

Shelter Association of Washtenaw County-Robert J. Delonis Center

Comments to the Michigan House of Representatives Appropriations Committee 3/15/17

Thank you for allowing me to address the committee. I am here to encourage you to invest in the shelters of Michigan by approving the increase in the per diem rate from \$12 to \$16. One purpose of this increase is to allow shelters to provide social workers to engage with people using shelter and provide services that will help them to end their homelessness. I have brought you some data from the Robert J. Delonis Center in Ann Arbor Michigan that supports the addition of services.

The Shelter Association of Washtenaw County provides shelter and services for adult individuals who are experiencing homelessness. We operate the Robert J. Delonis Center. We provide service with two programs. First is the Residential Program that provides a bed in the shelter and case management to provide resources and guidance to obtain income, save money and find housing. This program operates year round and helps to transition people to sustainable housing. We serve around 450 people per year with 50 beds and transition around 200 to sustainable housing.

Our second program is Non Residential services. For those who are experiencing homelessness but who are not in our Residential program, due to the small number of beds, we provide basic services, including showers, laundry, medical care, food and other basic need services. In the winter we provide a temporary mission style shelter from November 15th until March 31, for this population, in order to prevent death from the freezing temperatures. We serve 500-600 people in Non Residential each year and about 450 take advantage of winter shelter.

Before FY 2012 we provided Case Management to Nonresidential clients, by request . In the FY 2012 winter we received a small grant to establish a pilot program which would provide a 20 hour/week case manager at the winter shelter program. This case manager was to engage with people, provide services and attempt to move people from shelter to housing. We managed to move 15 people to sustainable housing and out of shelter during that winter. In the next few years we had the following result:

- FY 13 31 people transitioned to housing
- FY 14 47 people transitioned to housing

This pilot program led us to expand our case management services to Non Residential clients on a year round basis. We started case management as soon as people were assessed, and opened in our Non Residential program. We have had the following result:

- FY 15 69 people transitioned to housing
- FY 16 105 people transitioned to housing

By supporting shelter operations, dollars can be diverted to service provision which can affect the transition to sustainable housing. Ending homelessness quickly is our goal.

Thank You,
Ellen R. Schulmeister
Executive Director