

February 2010

SOUTH COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION RECEIVES GRANT AS LEAD AGENCY FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND RAPID RE-HOUSING INITIATIVE!



The South County Community Action (SCCA) has been funded for \$570,000 by the RI Office of Housing and Community Development as the Lead Agency for the Washington County Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Initiative.

The Collaborative partners include The Warm Shelter; The Westerly Johnnycake Center; The Welcome House of South County; The Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale; The Rhode Island Center Assisting Those in Need; and The Westerly Housing Authority. Funds have been awarded on behalf of the Collaborative to assist individuals and families who are homeless or at risk for homelessness and residing in Washington County and West Greenwich. The three year grant was awarded by the State Rhode Island with funds from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, though the Federal Office of Housing and Urban Development. "The down-turn in the economy has placed a significant segment of the Washington County population in jeopardy of becoming homeless," said Joseph DeSantis, CEO of SCCA. "This grant will enable seven local agencies to work together to provide housing stabilization services, financial literacy and counseling, case management, support services, and financial assistance to families and individuals who are currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless." According to DeSantis, domestic violence, unemployment, poverty, physical or mental illness, disabilities, teen parenthood, and a wide range of other events and situations can lead to homelessness.



"Our goal is to help people transition from poverty to social and economic self-sufficiency, which includes having a stable housing situation," said DeSantis.

For those who are already homeless, the Collaborative will provide housing relocation, financial assistance, and

landlord/tenant education. Case workers will reach out to the homeless living in shelters, motels, campground and parks, as well as those sleeping in places not meant for habitation such as cars, abandoned buildings and on the streets. Clients must agree to a case management plan and financial stability counseling and their progress will be monitored with the goal of developing a strong foundation for self sufficiency at the conclusion of their involvement with the program. Individuals and families may be eligible to receive financial assistance for help with, rent, utilities, moving costs, security and utility deposits and hotel/motel emergency vouchers.

South County Community Action Agency has extensive experience with risk populations, having provided social services in Washington County for over 40 years. The agency helps over 5,600 unduplicated clients annually. Other members of the Collaborative also have decades of experience serving the poor and homeless through their shelters, soup kitchens, food pantries, and transitional and affordable housing programs. "This is the first comprehensive, coordinated effort among Washington County providers which will result in permanent changes in how we address homelessness long after state and federal fund are exhausted," said DeSantis. Clients will have access to services through ten sites located throughout Washington County and West Greenwich.

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