



Business Concept of Operations
For
Community Solutions of the Emerald Coast's
One Hopeful Place

Conducted by
The Institute for Senior Professionals (ISP)
Northwest Florida State College

March 1, 2016

BUSINESS CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

Community Solutions

One Hopeful Place

Background

Issue

Okaloosa County and the downtown Fort Walton Beach business district area have an issue of homelessness. Although various concerned service providers wish this problem to be coherently addressed, the latest of such entrants into this service field being Community Solutions, the overall approach to an end state amongst interested parties remains disjointed.

How the issue is defined determines what is considered to be an effective strategy. It is important to acknowledge fundamental differences in people's beliefs about chronic homelessness. Put simply, the homeless are viewed as either victims who need society's help to recover or they are perceived as self-initiated deviants who put a drain on public resources and damage the community.

As such within our community, there exist two primary venues on how to approach resolution. One advocates for the permanent "forced" relocation of vagrants and aggressive panhandlers from the downtown business district to an isolated less visible area. Another pushes for building a centralized hub of progressive tangible services which could lead to self-sufficiency for a more inclusive list of homeless categories. The second venue has the potential to address both the former and later objectives.

This said, limited progress within our community has been achieved. Problems have been reported in the network of agencies providing various services, recognizing that the homeless often seemed to "fall into cracks" between agencies and as such, there are gaps in needed services. Resources are relatively low in the area of mental health care and drug abuse treatment; the least available resource is transitional housing.

Although there seems to be little perception of competition amongst service providers, it is repeatedly stated there is a lack of coordination between agencies, even though there is a local State designated umbrella organization to do so.

Keeping in mind that Community Solutions has neither the resources nor the capability to singularly *break the cycle of homelessness* within our community, it is acknowledged that there is the potential for Community Solutions to be a vital facilitator within a continuum of collaborative organizations attempting to provide an avenue for self-sufficiency for the homeless.

Observations

1. The community cannot afford to have people *living* on the street. The negative impact on people's lives, neighborhood revitalization, and economic development is too great. The cost—in human and economic terms—is staggering.
2. Homelessness affects the entire community and is not just a City of Ft. Walton Beach issue. Every jurisdiction in Okaloosa County was identified as a last permanent address for one or more homeless persons in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), and every jurisdiction has a role to play in the solution.
3. The role of housing in ending homelessness cannot be overstated. Keeping people housed and rapidly re-housing those who become homeless is of great importance. Homelessness is a housing issue. Housing represents the fundamental base-solution to the problem of homelessness. The lack of affordable housing and the limited scale of housing assistance programs contribute to homelessness.
4. Mental illness and alcohol or drug addiction play a major role in extending homelessness for many single adults. Alternative shelter and Housing First (placed into housing first without any prerequisite for treatment or being connected to a system) options are needed to engage this population, as it is deemed easier to work on substance abuse and mental health issues when clients are stably housed.
5. Persons who experience homelessness fall into one of two groups—those who can become self-sufficient and live independently and those who will need a lifetime of support.
6. Community education about who is at risk of homelessness and the necessity to develop community will and financial resources to reduce and eventually break the cycle of homelessness are paramount.
7. The community must work together to develop a unified plan and approach to poverty reduction to decisively impact homelessness.

Needs Statement

Homelessness is a housing issue. Housing represents the fundamental base-solution to the problem of homelessness. A comprehensive Community Plan emphasizing investment in affordable and accessible Permanent Supportive Housing for homeless veterans and for those who experience chronic homelessness is a priority community need.

Building a permanent one-stop shop Resource Center to assist the homeless with reestablishing themselves within the community is a priority community need. Through various community forums over the years and as annotated in the Community Solutions document, “*A Visionary Proposal: Providing a Homeless Resource Center in Okaloosa County,*” dated January 2015, business owners, service providers, law enforcement, government officials and members of the public agree.

Operating a permanent location emergency cold weather shelter is a priority community need.

Intent

Community Solutions intends to partner with other service providers to build and operate a full-service homeless Resource Center with on-site services:

- Emergency cold weather shelter when the outside temperature is 40 degrees or below.
- Transitional housing for male veterans and for women and women with children
- Individualized case management counseling
- Permanent housing assistance
- Transportation support
- Life skills training
- Employment counseling with contacts
- Access to mental and medical treatment through the Mental Health Association and the Okaloosa county Department of Health
- Access to federal, state, county and local resources to reduce financial vulnerability

One Hopeful Place.

Business Plan

Introduction

The Executive Director of Community Solutions of the Emerald Coast forwarded *a request to assistance* in developing a Strategic/Business Plan in order to end homelessness in South Okaloosa County. The ISP Study Team was composed of: Charla Cotton, Mack Gay, Ken Hinrichs, Fred Pryor and Rudy Wright.

Community Solutions of the Emerald Coast is a community initiative originated by the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce Foundation for the purpose of *breaking the cycle of homelessness in South Okaloosa County* through effective communication and collaboration between service entities, resource providers and community participation. *The intent is to bestow innovative and compassionate direction to men, women and children.*

As written in the Community Solutions document, “*A Visionary Proposal: Providing a Homeless Resource Center in Okaloosa County,*” dated January 2015, inputs from public perception, business owners, service providers, law enforcement and government officials make priority note that providing a homeless Resource Center in Okaloosa County is a glaring unmet need, specifically within the Fort Walton Beach area and that this Resource Center should provide all of the necessary services to assist the homeless with re-establishing themselves in the community.

In addition to the Resource Center, the document reflects priority service will include an Emergency/Cold Weather shelter with up to 100 beds, to include space for transitional housing and a food service area – all to be built in phases. Community Solutions also advertises its customers as the homeless to include: men, women, children, families, veterans and the chronic homeless.

The ISP realizes that the tenuous nature of grant funding coupled with associated spending restrictions dictate that a flexible, phased construction and operations plan be followed. As such, throughout the course of this project, Community Solutions priorities and levels of effort continue to adjust in order to meet respective funding streams. What follows is a current understanding of the scope of the environment today.

Description of Services as an Organization

Vision

A community of stakeholders collectively promoting opportunities to prevent, dramatically reduce, and eventually break the cycle of homelessness.

Mission

Provide an avenue of self-sufficiency for the homeless in South Okaloosa County by operating transitional housing and comprehensive assistance programs for veterans, women and women with children. We actively promote community response and networking of resources to meet safe shelter, food and individualized supportive service needs until housing stability is achieved.

In addition, we will provide emergency overnight cold weather shelter services when the temperature is 40 degrees or colder.

Core Values

1. Collaboration not Competition: Breaking the cycle of homelessness only occurs where there is a strong, informed community commitment and partnership evidenced by the involvement and support of business and civic leaders, public officials, faith-based volunteers and providers of housing, human services and health care.
2. Commitment: Provide guidance, innovation, identify and adopt best practices in our programs and obtain the necessary short and long term resources to implement the Mission.
3. Conduct: Demonstrate the hallmarks of civility, expertise, determination, honesty, integrity and be effective stewards of human and financial resources entrusted to us.
4. Communication: Enlist community support. Better informed citizens may be more receptive to fundraising efforts for programs and services.

Goals (Short Term: 2 Years)

1. Secure sustainable funding streams to support build-out, start-up, recurring daily operations for Phases I, IIA, IIB, III and future expansion of Phase IV.
2. Adopt an aggressive public relations/media/marketing campaign to provide progress updates and solicit ongoing community support.
3. Hire sufficient qualified and dedicated staff to manage current and future operations.
4. Operate a robust one-stop Resource Services Center dedicated to serving the homeless with health care, mental health counseling, housing support and case management.
5. Construct and operate a cold weather facility to temporarily shelter and feed up to 80 homeless when the temperature is 40 degrees or colder.
6. Construct and operate a limited number of emergency shelter beds (10) for single men and women until permanent housing arrangements are secured.
7. Refurbish the shell of an existing building capable of housing up to 32 beds for women and women with children until permanent housing arrangements are secured.
8. Complete the interior build with furnishings to operationally house women and women with children.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Approach

Community Solutions plans to develop a Central Homeless Resource Center on an eight acre site at the old Ft. Walton Beach Waste Processing Plant located at the end of Beal Street Extension. This property has been leased to Community Solutions for \$1.00 per year. This property provides an opportunity to develop a full service homeless resource center with emergency shelter, transitional housing and all supportive services.

Facility Requirements

The facilities will be developed in a phased approach with priority given to: 1) emergency cold night shelter, 2) veterans transitional housing, 3) resource services center, 4) single men and women transitional housing, 5) transitional housing for single families and families with children and 6) permanent housing.

The ability to execute within these priorities is always subject to the timing of funding sources and their requirements. The tenuous nature of grant funding dictates that a flexible, phased development plan must be developed. Currently we have planned a four phase program and is shown in the Site Plan and provided in Figure 1. The proposed design for Phases I & II facilities are shown in Figure 2

Phase I: Construct a 3K square foot building capable of housing up to 10 transitional beds for single Veterans. This facility will also have the capability to accommodate up to 100 additional homeless during cold night weather operations. This facility will have lockers, showers, kitchen and a laundry.

Phase IIA: Concurrent with Phase I. Refurbish the shell of a existing 5K square foot building capable of housing up to 32 transitional beds for women and women with children. This facility will have lockers, showers, a full commercial kitchen, laundry, meeting and lounge areas.

Phase IIB: Complete the interior build of Phase IIA with furnishings.

Phase III: Renovate existing on-sight city building and transform into operational Resource Center with dedicated offices and meeting rooms. (This may be accomplished with donated trailers.)

Phase IV: Continue land development with permanent housing (trailers, tiny houses, etc.).

Development Design

Site Plan

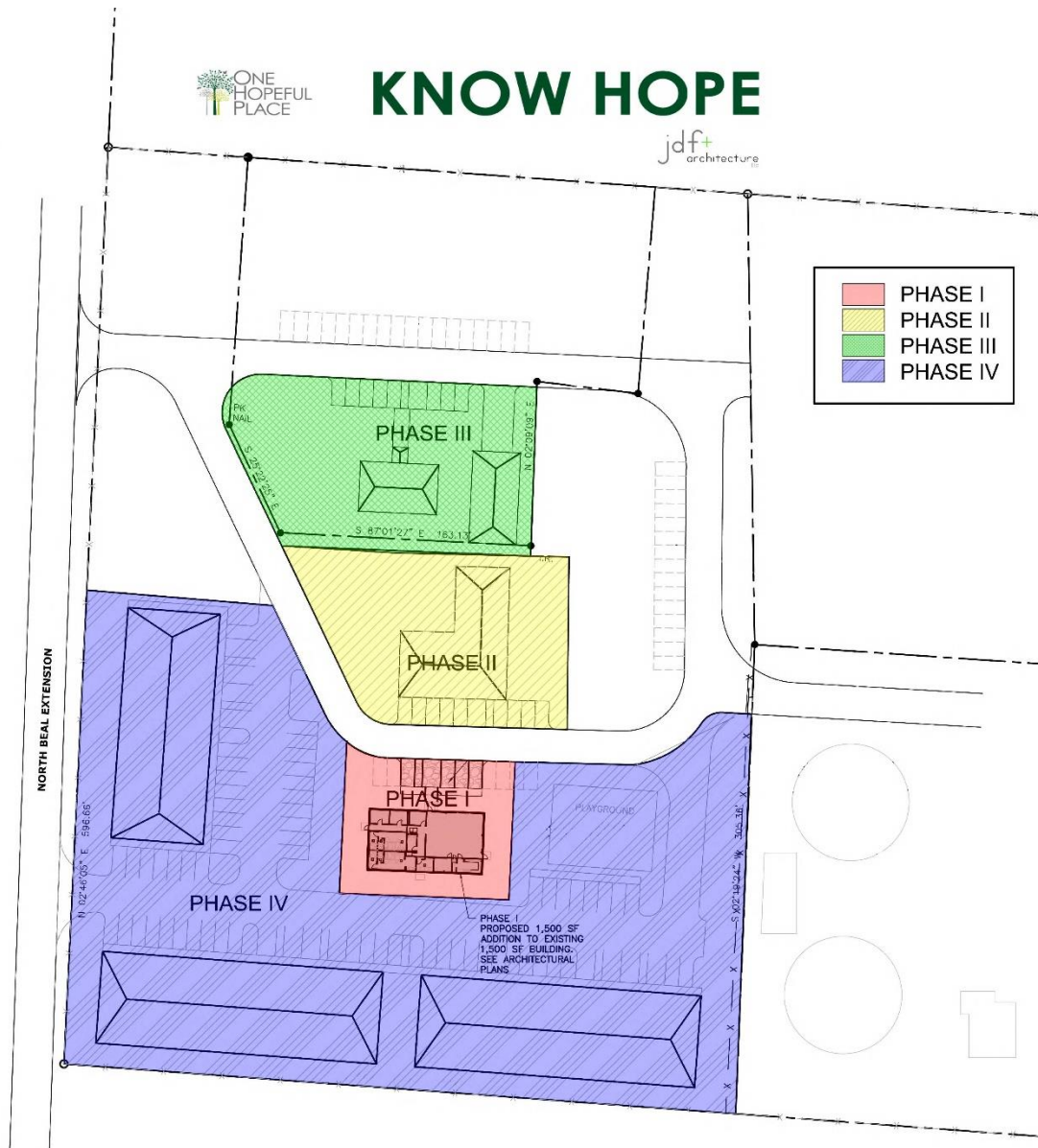
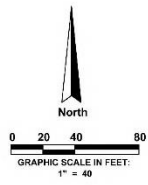
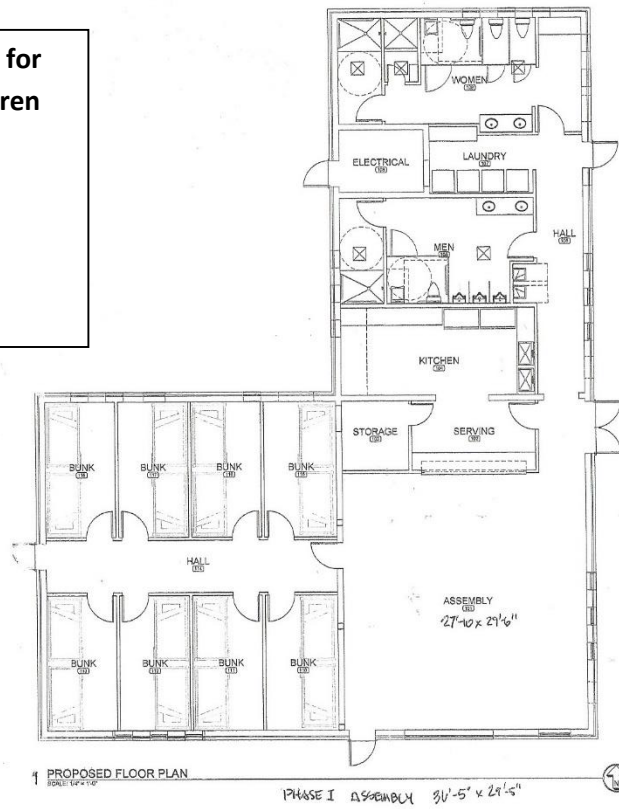


Figure 1. Site Design

Phase I & II Proposed Design

Phase II: Transitional Housing for Women & Women with Children

- 32 Beds
- Commercial Kitchen
- Bathrooms
- Laundry Facility
- Assembly Room



Phase I: Transitional House for Veterans & Cold Night Shelter

- 10 Bed Emergency Shelter
- 100-person Cold Night Shelter
- Bathrooms
- laundry Facilities
- Lockers
- Kitchen

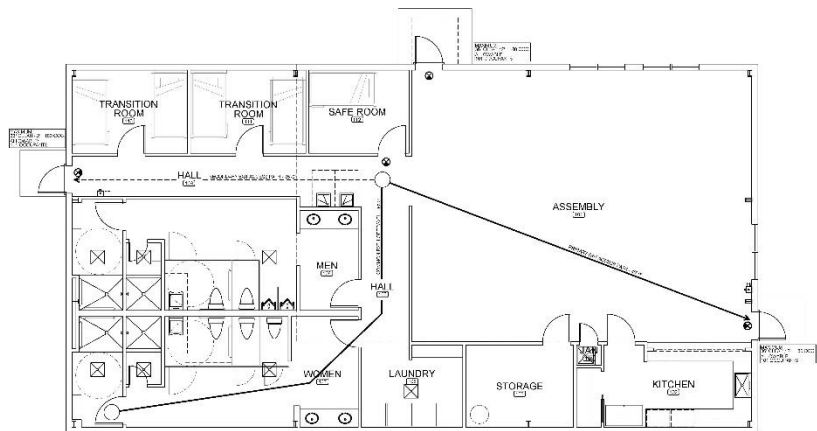
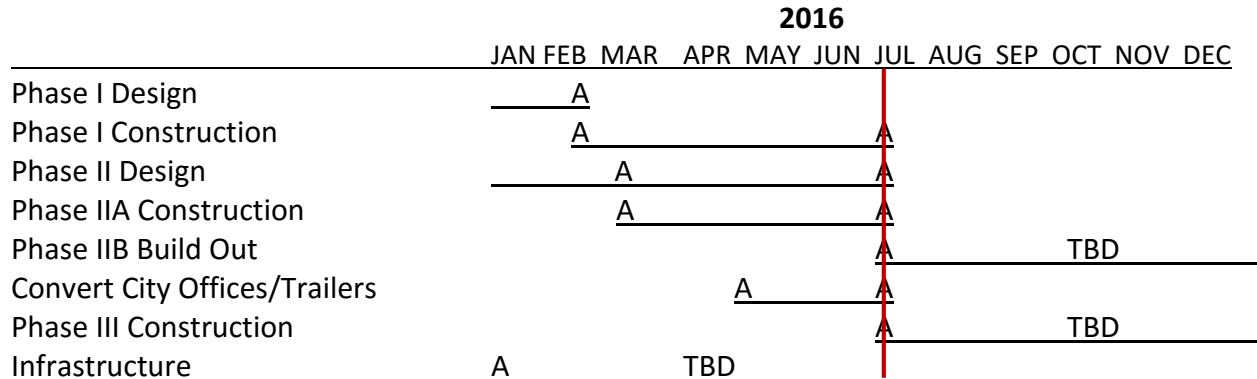


Figure 2. Phase I & II Designs

Development Schedules

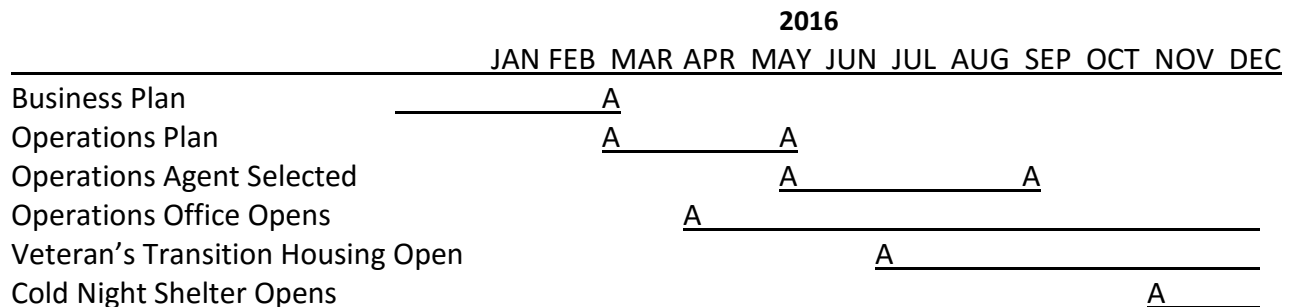
Construction Schedule



Construction Funding Schedule

Source of Funds	Purpose	Amount	Status
CDC FY14-15	Phase I Design	\$ 36,846	Pd & Spent
CDC FY-15-16	Phase I Construction	\$334,363	Under Contract
Legislature FY15-16	Phase II Design	\$ 40,000	Under Contract
Legislature FY15-16	Phase IIA Construction	\$260,000	Under Contract
Challenge Grant (HHA)	Phase I&II Furnishings	\$184,000	Requested
Emergency Solutions Grant	(?)	\$ 50,975	Delayed
Community Development Grant	Miscellaneous	\$ 49,216	?
Dugas Family Foundation	Phase IIB Construction & Furnishings	\$900,000	Requested

Operations Plan Schedule



Operations Budget

An analysis of 2015 budgets of four local shelters was conducted and their numbers have been averaged. While the capacities of these shelters differ (9 to 22 beds), the number of staff is, for the most part, a constant: 2-3 full time, 2-3 part time, 50-100 volunteers. Therefore, there expenses should generally run about the same with the exceptions of food and heating and air conditioning. Major differences would include a reduction of income for the One Hopeful Place “Program” category since revenue (and expenses) will be borne by the O&M Contractor, and the likelihood of no investment income for a Start Up Organization. This will require a continuing grant writing effort and the conduct of continuing fund raising efforts.

A proposed Organizational Functional Structure is shown in Figure 3, reflecting the relationship between the Community Solutions Board and that of the O & M Contractor. The functions required of the O & M Contractor drive the staffing requirements which are representative of those of the Model Operating Budget below. Based on actual averaged numbers, here is a proposed Model Budget for a local Shelter.

Proposed Model Annualized Operating Budget A Full Time Shelter - 15 Bed Capacity

Staff Required: 3-4 Full Time, 2 Part Time

<u>Expenses</u>		<u>Income</u>	
Salaries	\$212,561	Contributions	\$ 88,507
Taxes	\$ 5,246	Events	\$ 18,000
Benefits	\$ 41,893	City	\$ 0
Fees	\$ 30,653	County	\$ 1,619
Travel	\$ 6,000	State	\$151,634
Conferences	\$ 333	Federal	\$ 85,669
Supplies	\$ 13,220	Membership	\$ 0
Telephone	\$ 8,386	Program	\$ 4,313
Shipping	\$ 3,991	Public	\$ 11,500
Occupancy	\$ 53,862	Investment	\$ 18,250
Equipment	\$ 2,640	Foundations	\$ 72,288
Publications	\$ 8,001	Miscellaneous	\$ 7,428
Individuals	\$ 50,003	United Way	\$ 3,000
Dues	\$ 2,732		
Miscellaneous	\$ 10,952		
Other	<u>\$ 11,735</u>		
Total	\$462,208		\$462,208

Organizational Functional Structure

Community Solutions One Hopeful Place Proposed Functional Organization

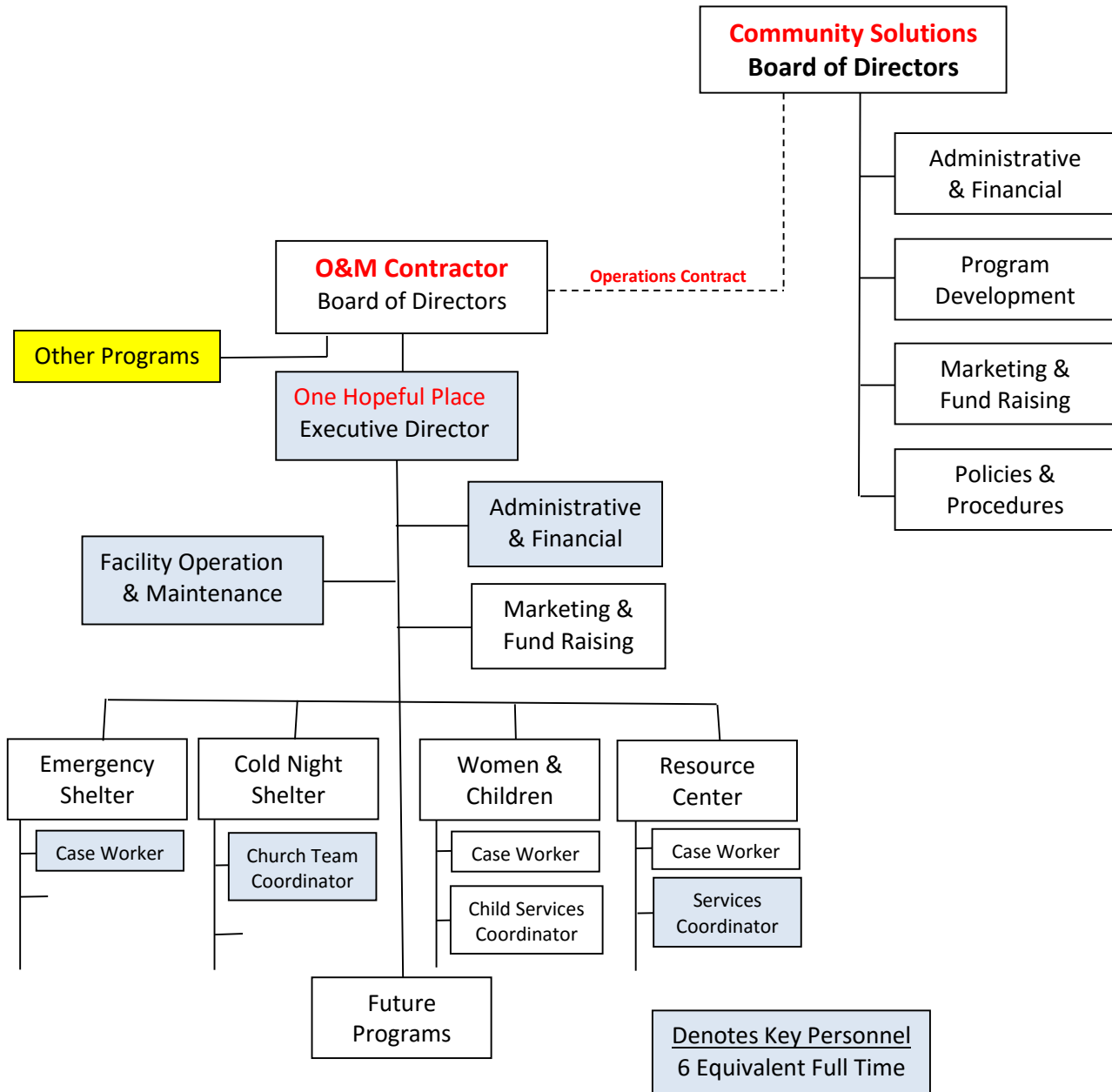


Figure 3. Proposed Functional Organization

Principal Accountabilities Of Site Director

1. Program development: Oversee and develop all agency programs and facilities, including emergency, supportive and transitional services for the homeless.
2. Fund raising: Investigate funding opportunities, write or supervise the writing of grant proposals, and direct other funding initiatives in conjunction with the Community Solutions Board.
3. Staff supervision and development: Responsible for maintaining staff for all agency services and programs within positions authorized by the Board. Write and maintain updated positional job descriptions. Select the best qualified job candidates. Provide in-service training and on-going supervision for all staff.
4. Budget controls and financial reporting: Work with the finance committee to present a balanced budget for CS Board approval. Assure compliance with approved budgets. Account for all fiscal, professional, and volunteer services and assure accurate reporting procedures for all projects and programs.
5. Policy and procedure development and implementation: Develop and implement agency policies in conjunction with the Board and administrative staff. Maintain a complete and accurate collection of all policies approved by the Board as well as all administrative procedures which may not require Board approval. Assure agency functioning in compliance with agency policy.
6. Community Relations: Represent the organization to the public and on community coalitions and councils. Present seminars, speeches, and offer interviews to the media on the issue of homelessness. Link with city, state, and national efforts in the field. Educate homeless individuals about the services that are available to them. Inform the public about the real causes and complications of homelessness. Recruit and effectively utilize volunteers.
7. Legal affairs: Sign contracts as authorized by the Board. Assure compliance with all contracts. Maintain all agency records in compliance with Board approved budgets and policies.

Recommendations

1. Adopting measurable goals with shorter timelines would allow for comprehensive assessments and course corrections when shortfalls are identified. In other words, the plan should be relevant and measurable. To better capture the essence of Community Solutions, a proposed revision to the Vision, Mission Statement, Core Values and Short Term Measurable Goals are provided for consideration.
2. Adopt the “updated” HUD HEARTH Act definition of homelessness, along with associated Categories and Subcategories in order to better define their mission and target funding streams associated with Continuum of Care.
3. The Okaloosa/Walton County Continuum of Care (Homelessness & Housing Alliance) is designated by the State of Florida as the lead umbrella organization responsible for coordinating housing and service programs and is the conduit for federal, state and many local funding streams. Support creation and implementation of a coordinated intake, assessment and triage system for placement of homeless men, women, families and children to the best suited shelters already established within the community. As such, assessment and targeting mechanisms should be used to distinguish between those who can resolve their homeless situation on their own or with

mainstream support, those who need targeted short-term assistance, and those who require long-term housing assistance.

4. Market Community Solutions impact on reducing homelessness for a one/two-year period outlook. Progress can then be measured, and people can relate as each phase comes on line.

5. Be it an MOU or a legal contract with a partnered service provider overseeing the facilities, programs and future expansion, the relationship between respective Boards of Directors should be clearly defined regards procedures, policy changes, operations and funding responsibilities. A formal mediation process should also be considered. Determine which organization will manage the Cold Weather Shelter and procedures and coordinate with the current cold weather service providers.

6. Within either an MOU or a legal contract with a partnered service provider, clearly designate which organization is to be held responsible (singularly or shared) for securing sufficient and ongoing funding resources to finalize the build of Phase II, III and IV, as well as fully operate each facility with associated programs and sustained operating and maintenance support requirements. Designate which organization assumes liability for personal injury litigation.

7. Before Phase I can accommodate veterans, the Resource Center should be up and running. Phase III renovation funding has yet to be addressed. Community Solutions must provide sufficient office space and a conference room for the services provided by the O&M Contractor. As a minimum, the city workers occupying the Phase III buildings should be relocated so the resource advisors can move in until such time as funds are obtained for renovation. An alternative is to consider using the acquired trailers as a temporary Resource Center hub.

Summary

Community Solutions of the Emerald Coast is a committee of members of the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce charged and determined to address the here-to-fore consistently debated issue of disentangling the multitude of issues and obstacles prohibiting a reasonable avenue to housing and services for homeless men and women who are evident on the streets of greater Fort Walton Beach. The group initiated a proposal in partnership with the City of Fort Walton Beach to convert city owned property to a homeless shelter and comprehensive resource center as a step toward a self-sustaining, independent life for homeless citizens.

Given the presence of homeless individuals undeniably apparent on the streets of the community, perceived to be negatively impacting the quality of life, the health of businesses, and, arguably, a socially neglected segment of adults capable of rehabilitation but requiring community scaffolding to approach the gate of self-sufficiency, Community Solutions began the process of resolving the dilemma through an intentional initiative to create a concrete solution with specific outcomes: a cold night shelter, temporary housing for homeless male veterans and women with children, and a comprehensive resource center offering services to promote productive independence. While the

desired final outcome was clear, the limited financial resources resulted in a phased plan of action with intermediate outcomes and selected goals to be completed as resources become available.

Community Solutions, Inc. enlisted the assistance of the Institute of Senior Professionals at Northwest Florida State College to review the initiative and recommend a business plan for achieving the intended outcomes. The preceding pages outline the results of the review after briefings by Community Solutions board members, conversations with community leaders, and interviews with agency personnel within the Homeless and Housing Alliance (formally Coalition of the Homeless) who offer a composite of services to homeless individuals.

All components of a business plan are present except for a reality-based working budget, Fund Raising Plan and a Marketing Plan.. However, a *pro forma* budget is offered as a model for use when resources are determined and essential decisions are made that will impact final allocations of revenue. The Fund Raising and Marketing Plans are a work in progress and should be added when available.

While adjustments to Community Solutions' original plan of action have occurred within the timeframe of the study, the results offered here are based upon the definitive information and understanding as of the conclusion of the evaluation process on March 1, 2016. Understanding that information could influence policy, program planning, and justification for funding requests, while all attempts have been made to include the most current data, detail and resources, information contained in this study is based on the ISP's understanding of the latest available phased approach provided by the Community Solutions Board and may yet again be subject to change as funding streams dictate.

Community Solutions has provided the catalyst to propel progress on a long debated community issue. Great potential to make a difference exists within the Community Solutions initiative. This said, be it an issue of threats to business viability, illegitimate use of public space, concern for criminal activity, resident fears over a drop in property values, or an intrinsic desire to assist those in need, the perspective of the observations and recommendations in this study are offered to achieve the outcome desired by bringing all community resources available to the table to offer proverbial "bootstraps" to those who have none.

Acknowledgement

We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the extraordinary cooperation of the personnel of the Community Solutions Board and other Community leaders and organizations with whom we spoke, in all cases repeatedly. In scheduling interviews, telephone conversations, and sharing of their time, knowledge, and thoughts, they demonstrated without exception their commitment to their responsibilities and "buy-in" to the need for homeless programs. We were repeatedly impressed with the candor and appreciate their assistance with this study.