bloomington’s case means omitting newly constructed high end condos from the equation (HUD User, para.5). In reality, when HUD determines the rent cost, which represents the 40 percent mark, this price more realistically represents the bottom 20 percent of available housing. This would mean only 20 percent of the available one-bedroom apartments in Monroe County cost $548 or less a month to rent. Again, as we find with inadequate census data notes above, housing cost data gathered to help guide policy and budget decisions adds to the problem. Inadequate information results in inadequate amounts of affordable housing.

The FMR rate is used when HUD decides how much money to issue housing agencies for Section 8 housing. Since 40 percent of the rental property in Monroe County is said to be below $548.00 a month for a one bedroom apartment, HUD will not help pay for any one bedroom apartment costing over this amount. Unlike Public housing, Section 8 must be paid for using federal vouchers, from a special Section 8. Vouchers are the only way to access federal funds for all Section 8 properties. The BHA was given 15,408 vouchers this past year. This is enough to house 1,284 families for 12 months. While some may interpret this to be more than generous, there is a catch. Once the vouchers have been used up, no more people can be housed, even if there is money remaining in the federal account for Section 8 housing. Curiously, the amount of money in the federal account for Section 8 housing does not always run out when the vouchers do. As one agency employee explains:

“There have been times we have run out of vouchers before we run out of money available to subsidize Section 8 housing. The money, however, cannot be used because we do not have any more vouchers to access it. The money will sit there in the account unused until HUD takes it back at the end of the year. If we want to help put any extra people up in Section 8 housing the money must come from our administrative account which pays our salaries, for our office supplies and equipment, i.e., our livelihood as a housing agency. Last year we actually ended up taking money out of our administrative account even though there was money left over in the Section 8 account. It is very discouraging when money like that goes unused when every bit of it is needed so badly”.

When there are so many people in need of financial assistance, it is hard to imagine any funds designated to help communities would be kept off limits.

My first interview on date, at a housing agency ended on a more positive note with enthusiastic hope for better funding policies under the administration of Barrack Obama. When I returned later on date for a follow up interview, some of the enthusiasm was missing. The recently passed stimulus package had just guaranteed the agency with $700,000 in federal funding. While the amount in itself may seem like a cause for celebration, the terms and conditions attached to the $700,000 left much to be desired. Absolutely no new projects can be started using any of the money; it can only go toward projects that have already been started. As there are none currently underway, it is unlikely any new public housing units will be built in the near future. Moreover, it is harder to place people in Section 8 than Public housing. Because private landlords have their own rules about who is allowed to live on their property, they often have stricter policies than Public housing properties. At the same time, the federal government continues to refrain from funding anymore Public housing units because as I was informed: “...it is easier and cheaper for the federal government to pay someone else to use their property rather than have to take care of Public housing units which are owned by the federal government and thus their responsibility.”

As of April 22, 2009 there are 123 people on the waiting list for Public housing and 342 on the waiting list for Section 8 housing in Bloomington alone. If anything, this reveals that the federal government is not doing enough. There must be a better way of making sure no one goes without a home. For those working hard in affordable housing agencies to find housing for the homeless, it is difficult and stressful to operate within an inadequate funding distribution system. In addition to the funding problems, there are far too many terms, conditions, and restrictions attached to tax payer money allocated to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the homeless. More of the decision-making process needs to be put back into the hands of the personnel within the agencies and the community members those agencies are designed to help. This is the only way those most familiar with the needs of the community can have the final say on where money is needed most and how it should be spent.
Bibliography


Appendix A. Homeless Assessment Test

Crystal L. Murry

What do you think of when you think of the “typical” homeless person?

Do you ever imagine any of those individuals being veterans who have served our country at some point in their lives?

Do you ever think that these people knowingly and purposely choose their predicaments?

Do you ever think that these individuals may have been financially independent at some point in their lives?

Do you ever think that these individuals may be battling with treatable drug and alcohol addictions, if they had the funding and resources to do so?

Do you ever think that some of these individuals are current or expecting mothers and fathers?

Do you ever think that some of these individuals may have been homeless the majority of their lives (i.e., their teenage years since their homes were in complete disarray)?

Do you ever imagine that some individuals have non-violent felonies for offenses such as back child support extending back until the time an individual was married to his significant other?

Do you ever imagine that some individuals are victims of violent domestic abuse?

Do you ever think of individuals who are actively looking for employment?

Well, if you are like most, you answered “no” to at least one or more of the questions listed above. Then, you clearly do not know the stories about the homeless population that we spoke with in Bloomington, IN.
Appendix B. RESOURCE LIST FOR MATHA´S HOUSE

Compiled by Holly Jo Simms and Thomas Burns, Jr.

MARTHA´S HOUSE PERSONNEL

Executive Director: Bobbie Summers (ext. 207) (bjasummers@earthlink.net)

Program Director:

Joe Castle’s duties are to watch, monitor, and track the progress of Martha’s House through the use of statistics. In this process, Castle is collaborating with New Leaf New Life as well as Crossroads. He is currently working on a programming initiative. Castle is part-time at Martha’s House and comes in later in the afternoon around 3 PM.

Case Managers:

Robin Crook is a full-time case manager that spends most of her doing fieldwork. She works with the Bridges to Housing Program (bridgestohousing.org) for family housing. Crook has no regular hours with Martha’s House, though, she does attend meetings every other week with the other case manager, Tanya Rakhimkulova.

Tanya Rakhimkulova (tet_rakh@hotmail.com) has been the in-shelter case manager for Martha’s House since August 2004. She meets weekly with each Martha’s House resident to discuss affordable housing and works with property managers to get residents housed. Rakhimkulova also helps residents obtain IDs by working with the Shalom Center (shalomcommunitycenter.org). She helps with employment by helping residents find jobs and coaching through the Area 10 Agency on Aging (area10.bloomington.in.us). If a resident is disabled Rakhimkulova will also help to get that person on disability. She also helps residents in budgeting and getting to medical appointments. To avoid being obstructive in the schedules of the residents, Rakhimkulova comes in from 12 PM until 7:30-8 PM to meet with those coming off of day and night shifts.

Resident Advocates:

Louis Levato, David Rezendes, and Karen Riden manage Martha’s House while the residents are present. Their duties include in-take—managing new residents, assigning chores and making sure they are done. They also make sure the residents take care of themselves by making sure residents take showers, administer medication, and when necessary, conduct breathalyzers. Resident advocates do chores as well such as laundry, changing sheets and bedding, and making sure that the residents’ belongings are
properly stored. Their hours at Martha’s House are daily on two shifts—either 4 PM – 12 AM or 12 AM – 8 AM. Only one resident advocate is present at a time.

**Weather Stay:**

*Joe Castle, Craig Criswell, and Robin Vermilion* are the current weather stay staff. This is a temporary, part-time position. It involves working in the community kitchen by managing the overflow of residents brought on by the winter months. Winter stay staff work by managing space and cots. This position is open ten hours a day, seven days a week from December until March.

**Volunteers:**

Volunteers are always needed to assist the in-shelter staff. The current problem arises that a volunteer will work for a semester, and then quit the following.

**Community Resources**

**Job Training Services**

*WorkOne Bloomington:* WorkOne offers employment counseling, skill development and helps provide jobs to individual in need. Most services are free. Some training has a nominal fee.

Contact Info: 812-331-6000

*Goodwill Industries – Career Development Center:* Goodwill provides job search assistance, resume building and job placement counseling. Services are free and available to those in need.

Contact Info: 812-355-2501

*Vocational Rehabilitation Services:* Include counseling and guidance, medical and hospital services, prosthetic devices, training in schools, transportation, and job placement assistance and follow up.

Contact info: 812-332-7331

*Employers That Hire Ex-Offenders:* Employers look at background and resume. Sex offenders are the hardest to find employment. Half of them get turned down. For one sex offender, it took four months to find employment. Employers fear poor public perception by hiring ex-convicts. Many employers in Bloomington prefer to hire students, although the position does not stay filled very long. Students often move on to other jobs. Ex-convicts are much more devoted to positions of employment, because there are few other options for them

Restaurants: Golden Coral, Denny’s, Bob Evans, Domino’s Pizza, Wee Willie’s, Village Deli, IU Memorial Union Food Court, Waffle House, Cheese Burger in Paradise, Chipotle, Texas Roadhouse, Buccetto’s, Moe’s Southwest Grill
-Red Lobster: Didn’t hire any Martha’s House residents.
-Taco Bell: Has taken many sex offenders.
-The Farm: This employer takes most of the applicants from Martha’s House. They hired six -----McDonald’s: Hired.
-Wendy’s: Will hire.

Call Centers: Author House, Finelight, Stone Research
-Campaign Center: Hired everyone. They did not have any problems with sex offenders.

Automotive Service / Parts: Meineke Muffler, Jiffy Lube, Expert Tire, Alamo Rent-a-Car, Avis Rent-a-Car, Ziebart, O’Reilly’s Auto Parts, High Speed Tire, Tire Barn
-Whitestone: No problem with sex offenders, but there is a problem with turnover.
-Sears Automotive: Is really bad with sex offenders. The hiring manager told Martha’s House that they would not hire any. The manager maintained his position even with the proposition of a tax deduction that comes with hiring ex-convicts.

Building Materials / Lumber: Bender Lumber, Black Lumber
-Lowe’s: Turned down all applicants from Martha’s House. They never called anyone back.

Moving Companies: Soft Touch Moving Company, A Better Way Moving Company

Hotel / Motel: Courtyard Marriott, Hampton Inn, Hilton Garden Inn, Homewood Suites

Construction: Weddle Brothers Construction, Crider and Crider Construction, Rose and Walker Siding / Drywall
-Others (contact Joe Castle / New Leaf New Life for referrals)

Convenience Stores: Circle K

Cleaning / Janitorial Services: Sweeny’s Cleaning Service, Bloomington Economy Cleaners
**Miscellaneous Labor:** State of Indiana, Terminex, JB Salvage

**Retail / Warehouse:** Target, K-Mart, Wal-Mart, O’Malia Foods, Sprint Wireless, Verizon Wireless

**Temporary Agencies That Hire Ex-Offenders:** Many agencies won’t hire people from the street. They are tough on people with people with felonies even if the felony in question is over 20 years old. Employment, especially for ex-offenders make starting a new life difficult.
- Labor Ready
- Express Personnel
- Employment Plus
- Personal Management Incorporated (PMI)

**Area 10 Agency on Aging** (www.area10agency.org)

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program

Norman Horrar [(812)876-3383/(800)844-1010] [nhorrar@area10agency.org],
Employment Specialist: Has helped a number of people find jobs. His duties include helping write resumes. He also helps people find jobs that fit their fields of interest and expertise. He also works with ex-convicts. He meets with Martha’s House residents for individually for an hour. If a resident is in prison he helps them write their resume from job experience there.

**Bank Account Assistance:** Opening a bank account is not a difficult process unless the resident has really bad credit. Martha’s House tends to work with the Federal Credit Union as well as Monroe County Bank and Chase. Martha’s House maintains an unofficial policy of having residents getting direct deposit with their places of employment. This helps residents budget their funds by having little availability to it—if you don’t have cash on you it can’t be spent. Martha’s House also does not want residents to have a lot of cash them so no theft occurs.

Child support offenders cannot open bank accounts because they do not have any money due to paying out child support. Also, they do not want to open an account because of fear that their money will be taken from them. A recent resident of Martha’s House works four jobs a day trying to pay back child support. However, he cannot afford the payments that are required because his employment does not cover it—let alone his living expenses.

**Federal Credit Union:** Is located on West Patterson Drive near the Social Security Office. It is approximately half a mile from Martha’s House. The Federal Credit Union will open an account with anyone.
**Monroe County Bank:** Is located on East Kirkwood Avenue near the center of town. It is one mile from Martha’s House.

**Community Service Access:**

**Donations:** Martha’s House is always in need of donations. Especially products related to personal hygiene. Residents are not allowed to share soap or shampoo to avoid the spread of germs. Martha’s House cannot take donations containing alcohol including sprays, rubbing alcohol, and mouthwash.

- In 2007 the Indiana University School of Optometry brought a large portion of donations that filled a small room in Martha’s House. The package included shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs, toilet paper, sponges, mops, printing paper, laundry detergent, and deodorant.
- A woman associated with the Dollar Tree once gave a donation of things that the Dollar Tree needed to dispose of.
- Hotels and motels have donated shampoo and soap in the past.

**Monroe County Public Library:** There are no restrictions barring ex-convicts from the library. To get a library card, residents must either use an ID with an address on it or obtain a letter from Martha’s House stating proof of residence. The parole office does not allow parolees inside the library—especially sex offenders.

**Legal Services:** There are not many legal services available. One problem with legal services is the ability of the Martha’s House resident to communicate with the service provider. At Martha’s House each resident is only allowed 15 minutes of phone time. In addition, messages that the Martha’s House phone receives can only be picked up at 4 PM when Martha’s House reopens for the residents. One person is assigned to take messages and they are written down and given to the respective resident. Martha’s House desires that legal services that community legal services would come to the house to work with residents.

- Indiana Legal Services: The staffs at Indiana Legal Services are very nice. They do not take divorce cases or cases involving children.
- Indiana University Student Legal Services: Offer free legal services at Shalom Center. Sex offenders are not allowed inside of Shalom Center. The legal services are given every Friday from 1-4 PM. This time span makes it difficult for residents to get in—especially those who work.

One resident sought legal services to reduce the payment of child support. He did so, because 130 percent of his salary was going to child support.

**Bus System Aid:** Martha’s House pays $125 for 250 bus tickets each month. Residents are given four tickets a week. If a resident has a physical disability they are given more tickets.
Affordable Housing Acquirement:

Apartments:
-Landlady Apartments: Wishes to work with students only. They are privately owned, very clean and nice. The owner said to allowing sex offenders residence said “no, period.”
-Orchard Glen: No one wants to move out of these apartments because they are so cheap. There is normally a one year waitlist for people to move in. The rent is $475 a month including utilities. These apartments are on the west side of Bloomington.
-Woodbridge Apartments: These apartments are based on income. They are almost never available.

Property Managers: Parker Management helps us too.
-Olympus Properties (http://www.olympusproperties.com): Has taken several Martha’s House residents and one sex offender. One employee there, Nikki Jenkins, makes an effort to work with Martha’s House. She has spent hours working with Tanya. The owner, however, is not so nice.

Township Assistance: When residents move out of Martha’s House approximately 90 percent of them are approved for paid first month’s rent through the township. Most residents in Martha’s House move to either Bloomington or Perry Township. They also offer a variety of other services which include:
Utility Payments
Shelter (rent payments)
Transportation
Medical Assistance
Food (Commodities/vouchers to grocery stores)

Division of Family and Children: Government Social Service agency for low-income individuals and families including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Stamp Program, and Medicaid.
Contact Info: 812-336-6351

South Central Community Action Program (http://www.sccap.monroe.in.us/): The “CAP” office helps people get electric, gas, and water assistance. People can apply for the assistance twice a year. Most are eligible. To be eligible the person seeking assistance must make less than approximately $14,000 a year. Those who seek eligibility must turn in pay stubs for the year, proof of unemployment, a copy of a lien, disability, or bank statement.
Contact Info: 812-339-3447
**Bloomington Housing Authority BHA:** Offers subsidized housing to low income families, including Section 8 vouchers. To qualify, state and federal guidelines must be met.
Contact Info: 812-339-3491

**Monroe County Housing Solutions:** Offer homeownership education and assistance for lower income people.
Contact Info: 812-334-8385

**Middle Way House:** Apartments are available for lower income female-headed households. Rent is 30% of income. A woman must have at least one dependent child and be homeless or a survivor of domestic violence.
Contact Info: 812-337-4510

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**Health Services**

**Hoosier Healthwise**
Contact Info: Division of Family and Children
410 E. Miller Dr.
812-336-6351

or
City of Bloomington, Community and Family Resource Department
City Hall
410 N. Morton St., Suite 260

**Bloomington Hospital Community Health Access Program – CHAP Clinic**
Services Provided: Comprehensive Healthcare
Immunization Clinic
Well Child Assessment (health screenings, physical and immunization)
WIC (women, infant and children nutritional food vouchers)
Contact Info: 333 E. Miller Dr.
812-353-2901

**Bloomington Hospital Family Planning Clinic**
Services Provided: Reproductive Healthcare
Birth Control
Pregnancy Tests
STD Testing
Sexual Education
Bloomington Hospital Positive Link (HIV/AIDS Services)
Services Provided: Anonymous HIV Testing and Counseling
Medical Referral
Financial Assistance
Advocacy
Continued Care for those living with HIV/AIDS

Contact Info: 333 E. Miller Dr.
812-353-2901

Planned Parenthood
Services Provided: Reproductive healthcare
Birth Control
Pregnancy Tests
STD and HIV testing
Sexual Education

Contact Info: 421 S. College Ave.
812-336-7050

Dental Care Center of Monroe County
Services Provided: Complete dental care for anyone. The office offers day and evening hours. Some oral surgery is available.

Contact Info: 306 N. Morton St.
812-339-7700

Mental Health/Counseling

Center for Behavioral Health
Services Provided: Mental health care
Counseling and support for children, adolescents, and adults
Support Groups in many varieties
Substance abuse programs
*Call for a complete listing of services

Contact Info: 645 S. Rogers St.
812-339-1691
1-800-344-8802
www.the-center.org

**Mental Health Association**
Services Provided: Support and education for mentally ill individuals and their families
Listening Line available 6 PM – midnight
Contact Info: 407 S. Walnut St.
812-339-2803
Listening Line 812-332-6060

**Oak Tree Counseling**
Services Provided: Confidential mental health counseling for individual, families, couples, and groups
Contact Info: 120 W. 7th St.
812-339-1551
www.bloomington.in.us/~fsa

**I.U. Center for Human Growth**
Services Provided: Full service counseling center
Contact Info: 201 Rose Ave, Rm. 0001
812-856-8302
www.indiana.edu/~centgrow

**Middle Way House**
Services Provided: Rape crisis center
- Rape and sexual assault support group
- Temporary shelter assault support group
- Legal advocacy
Contact Info: 812-333-7404
24 hour Crisis Line 812-336-0846
www.bloomington.in.us/~mwhouse

**Midwest Counseling Center**
Services Provided: Bloomington Rape and Incest Support Group
- Various other counseling programs
Contact Info: 839 Auto Mall Rd. Suite H
812-334-1131

**Addiction Help**

**Alcoholics Anonymous**
Service Provided: Informal self-help groups for anyone who finds it difficult to stop drinking
Contact Info: 812-334-8191
812-323-3771
1-800-589-8153
www.bloomington.in.us/~aa/

Amethyst House
Services Provided: Transitional housing for men and women who are recovering from alcohol or drug addictions. Programs include assessment, treatment planning, case management, counseling, basic life skills, and referrals.
Contact Info: Administration 812-336-3570
Women’s Shelter 812-336-2666
Men’s Shelter 812-336-2812
www.amethyst@bloomington.in.us
www.amethysthouse.org

ASSOCIATES OF MARTHA’S HOUSE

Circles: Some of the Martha’s House residents qualify for Circles.

Helping Hands: This program helps residents go from poverty to middle class. Residents are afraid of the program because of the large step it takes.

Shalom Center: Serves both breakfast and lunch to anyone, as well as offering outreach services to the homeless and a food pantry.

Ivy Tech HIRE Program: The coordinator is Amy Harding [(812)330-6270]. There are three main courses in the HIRE Program which are Basic Skills, Computer Skills, and Soft Skills. The HIRE schedule for the Soft Skills certificate includes such courses as: “Appreciating Who I Am,” “Exceptional Employee,” “Think for Success,” “Conflict Resolution,” “Customer Service Planning,” “Changing for the Better,” and “What Skills Will You Take to Work?”
-Martha’s House residents can apply online with FAFSA to take Ivy Tech courses. However, the parole office will not allow sex offenders to get online.

Probation Office:

OTHER
Sex offenders are not allowed online, Public Library or in the Shalom Center by rule of the parole office. Every month, Martha’s House has around seven sex offenders in-house.