EVALUATION OF
HOMELESS PREVENTION PROGRAMS
RECEIVING HPRP FUNDING –
FINAL REPORT

SUBMITTED TO

COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS OF HOUSTON/HARRIS COUNTY

SUBMITTED BY

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JANUARY 2011

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Evaluation of Homeless Prevention Programs Receiving HPRP Funding – Executive Summary

The Houston area has received $16,478,116 in federal funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and its HUD-managed Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP). The purpose of the program has been to assist to at-risk households and the literally homeless become stably housed. The Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County is interested in determining the most effective methods for preventing homelessness within the HPRP guidelines. This project is a pilot program to determine the best method to analyze the data and evaluate the programs related to preventing homelessness and to determine which program elements are the most efficacious. It is anticipated that a more comprehensive follow-up study will be conducted that will look not only at homeless prevention but also are rehousing the literally homeless.

In order to limit the scope of this project to fit within the parameters of the time and financial constraints of the grantors, the MKP Consulting team examined 6 agencies receiving State of Texas HPRP funds. A 7th site – SEARCH – was evaluated separately due to its unique and small population. The 6 sites include a large inner-city homeless services agency providing shelter, transitional housing and homeless prevention activities (Salvation Army); a large inner-city multi-service center (Wesley Community Center); 2 independent suburban area assistance ministries (Northwest Assistance Ministries and Memorial Assistance Ministries); and 2 suburban area assistance ministries under an alliance umbrella (Katy Christian Ministries and Humble Area Assistance Ministries). Each of the 6 sites has provided homeless prevention services to more than 100 households since receiving Texas HPRP funds. SEARCH's Texas HPRP funds that were earmarked for homeless prevention were part of a jail inreach program to work with inmates who are about to be released, helping them secure housing and services upon their re-entry into the Houston area.

The evaluation was originally divided into two primary components: an analysis of Houston area homeless prevention programs compared with those of similar cities throughout the United States; and an analysis of the homeless prevention activities of the 6 selected sites receiving Texas HPRP funds to determine the best practices for moving at-risk households to stability.

Comparable Cities Evaluation: The project attempted to compare the general conditions of the at-risk population and resulting HPRP activities for Houston/Harris County with comparable cities throughout the nation. Initially, 12 areas were selected based on population and geographic distribution throughout the nation. The 12 were reduced to 6 after a preliminary review of demographic data. Unfortunately, the 6 selected cities were not cooperative in providing data at the level of detail needed to conduct a comparison. Despite repeated phone calls and emails requesting completion of a survey and provision of summary data from their HMIS system or the federal reporting system, e-Snaps, none of the coalitions within the 6 cities responded. The data are not publically available on the HUD or ARRA websites.

Local Evaluation: The evaluation of the six primary sites along with SEARCH involved the collection and analysis of qualitative data through interviews as well as quantitative data through the HMIS system. The MKP Consulting team, along with Coalition staff, interviewed project managers at the 7 sites; posted a confidential staff survey on Survey Monkey for staff to complete; provided confidential surveys for current clients to complete; and interviewed those exited clients who could be reached by telephone. For the most part, managers, staff, current clients and exited clients gave the agencies glowing reviews, given the limitations placed on the program by legislation and funding constraints. One of the primary negatives about the program, as reported by the staff and clients – both current and former – was the length of time allowed in the program. Most of the clients were limited to 3 months or less for rental and utility assistance. This did not provide adequate time for the household to find new employment or access disability payments, re-stabilize and become current on other lapsed bills such as car notes and credit card debt.

The MKP Consulting team used the HMIS database to analyze the clients at intake and exit as well as the services received while in the HPRP program. A number of correlations, regressions and ANOVAs were conducted but a lack of wide variances in many of the variables such as time in program, change in income and number of service contacts, made analysis difficult. The following are the main results of the analyses:

- As the time in the program increases, the net change in income increases only moderately:
  - The vast majority of the clients were enrolled for 3 months or less. During that short time, it would not be expected for significantly higher paying jobs to be secured.
- As the number of services provided increases, the net change in income does not increase significantly:
  - The greater the level of instability – financially, socially, emotionally – the more services that are needed and the longer it takes to bring the household to stability and increased income.
  - There is no significant variance in the number of months in the program – regardless of level of instability, the majority are enrolled for 3 months or less, though more services per month and more months in the program are needed.
- As the level of income at intake increases, the number of services increases significantly rather than decreasing; and there is no correlation between the income at intake and the length of time in the program:
  - Overall, the level of income is greater in the outlying areas, while the accessibility to services through other agencies is considerably less. Therefore, in the more suburban areas, the agencies must be one-stop-shops providing all of the services to the clients.
  - Though the database provides a count of services provided by other agencies, few clients from any of the 6 agencies actually accessed other agencies during their tenure with HPRP, while the inner-loop agencies streamline their services relying on collaborations with agencies not in the HMIS system to provide comprehensive assistance.
  - The lack of variance in the time in the HPRP program makes it difficult to assess a correlation, positive or negative, between number of services/time and income at intake.
- There is a strong correlation between the number of household members and the net change in income:
  - While household size does not inherently denote 2-adult households, many of the large households do have 2 or more adults, adding to the job and income pool.
  - As household size increases, income must increase, resulting in adults taking second jobs to ensure financial stability.

- There is a moderate correlation between the number of household members and the number of units of service per month:
    - This is a predictable assumption as each household member may require some level of service, therefore as the number needing services increases, so do the number of services provided.

For the exited households for which income information was provided, 71.5% either lost income or showed no income change during their enrollment in HPRP. Obviously, income is a key factor to housing stability and without a significant increase between income at the stage of probable eviction and at the stage of successfully exiting a housing assistance program, those exiting will not be able to sustain independent housing for more than 30 to 60 days.

Determined Best Practices: The evaluation of the 6 large-scale and 1 small-scale homeless prevention programs yielded the following conclusions:

- The HPRP program as initially conceived by HUD lacked foresight in terms of the population that would be seeking assistance. The program was aimed at middle-income renter households facing short-term economic and housing crises. In fact, the majority of those facing homelessness due to the economic recession are homeowners who don't qualify for the program or those in long-term poverty who need significantly more services than funded through HPRP.
- The program has produced a level of schizophrenia in service delivery as the agencies are faced with serving some middle-income, self-motivated households facing short-term housing crises and a great number of low-income households who have a long history of housing crises, limited education, limited job skills and poor life choices. Three of the 6 agencies have been serving the low-income households prior to HPRP, while 3 have been focused primarily on the moderate- to middle-income in short-term crisis. The identification of which clients fall into which category and the transition from one focus to the other has not been addressed by the agencies analyzed.
- Research has shown that those in long-term or generational poverty have a different set of "hidden life rules" and mental maps than those who are middle-income. As a result, each group has a different way to address their pending economic and housing crises. Bridges Out of Poverty and its "Getting Ahead" service model identify the different "hidden life rules" and apply different directives depending on the set of rules identified.
- None of the agencies have intake instruments in place to help determine the set of "hidden life rules" and mental maps of the clients entering the homeless prevention program, making effective case management, service plan development and service delivery difficult. Therefore, the service delivery employed is primarily a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Research has shown that the most effective method for moving clients from addiction, poverty, homelessness or other debilitating situation is to assess at intake and throughout service delivery their readiness to change. Using the Transtheoretical, or Stages of Change, Model case managers, jointly with the client, can determine the client's stage of readiness to change from precontemplation (no recognition of a problem or intention to take action); contemplation (recognition of a problem and intention to change in the future); preparation (intention to take action immediately); action (specific modifications/changes have begun to take place); maintenance (specific relapse prevention techniques are employed); and termination (situations have ceased to be a threat).

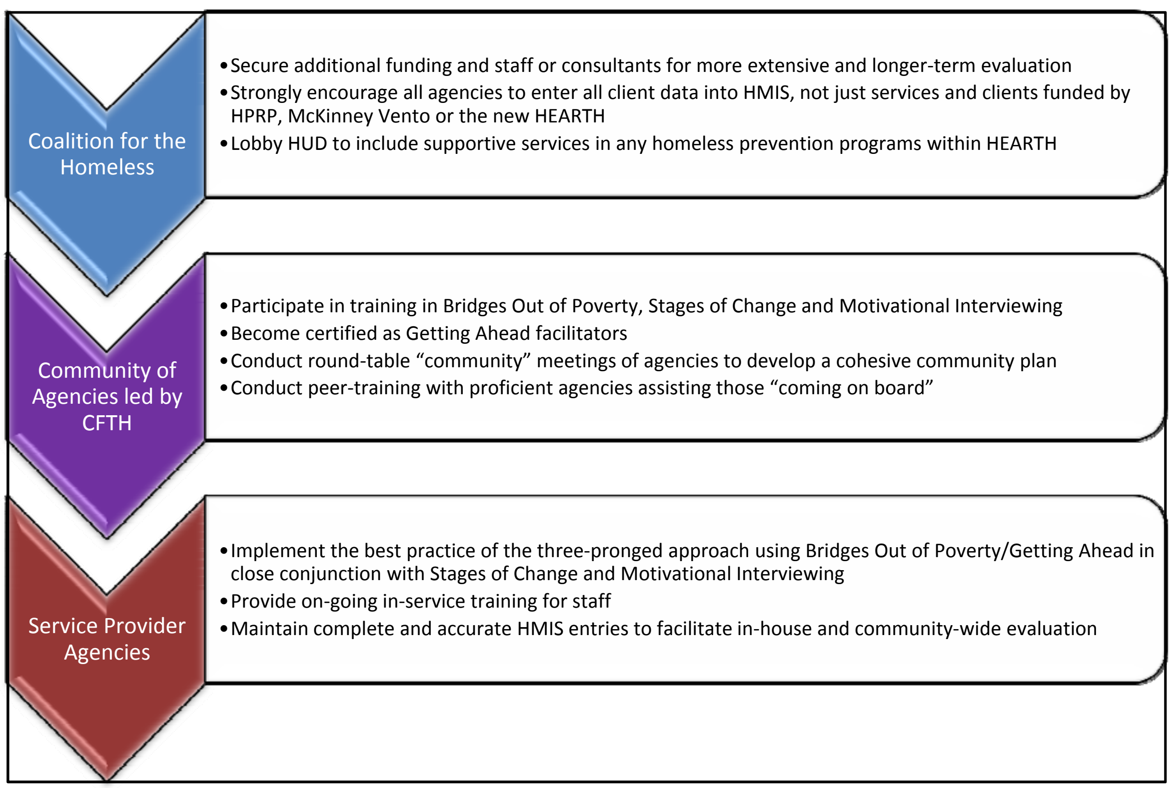
- Once the client's readiness to change has been identified, and re-identified as he/she moves through the stages, Motivational Interviewing has proven to be the most efficacious method of case management. Motivational Interviewing is non-confrontational and is client driven with the case manager directing or assisting the client in developing his/her own best methods for achieving change.

SEARCH has employed Transtheoretical and Motivational Interviewing models in its case management and has seen significant success. Through regular in-service trainings, the staff has become well versed in both models and has employed both successfully for the homeless prevention and literally homeless clients. Due to the uniqueness of SEARCH's programs, the "Getting Ahead" model is likely to not be very effective in distinguishing between long-term poverty and middle-income mental maps as virtually all of their clients have been in poverty for many years, if not a life-time. However, the Bridges Out of Poverty identification model and the "Getting Ahead" service model would be beneficial in developing a set of directives to be employed within the Stages of Change and Motivational Interviewing Models, which are part of the entire "Getting Ahead" program.

The other 6 agencies would find that incorporating all three models in an integrated system would better serve the individual clients, meeting them at their level of crisis, history of poverty and readiness to change and providing a self-driven but case-manager directed and comprehensive approach to addressing all causes of their current situation and all barriers to exiting poverty and housing instability.

Possible next steps in moving the agencies to a more evidence-based model and providing more comprehensive data for future analysis are outlined in the figure below:

Figure 7 – Next Steps for Implementing Best Practices in Harris County



Evaluation of Homeless Prevention Programs Receiving HPRP Funding -- Final Report

Project Overview

Introduction

The Houston area has received significant federal funding to provide homelessness prevention assistance to at-risk households. In 2009, the level of funding increased substantially with the release of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and its Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP). While billions of dollars were allocated nationally for HPRP, do the funds prevent homelessness in a cost effective manner? The Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County is interested in answering this question and in determining the most effective methods for preventing homelessness within the HPRP guidelines. This project is a pilot program to determine the best method to analyze the data and evaluate the programs related to preventing homelessness and to determine which program elements are the most efficacious. It is anticipated that a more comprehensive follow-up study will be conducted that will look not only at homeless prevention but also are rehousing the literally homeless.

Although HPRP funds provide a substantial amount of support to prevent homelessness, most agencies receive money from multiple funding sources and bundle the funds into a cohesive service plan and budget. In order to limit the scope of this project to fit within the parameters of the time and financial constraints of the grantors, the MKP Consulting team examined only selected agencies receiving State of Texas HPRP funds. Ten Texas HPRP awards were made to Harris County agencies, covering 11 individual sites. Of these, 6 sites were selected to participate in the evaluation. A 7th site – SEARCH – was evaluated separately due to its unique and small population. The 6 sites include a large inner-city homeless services agency providing shelter, transitional housing and homeless prevention activities; a large inner-city multi-service center; 2 independent suburban area assistance ministries; and 2 suburban area assistance ministries under an alliance umbrella. Each of the 6 sites has provided homeless prevention services to more than 100 households since receiving Texas HPRP funds.

Through HPRP, Harris County agencies received $16,478,116 from HUD allocations to the City of Houston, the City of Pasadena, Harris County and the State of Texas, in the following form:

Table 1 – HPRP Funding to Harris County Agencies

Primary Grantee	Funds Distributed
Texas (Harris County Agencies Only)	$7,760,036
Harris County	$4,463,961
Houston	$12,375,861
Pasadena	$790,214
Area Total	**$25,390,072**

The 6 project sites received $6,572,288 in HPRP funds, coupled with other substantial private and public dollars. Nonprofit service providers could apply for and receive funding from overlapping jurisdictions; however, none of the evaluation sites received Harris County funding and only Memorial Area Ministries and the Salvation Army received Houston funding.

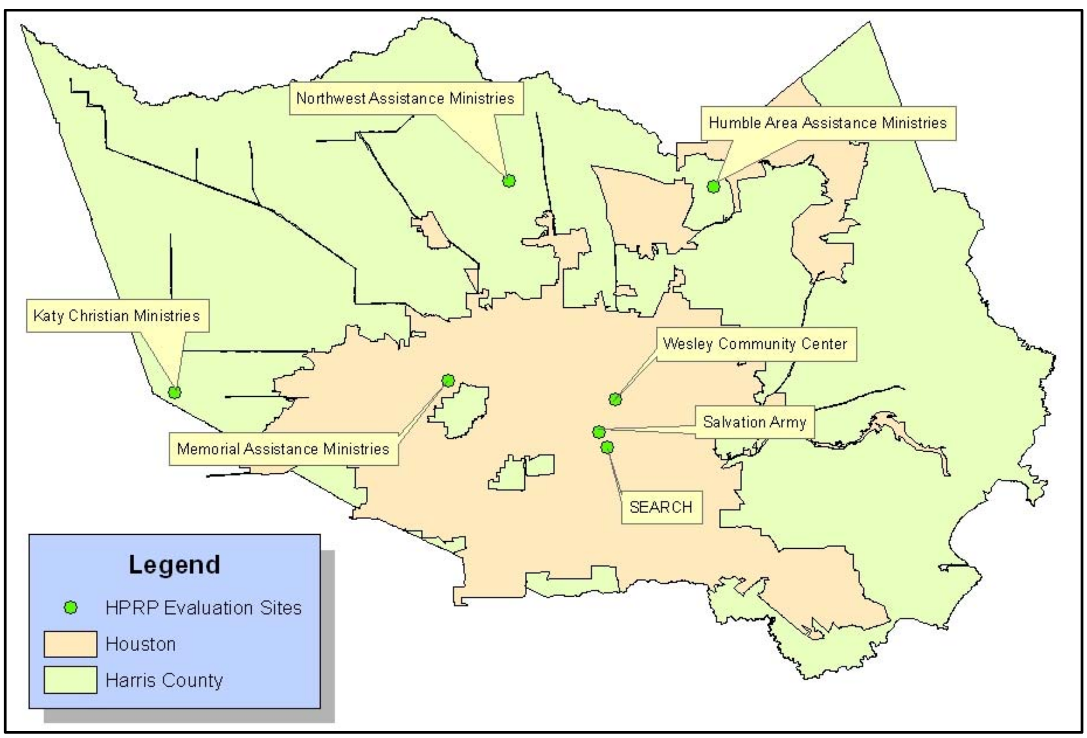
Scope of the Study

The evaluation was originally divided into two primary components: an analysis of Houston area homeless prevention programs compared with those of similar cities throughout the United States; and an analysis of the homeless prevention activities of the 6 selected sites receiving Texas HPRP funds.

Comparable Cities Evaluation: The project attempted to compare the general conditions of the at-risk population and resulting HPRP activities for Houston with comparable cities throughout the nation. Initially, 12 areas were selected based on population and geographic distribution throughout the nation. The 12 were reduced to 6 after a preliminary review of demographic data. Unfortunately, the 6 selected cities were not cooperative in providing data at the level of detail needed to conduct a comparison.

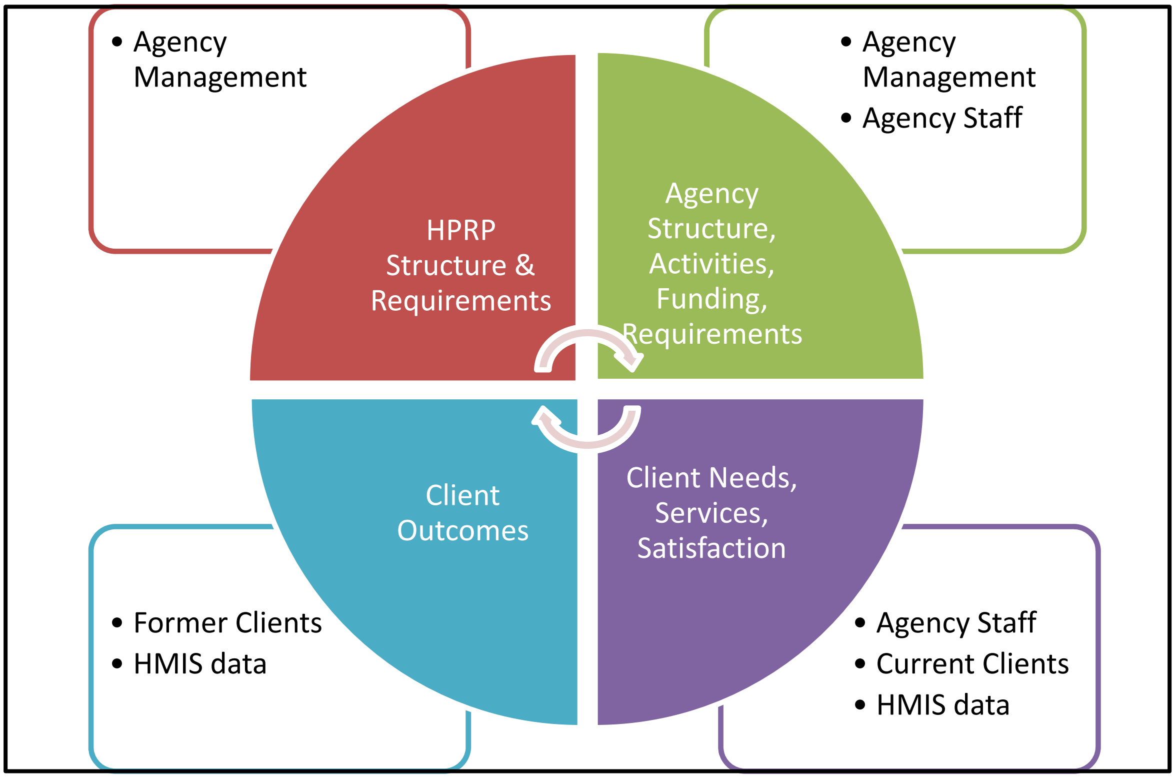
Local Evaluation: Six Harris County agencies receiving State of Texas Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing funds were evaluated to determine the best local practices in homeless prevention. In addition, a 7th site – SEARCH – was examined separately due to its unique and small client base. SEARCH's Texas HPRP funds that were earmarked for homeless prevention were part of a jail inreach program to work with inmates who are about to be released, helping them secure housing and services upon their re-entry into the Houston area. The map below shows the location of the sites included in the evaluation.

Map 1 – Location of HPRP Evaluation Sites



The study involved the use of HMIS data, interviews with program directors, and surveys of staff and clients. The figure below shows the information collected by information source.

Figure 1 – Subject and Participants of Surveys and Questionnaires



Overview of HPRP

The Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP) was established as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The purpose of the program is to provide housing stability to homeless and at-risk households and has been part of the "housing first" focus of HUD. As part of ARRA, the homeless prevention aspect of the program was aimed at those renters who were facing housing instability due to the economic recession in the country. The program is based on a "but for" concept that the program participants would become homeless or remain homeless "but for" this program. Its intent was to provide assistance that would lead to the program participants remaining stably housed after the assistance ends. It was not intended for those needing extensive supportive services or permanent housing assistance. Generally, the program was aimed at those who have been self-sufficient for most, if not all, of their adult life until the recession of 2008 hit and they faced an economic crisis. It was assumed that those seeking assistance would need a "leg up" to return to stability and sustainability.

The program was established to serve households for up to 18 months. However, shorter time periods have been encouraged. Entitlement jurisdictions and their subrecipient agencies are required to expend at least 60% of their funds within 2 years and all of the funds within 3 years. The 3-year clock began ticking when HUD and the entitlement jurisdiction, in this case the State of Texas, signed the agreement. The already tight timeframe was additionally stressed because of the time needed for requesting proposals from potential subrecipients, selecting the subrecipients and executing the contracts, along with the subrecipients ramping up to receive and serve the clients.

Under the housing prevention aspect of the program, rental and utility assistance can be provided for up to 18 months, including up to 6 months of arrears payments, which are counted as part of the 18-month time limit. Homeowners are not eligible for the program, with the exception of owners who have lost their home to foreclosure and need assistance to move into rental properties.

Eligible expenses include rents, utilities, moving costs, deposits, motel/hotel vouchers, storage for up to 3 months, costs for inspecting properties for habitability, and staff time for processing assistance. This program is meant to be a housing assistance program, not a supportive services program. The only eligible services are case management, outreach and engagement, housing search and placement, legal services and credit repair services. Costs for related services such as job training, job search/placement, life skills training, financial literacy classes and other services to assist in stabilization are not eligible expenses.

Limitations of HPRP legislation and intent: There are several assumptions and goals inherent in the federal legislation and intent that have limited the effectiveness of the program. While the legislation allows for up to 18 months of assistance, it requires that 60% of the money be expended within 2 years. Most of the subrecipient agencies began engaging clients 6 months after the clock began ticking. Additionally, the federal government envisioned HPRP as a means to prevent homelessness for those who are facing housing instability or rapidly rehouse the homeless due to the economic recession. It was not meant to be a program for those with long-term housing instability or living long-term in poverty. In order for subrecipient agencies to expend 60% of their funds within 2 years they needed to bring the program to capacity as soon as possible. As a result, extensive outreach was conducted and those coming to the agencies for assistance were, and continue to be, those in chronic poverty with histories of housing instability and those on the public housing and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher waiting lists. Middle-income households that faced unexpected economic crises have not been the typical client coming to agencies for homeless prevention assistance. The intended population either has had other resources through savings, friends and family, have been able to secure employment within a relatively brief time, or own their own home so do not qualify for HPRP. Those who have come to the agencies and do qualify are overwhelmingly those in long-term poverty with long-term housing instability.

HUD's intended population should logically require a few months of rental and utility assistance with limited case management to return to stability. In reality, those accessing the program need significant supportive services, including more comprehensive case management, financial literacy education, job readiness training, job preparation, job training, job placement, child care, transportation including car payments, food, clothing, household items, prescription assistance, substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, and medical treatment. None of these services are eligible activities for HPRP funding. HUD, and as a result entitlement grantees and subrecipients, have a "one size fits all" approach to homeless prevention.

The speed with which the program hit the streets resulted in numerous revisions by HUD of the regulations. Insufficient training was provided to the entitlement grantees and no HUD-level training was available to the subrecipient agencies. The confusion at the federal level has led to confusion and program changes at the state and local level.

Additionally, HUD limited administrative costs to 5% of the award. The funds are entitlement funds awarded to entitlement grantees and subcontracted to subrecipient agencies. The expense of managing the program at the grantee level exceeds the 5% administrative cap as does the expense at the agency level. Therefore, the grantee and its subrecipients must expend non-HPRP funds to manage a program that was dropped on their desks without the time to plan and seek complementary funding from other sources.

The regulations require that agencies recertify clients every 3 months. This has put a burden on the agencies and limits the effectiveness of the program and its goals. Recertification takes staff time that is not fully compensated by the HPRP funding. Because of the burdens of recertifying every 3 months, and the high number of intakes limiting funds for existing client beyond 3 months, the agencies are, in fact, exiting households at the 3 month point before the households are truly stable and can continue to maintain and sustain independent housing. A household typically requires at least 6 to 12 months to recover from a financial crisis even when long-term assistance has been provided and re-employment has occurred. Other HUD programs require recertification after 12 months.

At the exit point, the vast majority (over 90% in this study) are tabulated as being stably housed in rental units with no other subsidy than the HPRP funding because, at that point, they are current on their rent and they answered affirmatively to the question of whether or not they thought they could pay their rent in the future. Being current on their rent and answering affirmatively leads to a “destination” determination as “housed stably without subsidy”. In fact, many become unstably housed within 1 to 2 months after the exit point determination. As a result, the reported outcomes are very misleading.

Limitations of local HPRP Subrecipients: For the most part throughout the nation, the agencies that were alerted to the HPRP funding and that had the capacity to apply for and manage the funds were agencies with a history of serving the literally homeless and those chronically in poverty. In some areas, such as Harris County, assistance ministries and other suburban support agencies also applied for funding. These agencies have a history of serving the at-risk population who need very short-term assistance with utilities, rent, mortgage and prescription drugs or may need food and clothing. In reality, those seeking assistance through HPRP for the most part have fallen between the two extremes. Those seeking homeless prevention services are not literally homeless, but need more extensive services both in depth of subsidy and breadth of assistance type than the assistance ministries normally provide. With the limits on how the funding can be expended, neither type of agency, be it a homeless service provider or an assistance ministry, have the capacity with HPRP funds to provide a full-service approach to preventing homelessness and developing long-term sustainability and stability in their clients. All have been forced to use other resources to augment HPRP, particularly in staffing and operations. Volunteers make up the bulk of some of the agencies’ staff.

Additionally, the demand to ramp up the program and spend the funds as soon as possible coupled with the number of applicant households in long-term poverty has resulted in the agencies accepting as many clients as possible, serving more for a shorter time and focusing on immediate homeless prevention rather than long-term sustainability. The Houston area agencies have been providing 3 months of assistance to the vast majority of their clients. After 3 months, the clients must be recertified, which requires additional staff time and takes money from those in emergency need.

Therefore, it was determined that the agencies, except in extreme circumstances, would provide 3 months of assistance only. History has shown that most clients who come to agencies for rental assistance need either a one-time payment or considerably longer than 3 months. By the time formerly stable households seek assistance through HPRP-type programs, they have become significantly behind on credit card payments, car payments and other debts. Rent and utilities are the two bills that are paid first. Many have lost their cars to repossession. Most have cancelled health insurance and car insurance. The rental and utility assistance allows those who find employment to catch up on their other bills, prevent repossession of their cars or secure alternative vehicles but for those who do not find employment in a relatively short time, the positive results of a 3-month rental and utility assistance may be rendered negligible.

Follow-up services and interviews are not eligible expenses under the HPRP program. As a result, most agencies are not able to follow-up with former clients to determine their housing stability 30 to 120 days after exiting the program.

Limitations of the data: Upon extracting and analyzing the data, it became apparent that there are several limitations hindering a reliable evaluation. One misconception the team had going into the study was that HMIS contained complete service information on all HPRP clients. All agencies receiving HPRP funds are required to enter data into HMIS for the HPRP-funded services of HPRP clients. Only those agencies receiving other McKinney-Vento homeless funds – SHP, Shelter Plus Care, SRO Moderate Rehabilitation, Emergency Shelter Grant – are required to enter their federally-funded clients into HMIS. The majority of the agencies receiving HPRP funds do not receive other federal funds for homeless services. Therefore, they are not required to enter non-HPRP services into the HMIS database, making it impossible to determine if a client is not receiving services or is receiving services funded by non-federal sources, thus not entered into HMIS. With the strict limitations on service provision through HPRP funding, the resulting data appear to show that clients are only receiving rent and utilities when, in fact, they may be receiving additional essential services.

It was the expectation of the evaluation team that the agencies would be able to assist in securing confidential surveys from their clients. The team provided each agency with one-page surveys and envelopes in which clients could place and seal completed forms. Because one case management contact per month is required, the team left the surveys for more than 30 days, expecting that each client would be seen by a case manager at least once and that the case manager could provide the questionnaire and envelope to the client for completing at the time of the meeting. The agencies were asked to provide the questionnaire to existing clients who had been in the program at least 2 weeks. Only about 30% of current clients completed the survey and many of those were clients completing at intake, giving no information about the availability and quality of services.

An additional questionnaire was developed for those who had exited the program at least 90 days prior. Phone numbers were extracted from HMIS and of those with phone numbers on file, 50% were randomly selected for contact. The team made three attempts to contact each former client – one during a week day, one during a week night and one during a weekend. Each time a voice mail or answering machine was reached, a message was left asking for a return call. After attempts had been made to contact 125 of the 250 households with phone numbers in the HMIS system, only 37 surveys were completed. Of those for whom no survey was conducted, 32 had numbers disconnected and 12 said that they never received HPRP or other services from the agency indicated, 4 hung up on the interviewer, and 7 indicated that they would talk at another specified time, but either did not answer or refused at the requested time. In addition, 6 of the recordings stated that the number could not receive incoming calls and 6 had no answering machine or voice mail. The remaining 20 were called three times and messages left on an answering machine or voice mail with a call-back number. No one returned the calls. The team requested the agencies to contact those who could not be reached or update the phone numbers for the team to re-attempt contact. The agencies did not have more current contact information for any of those who could not be reached. Because HPRP does not fund follow-up contacts, most agencies had no follow-up data on their exited clients. It was determined that to attempt to contact the 125 not selected initially would be futile and would not produce better results.

One element of the project was to secure comparable data from similar homeless coalitions. Six sites were selected and contact was made to each to determine the most current and appropriate staff person to whom to direct the questionnaire. It was determined that email would be more effective than regular USPS mail and each coalition was sent an email to at least one contact person. No responses were received by mid-November and it was determined that perhaps the workload due to the deadline for the Continuum of Care application was preventing replies. A second email was sent after the Continuum of Care deadline and a third one sent in mid-December followed by a second telephone call. At this time, one refused to respond and the other 5 have yet to send responses. As a result, only publicly posted information is available.

Comparable Cities Analysis

Initially, part of the scope of the project was to compare the homeless prevention practices in comparable cities. In order to compare the general conditions of the at-risk population and resulting HPRP activities for Houston with comparable cities throughout the nation, 12 areas were initially selected based on population and geographic distribution. After a review of the 2009 American Community Survey (ACS) data from the Census and Homeless Resource Exchange, the 12 were reduced to 6 based on comparability to Houston as indicated by:

- Having a local Continuum of Care/Coalition and with the area receiving county and city HPRP funding as well as county and/or city ESG funding;
- Having a total population of the central city and county relatively comparable to Houston/Harris County, with the county population being at least 1,000,000;
- Having between 45% and 65% of the county population residing in the suburbs, outside the central city, though Bexar County/San Antonio was the exception and remained included;
- At least 20% of homeowners and 40% of the renters have a housing cost burden (>=30% of income for housing);
- At least 12.5% are below poverty;
- At least 5% are unemployed;
- At least 50,000 are veterans; and
- A combination of local HPRP, ESG and CofC funding exceeds $10,000,000.

As a result of the cursory review, the 6 cities selected are:

- Phoenix, Arizona
- Los Angeles, California
- Atlanta, Georgia
- Detroit, Michigan
- Cleveland, Ohio
- San Antonio, Texas

Those initially reviewed and rejected due to lack of comparability were Chicago, Miami, Oklahoma City, Seattle, Philadelphia and Denver. The table below compares the selected cities by the primary variables used for the selection:

Table 2 – 2009 Funding and Demographic Estimates for Counties In Which Selected Cities Are Located

Variable (entire county including central city)	Harris/ Houston	Maricopa/ Phoenix	Los Angeles/ Los Angeles	Fulton/ Atlanta	Wayne/ Detroit	Cuyahoga/ Cleveland	Bexar/ San Antonio
Primary variables used for selection							
Central city population	3,984,349	3,954,598	9,862,049	1,014,932	1,949,929	1,283,925	1,622,899
Percent of county population outside central city	49.21%	61.4%	61.4%	55.4%	60.1%	68.2%	20.3%
Percent owners with housing cost burden (>=30% of income for housing)	23.61%	31.9%	42.9%	29.4%	27.7%	24.5%	21.8%
Percent renters with housing cost burden (>= 30% of income for housing)	49.24%	53.4%	59.1%	48.6%	64.0%	56.8%	55.9%
Percent population below poverty	15.3%	13.4%	15.2%	14.0%	20.1%	15.6%	17.2%
Percent unemployment	5.4%	5.3%	6.9%	7.0%	13.6%	8.9%	5.2%
Veteran population	194,610	292,714	369,820	52,325	123,898	96,833	144,003
Total Sheltered Homeless	5,457	4,971	14,050	4,855	3,432	2,105	1,583
Total Unsheltered Homeless	2,119	2,918	28,644	2,164	262	131	1,107
HPRP Local Funding (County + City)	$16,839,822	$7,896,546	$41,643,412	$4,337,160	$18,543,457	$11,354,237	$5,974,286
Continuum of Care (2008) Funding	$20,069,555	$24,575,654	$68,902,729	$9,408,317	$24,097,846	$22,056,776	$5,619,422
Emergency Shelter Grant Funding	$1,801,946	$845,534	$4,484,764	$492,723	$1,918,487	$1,220,408	$639,013
Other variables indicating need considered in the selection							
Overcrowding (>=1.01 persons per room)	6.3%	3.9%	11.8%	2.8%	2.6%	1.0%	3.7%
Median household income	$52,377	$56.499	$55,499	$63,819	$42,376	$44,199	$45,775
Median rents	$795	$940	$1,103	$919	$745	$685	$751
Single parent households	156,725	132,559	349,254	34,087	90,716	56,104	51,544
Elderly living alone	80,476	108,922	250,014	24,969	74,910	67,805	45,809
Households with public assistance income	20,782	25,005	102,264	4,372	36,862	15,579	10,504
Households with Food Stamp benefits	101,941	27,441	163,003	26,239	120,824	64,096	60,377
No vehicles available	94,635	75,892	300,177	42,028	86,729	71,046	47,828
Noninstitutionalized adults < 65 years with disability	196,754	223,250	460,343	55,812	185,861	92,746	124,551
Noninstitutionalized elderly with disability	119,578	153,947	408,741	31,699	96,615	72,128	69,901

The team attempted through telephone calls and emails to extract HPRP information from each of the 6 comparable coalitions. One refused to cooperate and the others did not respond. In retrospect, the data provided would not have accomplished the mission of the comparison. For the data to be valuable in comparing localities, each subrecipient agency would need to be contacted and information gathered as was done for the 6 sites in Harris County or HMIS data downloaded for each agency. HUD has limited data for each of the coalitions and the 2009 Continuum of Care applications' population count is available and is included in the table above.

The only HPRP data available through HUD is the funding expended through November 8, 2010 by the primary entitlement grantee. No information is provided at the agency level or by geographic area for the state-level funding. However, below is a table for the funding received and expended at the city and county level for the 6 comparable coalitions:

Table 3 – HPRP Award and Spending Status for Comparable Cities

Location	Central City + County Awarded	% Expended as of 11/8/2010	Amount Expended as of 11/8/2010
Houston	$ 16,839,822	30.68	$ 5,166,522
Phoenix	$ 7,896,546	34.18	$ 2,699,295
Los Angeles	$ 41,643,412	19.17	$ 7,983,786
Atlanta	$ 4,337,160	44.27	$ 1,920,082
Detroit	$ 18,543,457	13.28	$ 2,462,655
Cleveland	$ 11,354,237	33.73	$ 3,829,267
San Antonio	$ 5,974,286	37.21	$ 2,223,032

Los Angeles and Detroit are significantly behind in spending while Atlanta has exceeded the minimum expenditure rate. In order for the locales to expend 60% of their funds within 2 years, they should have expended between 30% and 35% by November 8, 2010. No data regarding the number of households served are available through HUD and the coalitions contacted have not provided the information requested.

Local Data Analysis

HMIS data were extracted and analyzed for all clients entering one of the 6 HPRP programs from inception at about October 1, 2009 through November 30, 2010. A separate analysis was conducted for those entering HPRP through SEARCH's Jail Inreach homeless prevention program. To preserve the confidentiality of the agencies, random colors were assigned and have been used as identifiers when analyzing data outcomes and agencies were identified when appropriate.

Interviews with Program Directors

The team interviewed program directors and key staff at each of the agencies. The team began with a set of formal questions, however as the meetings unfolded, the conversations became more free-form and free-flowing, resulting in more relevant information. A copy of the initial formal questionnaire is included in the appendices.

Comments about the overall HPRP structure: All of the agency representatives stated that HPRP has been an asset to their organization, clients and service area. The general consensus is that the program fits their missions much better than Emergency Shelter Grant or funding for one-time assistance. All agreed that most of the clients that come into their agencies for assistance need more than a single month of assistance. The State-managed HPRP not only allows for, but requires, at least minimal case management, which is crucial for achieving the primary client goal of self sufficiency. Additionally, not having a matching fund or leverage requirement allows the agencies to manage more HPRP funds and serve more clients. A matching fund requirement would severely limit the amount of funds received due to a lack of unobligated matching dollars.

Though the scope of the evaluation project is to assess the effectiveness of the State-managed HPRP programs only, information about local funding was gathered from those agencies receiving more than one source of HPRP funds. All agencies receiving City of Houston HPRP funding in addition to State funding stressed major problems with the City-funded program. All program managers commented that the City's HPRP program is structured like an extended-time Emergency Shelter Grant Program where only rental and utility assistance are provided. Self-sufficiency does not seem to be a focus of the City program, rather "housing stability" seems to be seen as eviction prevention, not as a major result of financial stability. As a result, the City limits the amount of funding that can be used for case management and other federally-allowable supportive services. It is more a rental assistance program than a comprehensive approach to homeless prevention. Additionally, the City has contracted the management activities to the Child Care Council of Greater Houston, which does not have homeless prevention as part of its mission. The Child Care Council, in turn, has contracted the fiscal management responsibilities to a small accounting firm. These multiple layers of oversight and responsibility, with the service providers being at the end of the chain, takes away much of the front-line autonomy and flexibility to meet the varying needs of the clients as they arise and in a timely fashion.

The fiscal management of the financial assistance to the clients, including rental and utility payments, poses severe challenges with the City's HPRP awards. However, the State's system of reimbursement also can be a challenge, albeit a much smaller challenge. With State HPRP funds, an agency assesses the client, agrees to pay the rent, utilities and/or arrears, makes payment to the landlord or utility company and requests reimbursement from the State. This is extremely efficient for stabilizing the clients quickly, however it can create short-term financial stress on the agencies as they await their reimbursement.

The City manages the financial assistance, with the request coming from the agency to the Child Care Council as contracted fiscal agent for review/approval, to the contracted accountant for check creation, back to the Child Care Council and then to the agency. One agency indicated that the checks were sent from the Child Care Council directly to the landlords and utility companies. This makes it difficult for the agencies managing the clients to track the payments. In addition, the lag time between submission to the City for rental payment and the actual payments to the landlords and utility providers leads to late payments and resulting late charges virtually every month. The late payments also cause the relationship between the landlords and the service providers to deteriorate. The agencies have been working successfully with landlords for many years and work well with them through the State HPRP funding. However, those landlords leasing units to City-funded clients are frustrated by the continued late rent payments and the solid relationship between them and the agencies is rapidly deteriorating. As one program manager stated, the agency intervenes for the client and tells the landlords that if they will lift the notice to vacate they will be paid all arrears and current rent and will begin receiving rent on time for at least 3 months. They agree and then the agency requests payment from the City and the City does not pay for another 3 weeks. Each month the rent checks from the City are at least 2 to 3 weeks late. Not only do the landlords have to wait but HPRP funds are being used to pay late fees because of the City's mismanagement. According to the program managers interviewed, the City requires fiscal control over the subrecipients, but has contracted the management to Child Care Council of Greater Houston as fiscal agent, which in turn has subcontracted the financial management to a sole proprietor with other clients and obligations. Not only is the chain of command/responsibility cumbersome but those in the chain appear to be having trouble managing effectively and efficiently.

One benefit of the City's program for rapid rehousing, which requires Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and, in most cases, lead-based paint assessments, is that the City will carry those inspections out within 24 to 48 hours. State-funded HPRP agencies must use case managers or other staff to conduct the inspections prior to approving a unit for move-in. Those agencies providing rapid rehousing or relocation of clients to new units find that the City is a valuable team member in approving the units for occupancy.

According to most managers, the State provides much more guidance and regulatory technical assistance than the City. While there is no definitive reason, it is possible that the State receives federal directives more quickly than the City's designated fiscal agent, and that the State has a larger staff and more resources to disseminate the information and provide technical assistance. Conversely, one manager stated that the State's reporting rules are ambiguous and that the State has no set policies. This manager indicated that questions are answered more effectively and quickly through the HUD Homeless Resource Exchange (HRE) website and calls directly to HUD, than through information requests to the State.

Additionally, the State allows a larger percent of the award to be for case management and other necessary ancillary services than the City. All of the managers utilizing both City and State HPRP funding indicated that the ability to use the funds for case management and services other than financial assistance makes the State-funded clients better able to achieve self sufficiency and stable housing.

It was noted that, unlike with the City of Houston and Harris County funding, the State subrecipient contracts were executed in a timely manner and each site received a cash advance in October 2009 that covered approximately 2 months of assistance. However, one program manager stated that some of the agencies were unaware that the advance was simply to jump-start the program and that from December 2009 forward, payments would be based on an expenditure reimbursement system. It appears that this was a problem for those agencies that had not been regular subrecipients of federal dollars through either Emergency Shelter Grant or Community Development Block Grant; therefore, they were unaware that all HUD funding is based on reimbursements.

Interviews were conducted with the Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries (ACAM) and the 2 State-funded agencies within this evaluation that are opted to be subcontractors under ACAM. One major discussion centered around the ability for ACAM to provide management assistance as well as for the Rockwell Fund, a local foundation, to provide significant in-kind assistance to reduce the administrative burden on the subrecipients. The 2 area ministries under ACAM for the HPRP grant indicated that they are able to act much more effectively and receive/process much more funding, thus serving many more clients with expanded services, with ACAM as the fiscal agent and overarching program manager. Reporting can be a major resource drain for the subrecipients and ACAM is able to relieve its agencies of that burden by working with the Rockwell Fund to ensure that all programmatic and financial reports are completed accurately and within the very tight time constraints levied by the State.

When asked if they saw HPRP as a beneficial program to become a permanent element of the new Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act, all stated in the affirmative. All indicated that the longer-term assistance and the expanded eligible activities made HPRP a much more viable program than others like Emergency Shelter Grant. Most did indicate, however, that more ancillary services should be allowed if HPRP were to continue under the HEARTH Act. Child care and transportation were the two most common ancillary services that are needed to address clients' barriers to gainful employment and self sufficiency. Included in the category of "transportation" were car repairs and past due car payments, particularly for those living outside of the METRO service area where there is no public transportation. Prescription assistance was another service that 2 of the agencies indicated as an important need. Most see HPRP as an effective shelter diversion program and would like to see it fold into the HEARTH Act and continue to allow for longer-term assistance than the 3-month blocks with reassessment at the end of each time period.

Comments about site-specific issues: All of those interviewed indicated that the additional funding has allowed them to hire more case managers and to more comprehensively serve their clients. For the most part, a wide range of services are available to the clients based on their needs. However, the Salvation Army (SA) and Wesley Community Center (WCC) have a much greater opportunity to develop collaborations with other service providers, particularly job training, child care, credit counseling, budgeting, legal services programs. Due to their location within Loop 610 and near other social service providers, they have been able to collaborate with many more agencies, thus reducing their own in-house programs while expanding services to the clients. Humble Area Assistance Ministries (HAAM) and Memorial Assistance Ministries (MAM) are both located near some ancillary services with which they can partner and collaborate. Salvation Army, Wesley Community Center and MAM are within the Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO) service area, making transportation relatively accessible to clients.

Katy Christian Ministries (KCM) and Northwest Assistance Ministries (NAM) are located in much more suburban and remote areas. As a result, they must provide a broader spectrum of services in-house. Both agencies provide a number of services through their own organization as well as provide space for agencies to bring ancillary services to their location. However, the per-client service cost and the staff time invested in each client is greater for the more suburban agencies.

The further from the center of Houston, the smaller the case loads, which is most likely due to the greater time needed to serve the clients with fewer available coordinating resources. Case loads generally range from 20 to 50 depending on the agency and the level of need of the clients.

All of the agencies provide at least monthly case management, and, depending on the client's situation, they may receive up to weekly case management. Service contacts, primarily case management, average between 1.5 times to 3.8 times per month. All of the agencies, particularly the suburban agencies, indicated that clients call frequently to report on their successes and barriers. Because the goal of HPRP is to bring housing stability and self-sufficiency to the clients rather than one-time emergency assistance, the program requires the development of a service plan for each client, including some type of financial recovery plan. All of the organizations work with the clients to jointly develop a workable housing stability and self sufficiency plan which includes financial recovery and management. The level of the plan depends on the position the client is on the continuum from facing homelessness to being self-sufficient. Those with the greatest immediate needs are first provided emergency services and then they are more emotionally able to work with the case manager to develop a longer-term stabilization plan.

It appears that HPRP funding is providing the agencies with the means to build a stronger and more lasting bond with the clients resulting in more client-initiated contact. It also appears that the stronger bonds are with the more suburban clients who must go to the same agency for all services and contacts than those facing homelessness for the first time. Salvation Army, Wesley Community Center and to a lesser degree HAAM, due to their locations, have a high proportion of their HPRP clients who have long histories, even generational histories, of poverty, homelessness and near homelessness. They are often more familiar with the social service arena, and are working with, or have worked with, a number of services providers. Because of their location, their clients are able to be referred to a number of other organizations. Katy Christian Ministries, MAM and NAM clients are much more situationally poor, having recently lost income. Their needs are more financial than broad-based and they have fewer available organizations through which to receive assistance. Therefore, they do not have multiple case managers or multiple geographically dispersed programs, rather their service time is spent with one or two individuals in a single location. This results in a stronger bond. Research shows that the stronger the bond with case managers or other front-line staff, the more invested the client becomes in his/her recovery and the more motivated to not disappoint the service provider.

One of the barriers mentioned by some of the agencies – those in the more affluent areas – has been the education of landlords to trust the agency and accept the program as a viable alternative to eviction. As they have been educated about the program and have seen that it is less expensive to allow a service provider to pay the rent than to evict the household and ready the apartment for releasing, they have embraced the program. The only downside has been with City-funded clients when the Child Care Council has been late in paying the rents.

None of the agencies have had a problem finding clients. Those near shelters have provided information to the shelters in order for those about to become homeless and those ready to move into permanent housing to access the agency's homeless prevention or rehousing programs. Not only have the agencies advertised the program well and, where possible and appropriate, have provided information to shelters, but word of mouth seems to be a very effective tool. Many of the clients, particularly at the suburban agencies, have been referred by other clients or by their landlords. One agency stated that landlords are posting information about the program in their offices or handing out flyers to tenants who are late with their rent.

The agencies differ in their intake process, in part due to the number of calls they receive. However, all conduct a short telephone interview to serve as an initial assessment or referral. If a cursory assessment shows that the caller may be eligible for HPRP, he/she is either given an appointment, referred to a case manager who will set up the appointment, or told the days that intakes are conducted. They are told what documentation will be required to qualify them for the program. Once the potential client is interviewed in person by a case manager, he/she is assessed and either enrolled in HPRP or directed to another in-house program or another agency. For those qualifying for HPRP at agencies receiving more than one source of HPRP funds, the next step is to determine which HPRP program is best suited for the needs of the client. The agencies indicated that due to the cumbersomeness and slowness of the City program, those with urgent needs are directed to the State program. Typically, an applicant will be accepted into the program within a week of their initial contact. The landlords and/or utility companies are then notified that payments will be forthcoming.

Results of Staff Surveys

MKP Consulting developed an on-line survey for the staff members of the **6** participating sites. A copy of the survey is provided in the appendices. Using MKP Consulting's Survey Monkey account with results only accessible to the firm, the on-line confidential surveys were available to agency staff members for two months. Staff members from 5 of the 6 agencies completed the on-line staff survey. No staff members from the Purple agency completed the survey. In general, there were no glaring shortcomings perceived and most staff members praised the HPRP program as giving those at risk of homelessness the resources needed to stabilize. However, many commented that though the program allows for up to 18 months, the agency provides only 3 months of HPRP assistance except in dire circumstances. The staff indicated that 3 months was not long enough to stabilize the household. Additionally, for those outside Loop 610, access to necessary ancillary services and jobs is limited due to the lack of transportation. The primary results are provided below:

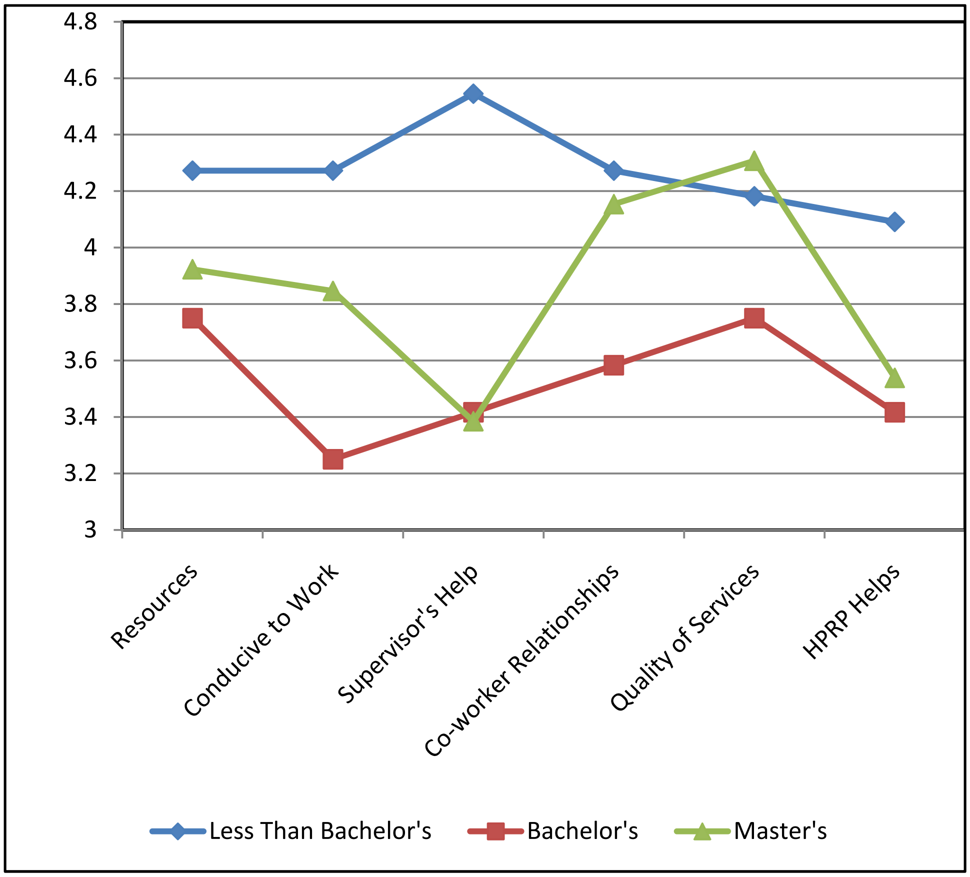
Table 4 – Average Results of Staff Survey

Variable	Blue	Green	Peach	Purple	Red	Yellow
Total Responses	5	3	2		6	21
Total w/MS, MSW, MA	3	0	0		4	6
Total w/ BS, BA	1	3	2		0	6
Resources Provided to Staff*	3.8	2.3	4.5		4.6	4.0
Conducive Work Environment*	4.0	1.7	4.5		4.0	4.0
Staff Receives Help from Supervisor*	3.6	2.0	4.5		3.7	4.0
Co-worker Relationships*	4.4	3.3	4.0		4.3	4.0
Perceived Quality of Services*	4.4	2.7	4.5		4.7	4.0
Perceived Benefits from HPRP Funding*	4.2	1.3	5.0		4.3	3.5

* Lickert Scale of 1 to 5, from worst to best.

In analyzing the results of the items in Table 2, the staff members with a Bachelor's degree scored working conditions and services considerably lower than those with less education and those with a Master's degree regardless of the agency at which they work. It should be kept in mind that at the 3 agencies with at least one Master's level staff member, the program director or agency director is one of the respondents. The results by agency are skewed as all staff members from Green and Peach who responded to the survey have Bachelor's degrees while only 20% of Blue staff, none of Red and 29% of Yellow staff have Bachelor's degrees. The graph below shows the average results by educational level of respondent.

Figure 2 – Average of Responses by Educational Level of Respondents



Comments about the overall agency performance: The respondents were asked to list the three services that would be rated as most effective and least effective in stabilizing the clients. The Table below shows a total of the top three most effective and the top three least effective services.

Table 5 – Staff-Determined Most Effective Programs

Variable	Blue	Green	Peach	Purple	Red	Yellow
Total Responses	1	0	0	0	5	12
Case Management	0	0	0	0	3	3
Rental Assistance	1	0	0	0	3	8
Utility Assistance	1	0	0	0	2	4
Ancillary Supportive Services	1	0	0	0	6	12
Access to Shelter, Transitional Housing, Permanent Housing for Literally Homeless	0	0	0	0	0	5

Comments regarding the least effective aspects of the HPRP program included:

- Generally allow 3 months and that is too short of a time for stabilization;
- Lack of other services in area to provide ancillary support;
- Lack of cooperation with Workforce Solutions;
- Lack of child care/babysitting for clients to keep appointments, go to job interviews, begin working;
- A need for legal assistance and credit repair;
- Inadequate accessibility to mainstream services;
- Food assistance, including access to food bank and Meals on Wheels, is inadequate or non-existent; and
- Lack of transportation to jobs and other service providers.

Comments by agency include the following:

- BLUE: Only one staff member from the BLUE agency responded to the questions concerning the best and least effective practices. That staff member indicated that the rent/utility program and financial management classes were the best along with "daily provisions" services such as food, clothing and prescription assistance.

- RED: Case management and client-worker relations were given by 60% of the RED agency's staff as best program components. Referral to mainstream services was also listed by 60% of the staff as good to best components. Advocacy, empowerment, barrier resolution were listed by 40% of the staff as positive aspects of the agency. While referral to mainstream services was listed by 60% as a positive, the remaining 40% indicated that there is an inability to find other appropriate programs or to connect clients to other agencies.

- YELLOW: Over 50% of the staff within the YELLOW agency, indicated that housing assistance – short term, transitional, permanent supportive and relocation – were the best aspects of the agency. Caring staff and quality case management were listed by 20% of the staff as best aspects of the agency. According to the respondents' perceptions, the agency's weaknesses lie in its lack of ability to provide comprehensive services and 10% listed lack of collaboration with other services as a weakness. The responses indicate a conflict among staff as to whether enough counseling is being provided and to whether the allowed time in the program is sufficiently long to render positive outcomes.

- GREEN, PEACH, PURPLE: None of the staff members completing the survey from the GREEN or PEACH agencies responded to the two open-ended questions about quality of services. No staff from the PURPLE agency completed a survey.

Results of Client Surveys

Survey of current clients: Copies of a one-page survey were given to each of the 6 agencies with a request that the staff ask current clients of the State HPRP program to complete the survey and seal it in an unlabeled envelope provided by MKP Consulting. The agencies were asked to give the survey only to those who had been in the program at least 2 weeks. The agencies were given approximately 6 weeks to have the clients complete the survey, with the assumption that every client would be seen by a case manager at least once during that time. Extracting the 18 clients who responded that they were literally homeless at intake, the team received 127 completed surveys. The vast majority indicated that they were about to be evicted when coming to the HPRP program for assistance. The table below summarizes the results of the survey and the actual survey is included as an attachment to the report.

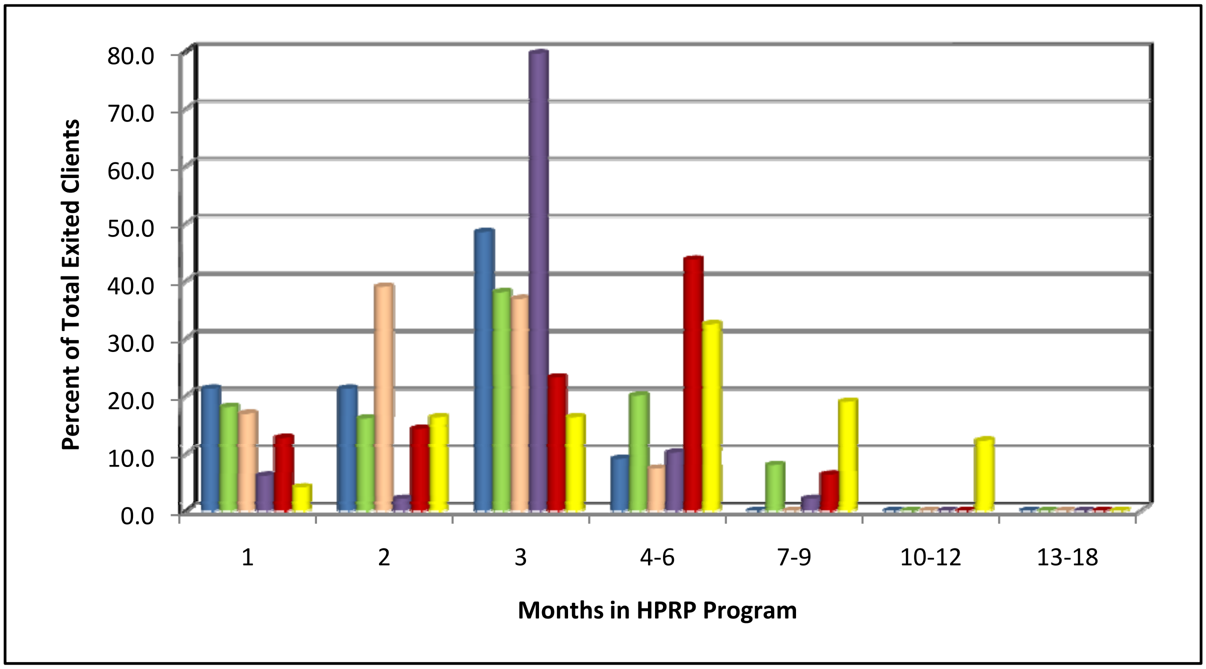
Table 6 – Summary of Client Survey

Variable	Response		Variable	Response
Literally Homeless at Intake (removed from future analysis)	18		Average total types of assistance received	3.6
About to be evicted	115		Number stating life has improved a lot	64
Number not evicted due to program	107		Number stating life has improved some	52
Living with friends or family	6		Number stating life has not changed	13
Other living arrangements	6		Number stating life has gotten worse	0
Came needing rental assistance	126		Average number of life improvements (total of 9 possible)	2.6
Came needing utility assistance	120		Average score for being treated with respect*	4.9
Average number of total needs	2.4		Average score for seeing knowledgeable staff and getting good advice*	4.9
Received rental assistance	120		Average score for seeing counselor or case manager promptly*	4.8
Received utility assistance	72		Stated length of time allowed in HPRP program	Ranged from 1 to 6 months with only 14 > 3 months

* Lickert scale: 1=Strongly negative; 2=Negative; 3=No opinion; 4=Positive; 5=Strongly positive

While the HPRP program allows for up to 18 months of assistance, only 14 of the 127 respondents indicated that the agency stated that they were eligible for more than 3 months assistance. There is no way of knowing if the agency was firm on the 3-month limit or if the agency stated that they would be eligible for up to 3 months with a re-qualification after 3 months. In actuality, looking at the 544 valid HMIS records for those who exited the program by December 1 2010, 64.9% exited by the end of 3 months, another 27.2% exited by the end of the sixth month and only 7.9% remained after 6 months. The figure below shows the distribution of exited clients by length of stay for each agency. As can be seen, only the Yellow agency enrolled clients for more than 9 months and had double the rate of clients than other agencies for 7-9 months of enrollment.

Figure 3 – Client Duration in HPRP Program by Agency



Using the client data from the HMIS database, there is no significant correlation between months in the program and change in income at exit. However, there is no way to control for exits due to sufficient income increase as opposed to exits due to the initial 3-month expiration. That is, a client may leave the program after 3 months because he/she has become stable or because the program only allows for 3 months of enrollment. The HMIS database shows that 89.1% exited the program in stable unsubsidized housing, which might indicate that they were deemed capable of remaining stable after assistance ended. However, it should be noted that the indication of "stable unsubsidized housing" as the destination is based on current housing at exit, which by the nature of the program is stable, and the client's self-declaration of his/her ability to remain in stable housing. Without HPRP funding for adequate follow-up, there is no way of knowing if the destination is stable and can remain stable for any length of time.

Survey of exited clients: The team extracted a random sample of family identifiers for those families who exited the program prior to August 1, 2010 – more than 90 days prior to the extraction and whose phone number was included in HMIS. The team made three attempts to reach each of the numbers, calling at different times of day on different days of the week and leaving call-back numbers. Those that could not be reached were noted and their family identifier and phone number were sent to their respective HPRP agency with a request for the most current follow-up information available. The agencies were unable to contact those clients and had no updated contact information to provide.

After attempts had been made to contact 125 of the 250 households with phone numbers in the HMIS system, only 37 surveys were completed. Of those for whom no survey was conducted, 32 had numbers disconnected and 12 said that they never received HPRP or other services from the agency indicated, 4 hung up on the interviewer, and 7 indicated that they would talk at another specified time, but either did not answer or refused at the requested time. In addition, 6 of the recordings stated that the number could not receive incoming calls and 6 had no answering machine or voice mail. The remaining 20 were called three times and messages left on an answering machine or voice mail with a call-back number.

No one returned the calls. It was determined that to attempt to contact the 125 not selected initially would be futile and not produce better results.

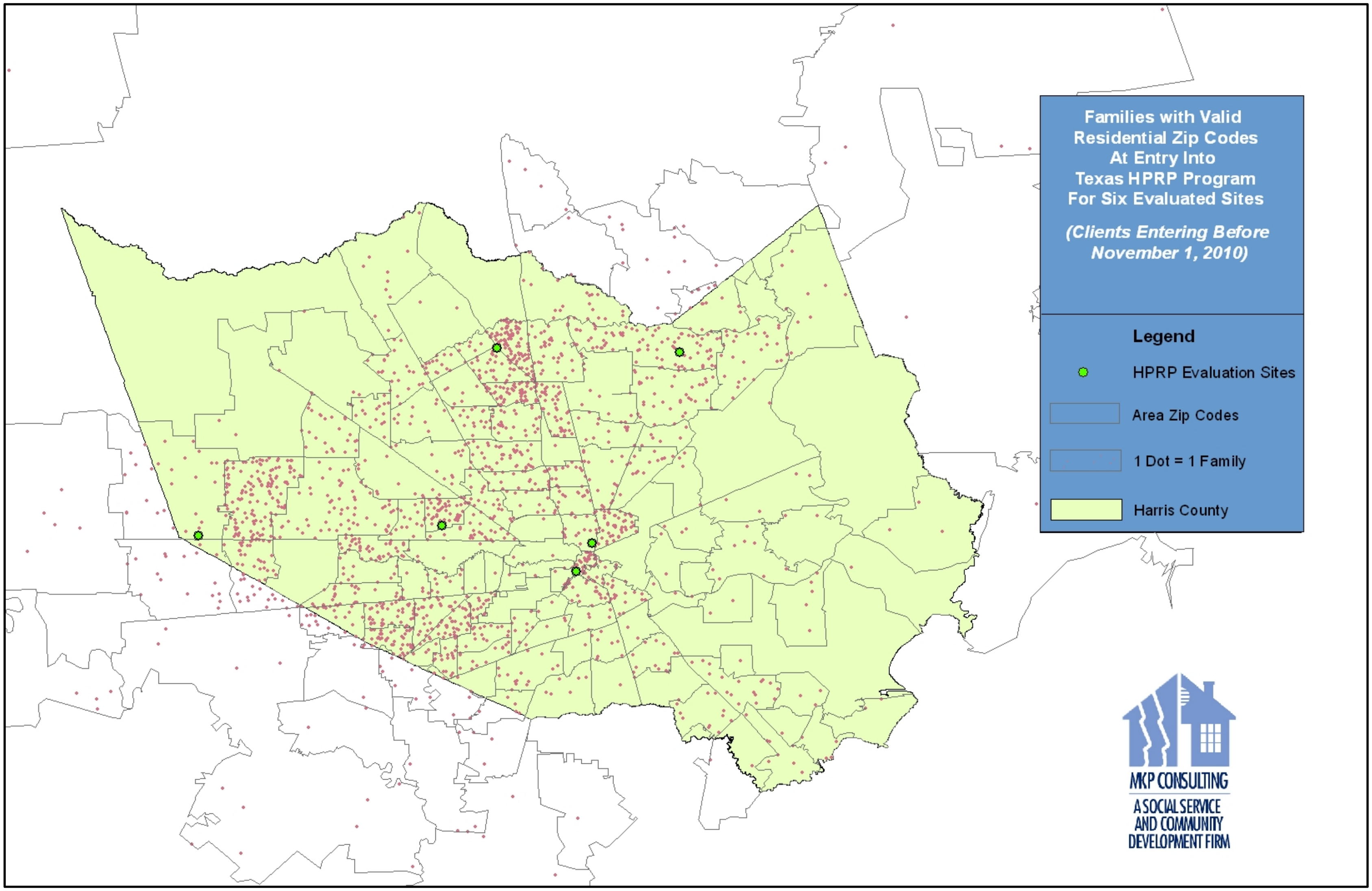
Of the 37 who were contacted and willing to complete the survey, 36% indicated that they were at that time unable to pay their rent, utilities and other living expenses and 25% indicated that their life was no better or worse since enrolling in the HPRP program. The clients who indicated that their life was no better or was worse stated that health problems (1), unemployment (3) and underemployment (7) were the primary reasons that life was not better. The clients who indicated that their life was better attributed the change to the HPRP agency helping with rent (13), moral support (2), job placement (1), budgeting (2), and

giving a leg up (3); family helping financially (2); securing employment without the assistance of the HPRP agency (3); and accessing social security. When asked if their income had changed since entering the program, 1/3 said it had decreased, 1/3 said it had remained the same and 1/3 said it had increased. A review of the HMIS client data at the time of exit shows that 25.2% had a decrease in income, 46.1% had no change in income and 28.7% had an increase in income. Despite a shortage of positive changes, all 37 rated their experience with the HPRP agency as very good.

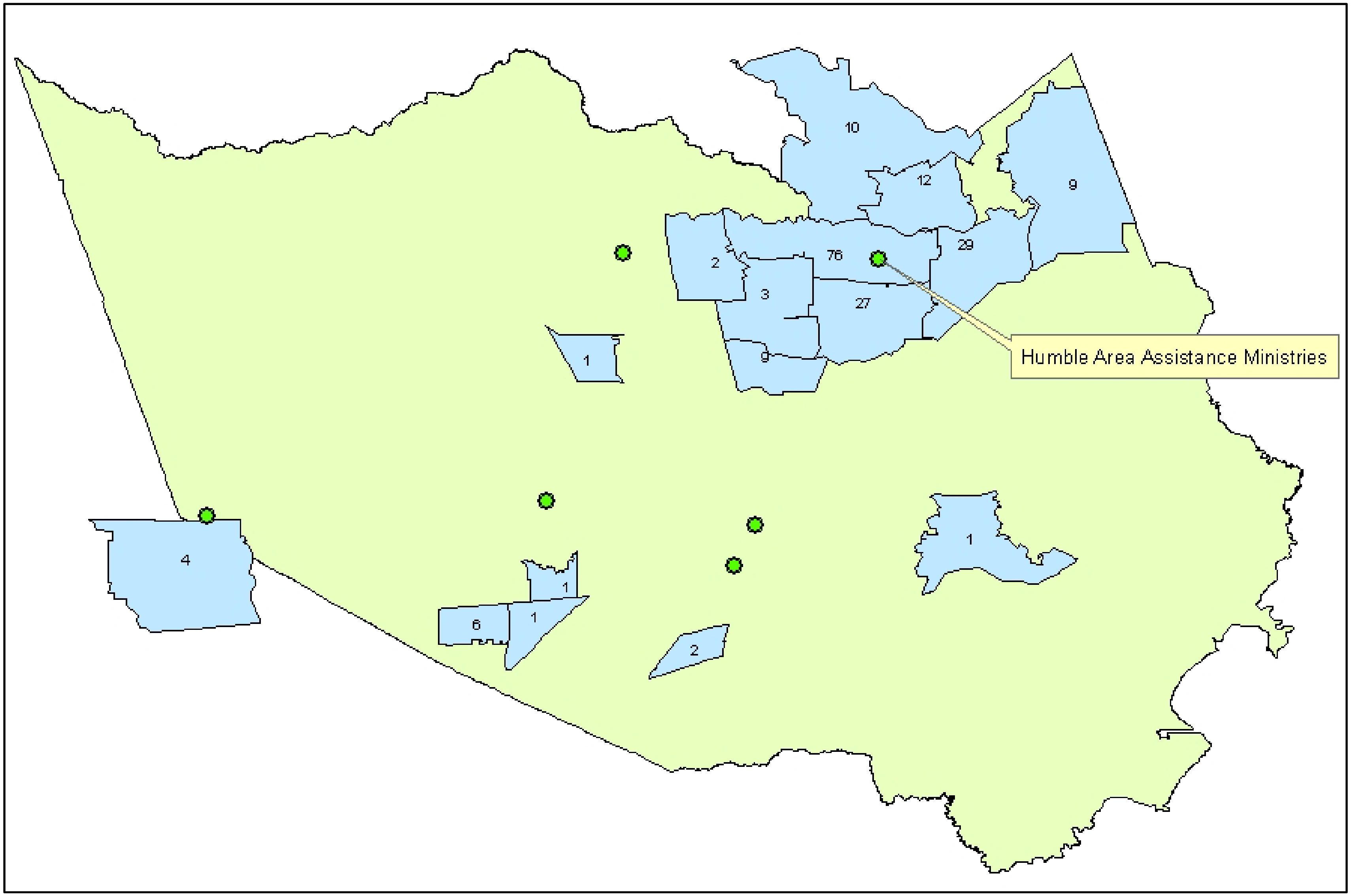
Client Data Analysis using HMIS Database

Geographic analysis: In order to better understand the client base of each agency, MKP Consulting requested and received additional information from the Coalition for the Homeless HMIS database. One key variable added was the entry zip code for each household. While there were many blanks in the file and many invalid zip codes, such as 6-character codes, the team was able to extract a sufficient number to map. Below are a series of maps that show the overall distribution of those households with valid zip codes within the general Houston region. Following is a map for each of the 6 main sites, with the number of clients from each zip code. A small number (less than 1%) of the households relocated from other parts of the state or from other states. They have been excluded in the mapping. For the distribution maps, actual agency names rather than colors have been used, as the location of each is delineated. As can be seen from the map, the far Northwest and far East zip codes have been under-represented. It is not known if the residents are accessing other services such as Harris County or other county HPRP programs, are not receiving services at all, or are not in need of services, though the latter is highly unlikely. SEARCH is not included in the mapping due to the nature of the program of including only incarcerated individuals. Their clients at entry are located in jails and prisons not rental housing throughout the area.

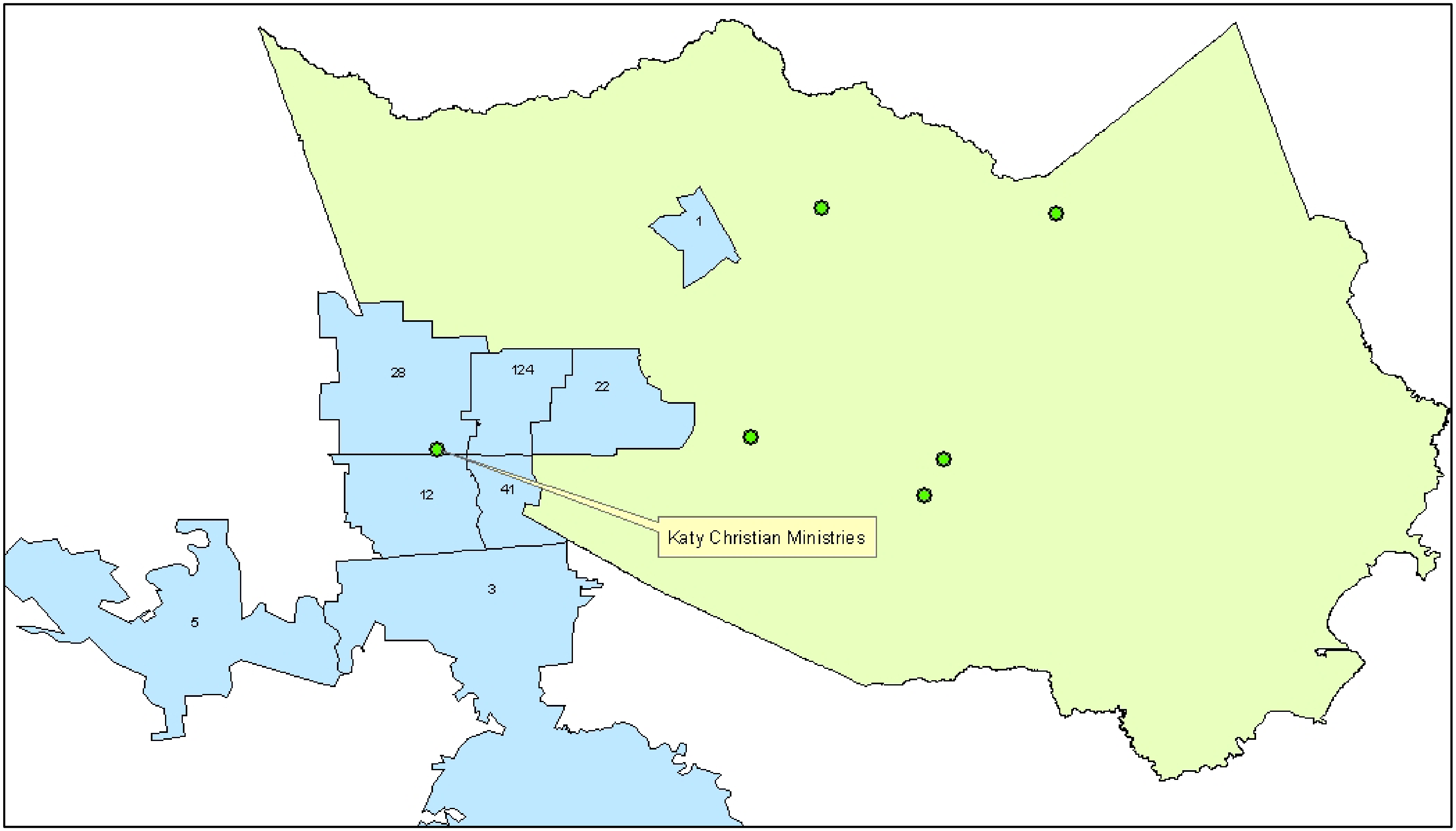
Map 2 – Distribution of Texas HPRP Homeless Prevention Clients with Valid Entry Zip Codes



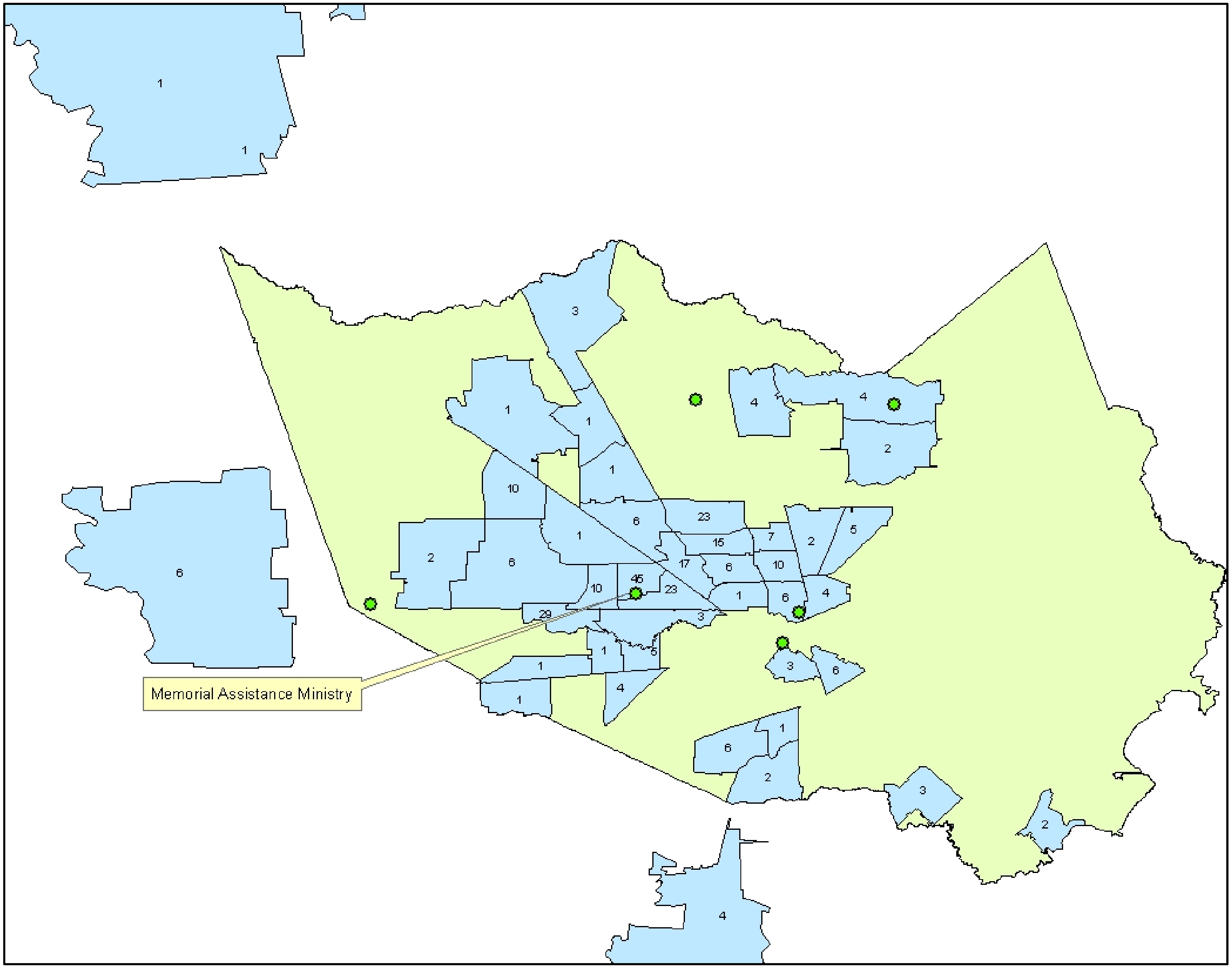
Map 3 – Distribution of HAAM Clients (Number within Each Zip Code Provided)



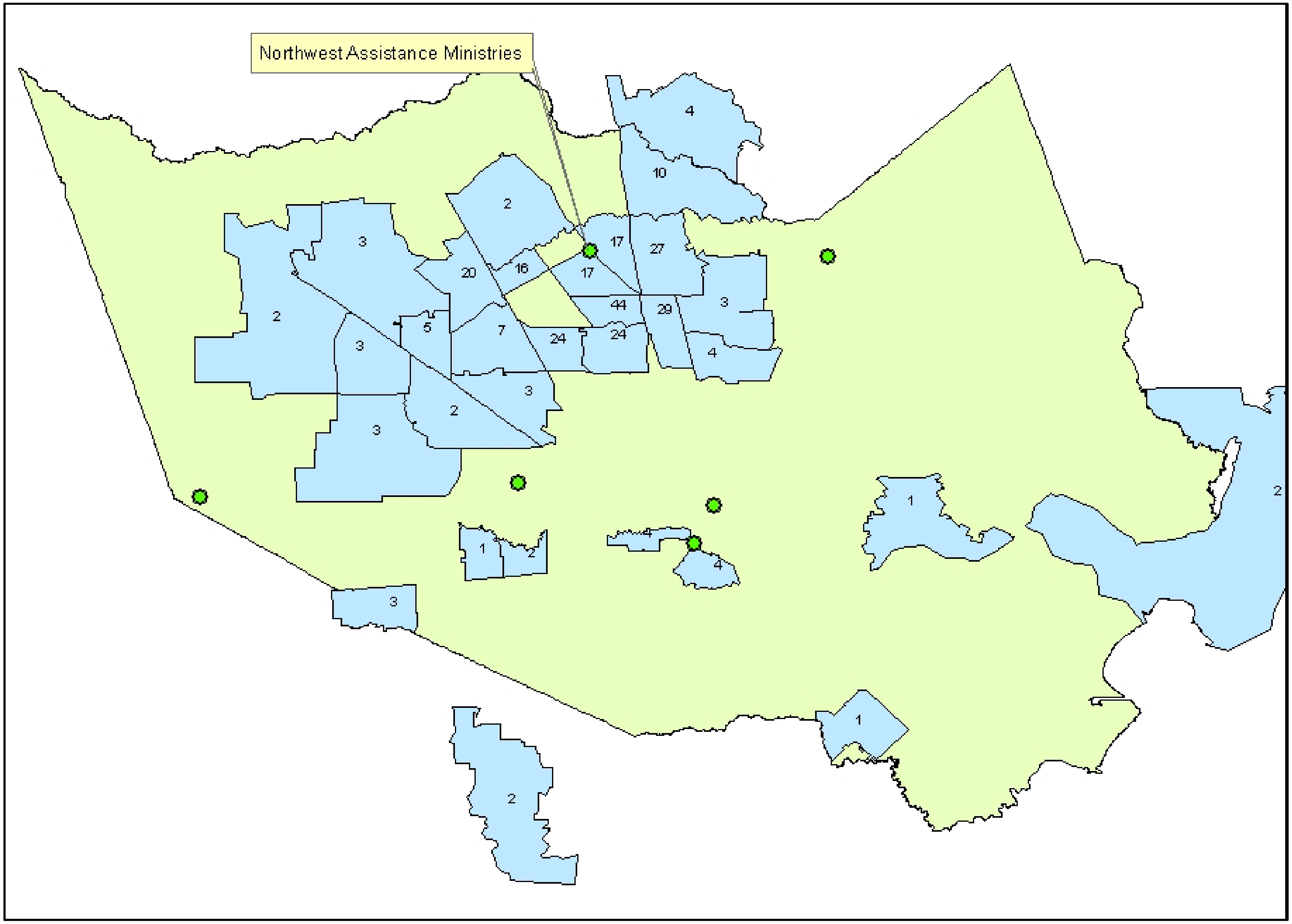
Map 4 – Distribution of KCM Clients (Number within Each Zip Code Provided)



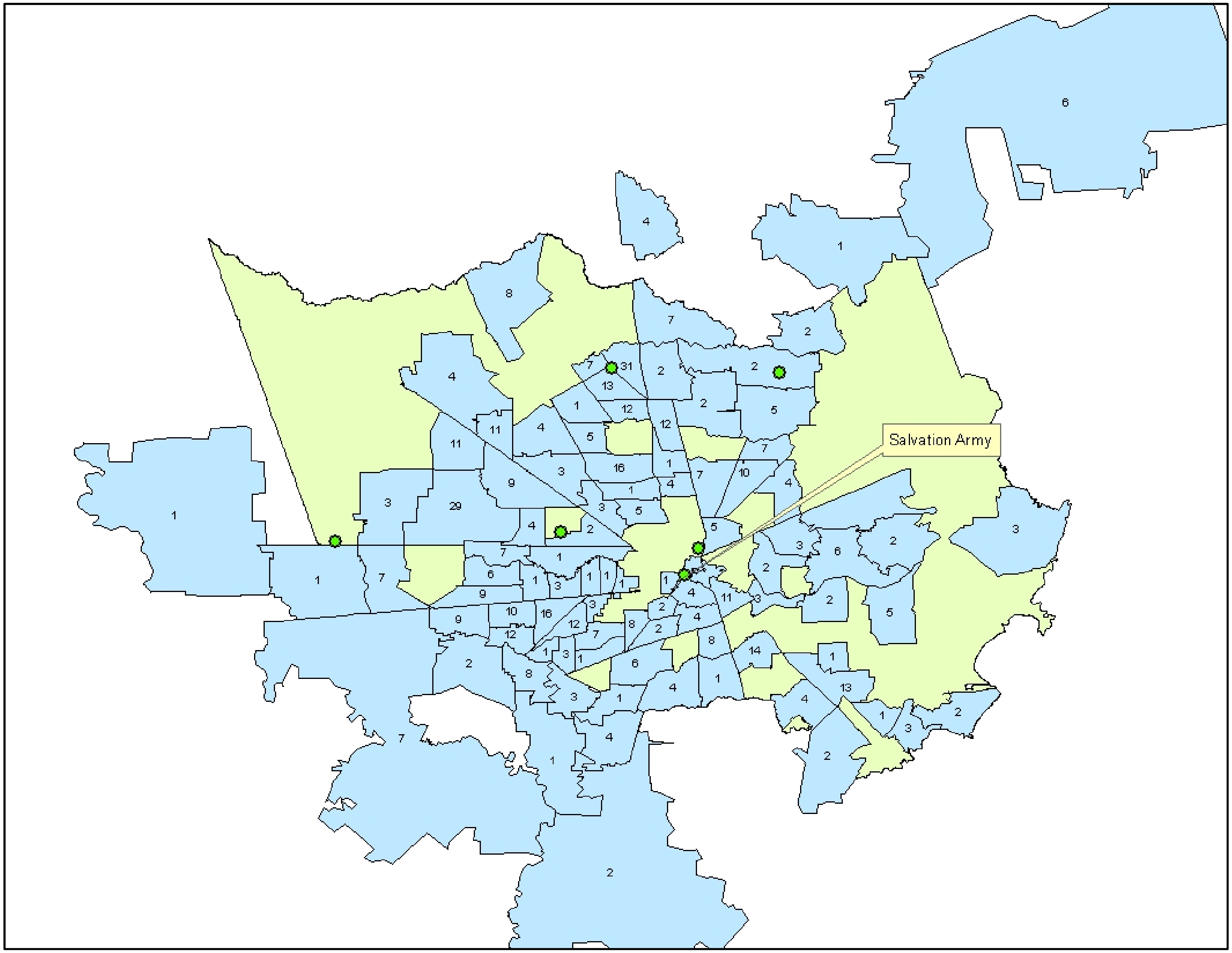
Map 5 – Distribution of MAM Clients (Number within Each Zip Code Provided)



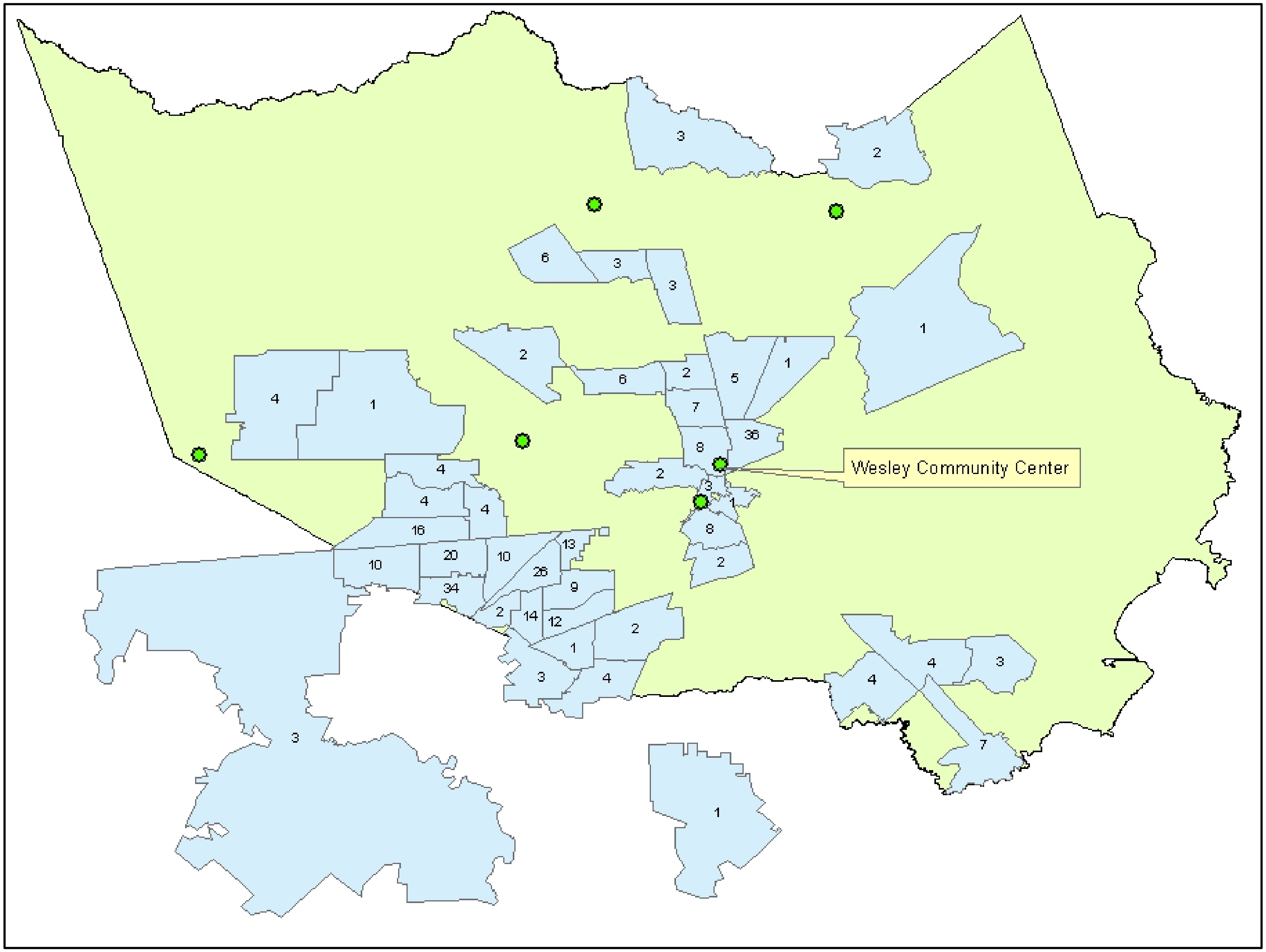
Map 6 – Distribution of NAM Clients (Number within Each Zip Code Provided)



Map 7 – Distribution of Salvation Army Clients (Number within Each Zip Code Provided)



Map 8 – Distribution of WCC Clients (Number within Each Zip Code Provided)



While zip codes are large geographic areas and it would be beneficial to map program participants to individual addresses or small neighborhoods such as Census Block Groups, data accuracy prevented such address-matching. Not only is it important to see the general location of the clients relative to the agency accessed, but linking the client to areas by area-wide income proves beneficial as a proxy for estimating the potential term of poverty – life-long or situational. Beginning with the 2010 Census, the Census Bureau did not release a sample survey that included income, educational, and detailed demographic characteristics. The American Community Survey will be used in the future to replace the decennial detailed data. The American Community Survey is a much smaller sample of households, conducted monthly throughout each year. In December 2010, the Census Bureau released its first set of sub-city data through the American Community Survey. Averaging the surveys from 2005-2009, the Census Bureau was able to release data at the Census Tract level, but has not yet released the data at the zip code level or at the smaller Census Block Group level.

While the relative income across zip codes has not changed dramatically since 2000, the incomes across Census Block Groups may have changed significantly as multi-family units were constructed in predominately single-family suburbs and gentrification has occurred in some inner-city neighborhoods. The relative stability of incomes at the zip code level was coupled with the availability of accurate locational data for the clients to the zip code. Therefore, geography was used to test the theory that areal incomes could be a predictor of term of poverty for each area's residents. To test this, the team divided the 2000 incomes by zip code into octiles with each 1/8 of the region's income range being identified. For example, a "1" was assigned to each zip code with a median income of 1/8 of the area's income; a "2" was assigned to each zip code with a median income of between 1/8 and ¼ of the area's income and so forth. Likewise, the clients' entry income was recoded to a 1 to 8 depending on its value. For clients, the incomes were coded in $250-per-month intervals as a "1" for those less than $750 per month; "2" for $750-$999 per month; through "8" for those of $2,500 or more per month.

The correlation between Entry Income ranges and Zip Code Income ranges was highly significant at the .000 level. Those clients with the highest entry income live in the zip codes with the highest average income. Obviously, the higher income participants are facing situational poverty, but it is probable that the clients from the higher-income zip codes, regardless of their entry income may also be facing situational poverty and not life-long or generational poverty. Unfortunately, many program participants have not accessed services until they were unemployed with no income or with a dual-income becoming a single income, making it impossible to determine if no or very low income is a result of generational or situational poverty.

Once the 5-year American Community Survey data[1] are released at the Census Block Group level, then a correlation of client incomes at the address level can be made with incomes at the Census Block Group level. If the correlation holds at the Block Group level, then Block Group identifiers may be used as an initial proxy for term of poverty. It should be noted, however, that to conduct an address-match that will assign Block Groups to each address will require a "clean" address file with correctly spelled valid street names, valid house numbers and valid zip codes. Given the error and missing rate of zip codes in the HMIS files, it appears that an address-match would require an extensive amount of resources.

[1] The Decennial Census no longer collects sample data, including income information, rather the Census Bureau is relying on a 5-year moving average of monthly sample surveys to collect small-area data. Single-year and 3-year averages are available at the county and large-city level, but the smaller the geographic area, the larger the required sample size, therefore only 5-year averages are provided at the zip code, census tract and census block group levels beginning with 2005-2009 data being released in January, 2011.

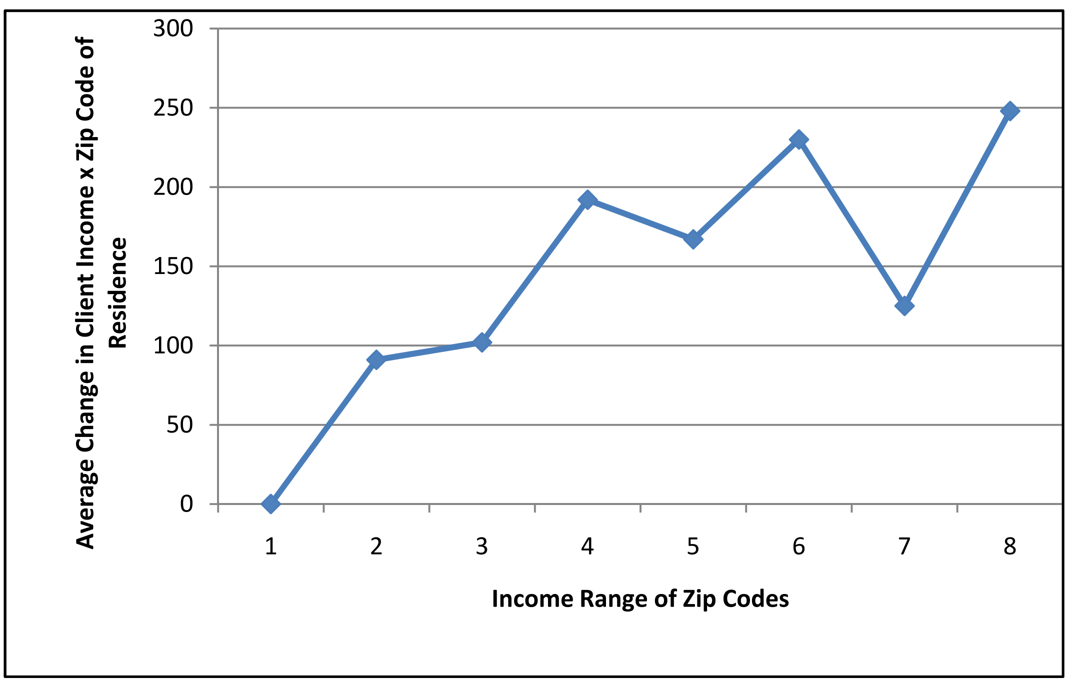
The ideal solution to determining term of poverty would be to alter the intake questionnaires to include questions about the history of the individual's income. Additionally, since the lines between the "hidden rules" (see Table 16) may be blurred in some cases, other questions to determine the client's overall set of "hidden rules" may be necessary. These changes in intake questionnaires will allow staff to determine the assumptions and rules with which the client is working in attempting to deal with homelessness risk.

Additionally, a there is a slightly significant correlation (.044) between the zip code income range and the average change in income of the exited program participants. In general, the higher the resident's zip code average income, the greater the change in income for the participant. The table and chart below summarize this correlation:

Table 7 – Average Income Range by Zip Code by Average Change in Income of Exited Participants x Zip Code

Zip Code Income Range by Octile	Average Change in Income by Participant Zip Code
1	$0
2	$91
3	$102
4	$192
5	$167
6	$230
7	$125
8	$248

Figure 4 – Correlation between Average Change in Client Income and Average Area Income Range by Zip Code of Client Residence



Programmatic analysis: The team analyzed a number of variables related to service provision in light of entry income, entry housing status, exit income and destination. All of the homeless prevention clients were either at eminent risk of homelessness (i.e. eviction notices had been received) or at risk of homelessness (i.e. rents or utilities in arrears). Additionally, the vast majority for which information was provided, exited to a stable environment which may mean they were in a stable environment at exit, with no information as to the sustainability of that housing stability. With no information for 40.9% and very limited follow-up information, it is unclear if the program has been a success in providing long-term housing stability.

Table 8 – Housing Status at Entry

Status	Percent
Literally Homeless	6.9
Unstably Housed/at risk	38.2
Stably housed	0.4
Eminently losing housing	19.0
No Information	35.5

Table 9 – Destination of Exited Clients

Destination	Percent
Shelter/SHP/S+C/SRO	0.2
Hospital/Psychiatric Facility/ SA Center	0.0
Jail/Prison	0.4
Housed/no subsidy	56.3
Temporarily with others or unvouchered motel	1.2
Permanently with others or Foster Care	0.2
Housed with subsidy	0.7
Deceased	0.1
No Information	40.9

As indicated above, the vast majority of those for whom destination information was provided, listed unsubsidized independent housing as their destination. The destination information is based on actual housing at exit, when everyone should be stably housed as part of the program, and the client's indication as to their expected destination at the end of the month. No follow-up information is available to determine if the clients remain stably housed. Based on the number of clients called in the team's follow up survey with either disconnected phones or indicating that their income had decreased and/or their life was worse, it can be estimated that a significant number do not remain stably housed for at least 90 days.

One concern about the data above is the high percent with no information. This indicates resistance by the client to divulge their incoming or outgoing situation or incorrect/incomplete recording of information by the case manager or intake specialist. Throughout the analysis of the HMIS data, the team found a high rate of incomplete or incorrect information entered by the staff at the 6 agencies. For a true assessment of the outcomes, complete and accurate information must be provided. According to HMIS, very few exited clients (less than 2%) have received follow-up contacts and most of the phone numbers entered at intake are non-existent, incorrect or no longer in service with no updated contact information on file through HMIS. This makes assessing the long-term effectiveness of the assistance impossible.

Disregarding the incomplete information, the team analyzed the services provided against outcomes and client survey results. Of those former clients who the team was able to reach by phone, all indicated that their treatment by staff was excellent and that they appreciated the services provided.

However, of those contacted, 1/3 said that their life is better since being in the program, 1/3 said their life was the same and 1/3 said their life was worse, stating health issues or job loss after exiting as the reason. Just over 1/4 stated that they found either a job or a better job, but of those more than 1/2 indicated that they found a job by their own efforts and not due to any assistance by the HPRP agency. Approximately 28% indicated that, while the rent and utility assistance provided was extremely helpful, the term was too short for the household to get back on its feet. Most felt that they needed at least 2 to 4 more months of assistance.

Service term: As indicated nearly 1/3 of exited clients contacted stated that they felt they needed rent and/or utility assistance for a longer period of time. The table below shows the average and the maximum length of time for exited clients by agency:

Table 10 – Enrollment Duration by Agency

Agency	Average Months Per Household	Longest Household Enrollment In Months
BLUE	2.61	6
GREEN	3.18	8
PEACH*	2.33	4
PURPLE	3.1	9
RED	3.54	8
YELLOW	5.09	11

**Agency provides short-term assistance and at intake/triage refers those needing longer-term transitional housing to a partner agency.*

Due to the lack of variance in the length of time a household is enrolled in a program, there is no significant correlation between time in program and change in income. Based on conversations with the program managers as well as a review of the data, the program is being considered as a short-term rental program, primarily due to the funding constraints. Agency managers have indicated that they do not receive enough funds to provide adequate numbers of case managers for clients to remain in the program for 6 to 18 months. Additionally, the need is great enough that many of the agencies have opted to provide 3 months of service to 3 to 6 times the number of households rather than 9 to 18 months of service to fewer households. Going into the program, most agencies thought that a short-term "leg-up" would stabilize the vast majority of the clients. This does not appear to be the case based on the change in income from entrance to exit. The table below summarizes the change in income for those clients who exited the program by December 1, 2010.

Throughout the analysis process, the team was searching for variables that would explain client success and form the basis for identifying a best practice in homeless prevention services. Various analyses were conducted for all cases and cases by agency.

General analysis of all cases: A set of correlations was developed for all exited households to determine which variables had the most significant correlations. Initial assumptions would be that:

- as the time in the program increases, the net change in income increases;
- as the number of services provided increases, the net change in income increases;
- as the level of income at intake increases, the number of services and length of time needed to stability decreases;
- there is no strong correlation between the number of household members and the net change in income;

- there is a strong correlation between the number of household members and the number of units of service per month; and
- there are significant differences in outcomes among the 6 agencies.

A correlation analysis confirmed some of the initial assumptions and disproved others. A correlation analysis of all 383 households by variable is presented as Table 11 on the next page. The attachments provide a set of tables that show the same correlation matrix for each agency. Also, following Table 11 is a table showing the One-Way ANOVA – analysis of variance – for the same variables among the 6 agencies.

Table11 -- Correlations for Total Database of Valid Exited Households (*n*=383)

Correlation Matrix		# of HH Members	Days In Program	Income @ Intake	Income @ Exit	Total Services Received	Change in Income	Total Services per Month
# of HH Members	Pearson Correlation	1	.031	.269(**)	.297(**)	.155(**)	.164(**)	.107(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.543	.000	.000	.002	.001	.037
	N	383	383	383	383	383	383	378
Days In Program	Pearson Correlation	.031	1	.050	.129(*)	.535(**)	.121(*)	-.241(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.543		.326	.011	.000	.017	.000
	N	383	383	383	383	383	383	378
Income@ Intake	Pearson Correlation	.269(**)	.050	1	.581(**)	.221(**)	-.034	.186(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.326		.000	.000	.510	.000
	N	383	383	383	383	383	383	378
Income @ Exit	Pearson Correlation	.297(**)	.129(*)	.581(**)	1	.179(**)	.794(**)	.077
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.011	.000		.000	.000	.138
	N	383	383	383	383	383	383	378
Total Services Received	Pearson Correlation	.155(**)	.535(**)	.221(**)	.179(**)	1	.055	.580(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.000	.000		.284	.000
	N	383	383	383	383	383	383	378
Change in Income	Pearson Correlation	.164(**)	.121(*)	-.034	.794(**)	.055	1	-.045
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.017	.510	.000	.284		.382
	N	383	383	383	383	383	383	378
Total Services per Month	Pearson Correlation	.107(*)	-.241(**)	.186(**)	.077	.580(**)	-.045	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.037	.000	.000	.138	.000	.382	
	N	378	378	378	378	378	378	378

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

- As the time in the program increases, the net change in income increases only moderately;
- As the number of services provided increases, the net change in income does not increase significantly;
- As the level of income at intake increases, the number of services increases significantly rather than decreasing; and there is no correlation between the income at intake and the length of time in the program;
- There is a strong correlation between the number of household members and the net change in income; and
- There is a moderate correlation between the number of household members and the number of units of service per month.

Based on the correlation matrix, the initial assumptions were altered and upon further review, the resulting correlations and assumptions are understandable.

- As the time in the program increases, the net change in income increases only moderately:
  - The vast majority of the clients were enrolled for 3 months or less. During that short time, it would not be expected for significantly higher paying jobs to be secured.
- As the number of services provided increases, the net change in income does not increase significantly:
  - The greater the level of instability – financially, socially, emotionally – the more services that are needed and the longer it takes to bring the household to stability and increased income.
  - There is no significant variance in the number of months in the program – regardless of level of instability, the majority are enrolled for 3 months or less, though more services per month and more months in the program are needed.
- As the level of income at intake increases, the number of services increases significantly rather than decreasing; and there is no correlation between the income at intake and the length of time in the program:
  - Overall, the level of income is greater in the outlying areas, while the accessibility to services through other agencies is considerably less. Therefore, in the more suburban areas, the agencies must be one-stop-shops providing all of the services to the clients.
  - Though the database provides a count of services provided by other agencies, few clients from any of the 6 agencies actually accessed other agencies during their tenure with HPRP, while the inner-loop agencies streamline their services relying on collaborations to provide comprehensive assistance.
  - The lack of variance in the time in the HPRP program makes it difficult to assess a correlation, positive or negative, between number of services/time and income at intake.
- There is a strong correlation between the number of household members and the net change in income:
  - While household size does not inherently denote 2-adult households, many of the large households do have 2 or more adults, adding to the job and income pool.
  - As household size increases, income must increase, resulting in adults taking second jobs to ensure financial stability.
- There is a moderate correlation between the number of household members and the number of units of service per month:
  - This is a predictable assumption as each household member may require some level of service, therefore as the number needing services increases, so do the number of services provided.

For the exited households for which income information was provided, 71.5% either lost income or showed no income change during their enrollment in HPRP. Obviously, income is a key factor to housing stability and without a significant increase between income at the stage of probable eviction and at the stage of successfully exiting a housing assistance program, those exiting will not be able to sustain independent housing for more than 30 to 60 days. The table below shows the distribution of exited households by change in their income between program intake and exit.

Table 12 – Change In Income During Enrollment

Difference in Income between Entry and Exit	Percent
Lost Income	16.3%
No Income Change	29.8%
Increased < $250/month	7.7%
Increased $250-$499/month	2.0%
Increased $500-$749/month	1.8%
Increased $750-$999/month	1.1%
Increased $1,000-$1,249/month	2.4%
Increased $1,250-$1,499/month	.6%
Increased $1,500-$1,749/month	1.3%
Increased $1,750+/month	1.7%
No Income Information	35.5%

Analyses by agency: In addition to analyzing correlations for significance, One-Way ANOVA's were conducted comparing the means of variables among the 6 agencies.

Table 13 – One-Way ANOVA by Agency

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
# of HH Members	Between Groups	80.424	5	16.085	6.682	.000
	Within Groups	907.477	377	2.407		
	Total	987.901	382			
Days In Program	Between Groups	179653.19	5	35930.638	14.698	.000
	Within Groups	921601.62	377	2444.567		
	Total	1101254.81	382			
Income @ Intake	Between Groups	408735270.13	5	81747054.026	31.255	.000
	Within Groups	986046134.596	377	2615506.988		
	Total	1394781404.72	382			
Income @ Exit	Between Groups	768875128.905	5	153775025.78	19.350	.000
	Within Groups	2996054423.04	377	7947093.96		
	Total	3764929551.94	382			
Total Services Received	Between Groups	2325.288	5	465.058	22.971	.000
	Within Groups	7632.471	377	20.245		
	Total	9957.760	382			
Change in Income	Between Groups	67033117.329	5	13406623.466	2.081	.067
	Within Groups	2429056759.68	377	6443121.378		
	Total	2496089877.01	382			
Total Services per Month	Between Groups	136.386	5	27.277	15.478	.000
	Within Groups	655.571	372	1.762		
	Total	791.958	377			

The table indicates that all but the income difference are highly significant (<0.01). Income difference is not significant at the 0.05 level but should not be totally discounted as a possible dependent variable in analysis as it does have a significance of 0.067. The ANOVA describes how the means (averages) of each variable vary (differ) among the 6 agencies. The variances within each group are large indicating that not only do the means vary across agencies but the raw numbers vary considerably within in agency. This "within group" calculation indicates that despite the high significance of the "between group" variances, the agencies may not yield a significant explanation for the differences due to the wide variances within each group.

During the analysis, it was determined that geographic distribution of the agencies as well as client income at intake might provide meaningful explanations of the income at exit. The 6 agencies were aggregated into three groups based on the average income of the surrounding area. The groupings are Red/Green, Blue/Peach and Purple/Yellow. Accessibility to jobs, transportation and other agencies as well as the general economy in the area determined the groupings. The same correlations were run including the Agency-Locational-Score with the following results:

Table 14 – Correlations of Agency Locational Score with Other Variables

Other Variables		Agency Locational Score
# of HH Members	Pearson Correlation	.181(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Days In Program	Pearson Correlation	.050
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.326
Income @ Intake	Pearson Correlation	.268(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Income @ Exit	Pearson Correlation	.262(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Total Services Received	Pearson Correlation	.429(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Change in Income	Pearson Correlation	.122(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017
Total Services per Month	Pearson Correlation	.396(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

All variables except for the number of days in the program are significant to at least the 0.05 level. When conducting a One-Way ANOVA using the 3 groups as the factor, the significance for each variable remained within the same significance as is outlined above in Table 13 for all 6 agencies individually. The only difference between the two sets of statistics is that the Change in Income became slightly more significant at 0.057 as opposed to 0.067.

A primary use of the correlations and ANOVAs is to determine possible independent/explanatory variables for the key dependent variable in a regression analysis. The purpose of this study is to determine the best practices in homeless prevention. Based on currently available data, "Change in Income" or "Income @ Exit" are the two variables that can be used as dependent variables. "Destination" – housing situation at exit – would generally be considered as a possible dependent variable but there is not enough variance in the outcomes and the outcomes reported are suspect. The "Destination" reflects where the client was on the day of exit and where he/she expected to be in 30 to 90 days. Without adequate follow-up data, it is impossible to judge the accuracy of the "Destination" information. More than 90% of the clients were determined to have stable unsubsidized housing with most of the remaining 10% having "unknown" as the destination. Based on the limited number of follow-up telephone interviews the team conducted, it appears that at least 36% were not exiting in a stable and sustainable housing situation and would again be on the verge of homelessness within 90 days. Therefore, the "Destination" variable does not reflect reality and could not be considered in the analysis.

Preliminary regression analyses were conducted to determine the strength of the variables in explaining exiting income. Unfortunately, none of the regressions yielded substantive results. There was not sufficient variation in "Destination" to use it as a dependent variable in an analysis of outcomes. "Change in Income" appears to be the best variable of outcome given the available data in HMIS. Several models were tested using "Change in Income" as the dependent variable and a number of potentially explanatory variables ad the independent variables. "Months in Program" did not have sufficient variance to include as most clients exited at the end of the third month. Housing situation at intake also had very little variance as this is a homeless prevention program and virtually all clients were at risk of homelessness or had received eviction notices. When conducting the regression with "Change in Income" as the dependent variable and "Income @ Intake", "Number of Household Members", "Total Services per Month" and "Agency Locational Score" as the independent/explanatory variables, an R^2 of only .057 resulted.[2] Using the same explanatory model with "Income @ Exit" as the dependent variable and the same independent variables resulted in an adjusted R^2 of a respectable .375, however most of the difference in R^2 is due to collinearity, as income at exit is comprised in large part of income at intake[3]. A stepwise regression model (entering each independent variable one at a time) showed that the adjusted R^2 with the intake income as the sole independent variable was .338. Again, this confirms the collinearity of the incomes at the two points in time.

An analysis of the types of services listed in HMIS as received indicates that very few clients received services that could sustain them in the long term. The table below shows the percent of exited clients by their entry income range who received sustainable services:

Table 15 – Sustainable Services Received By Entry Income Range*

Entry Monthly Income Range	Job-related (Job prep, Job search, Job counseling, Resume assistance, Job referrals)	Financial Counseling (Credit repair, Credit counseling, Financial literacy education, Budgeting education)	More than 1 Case Management Contacts per Month
No Income	5.8%	25.0%	42.3%
< $750	5.3%	24.9%	37.3%
$750-$999	4.3%	22.9%	40.0%
$1,000-$1,249	4.5%	26.9%	44.8%
$1,250-$1,499	4.9%	11.5%	41.7%
$1,500-$1,749	0%	38.2%	41.2%
$1,750-$1,999	0%	35.3%	64.7%
$2,000-$2,249	0%	27.3%	54.5%
$2,250+	0%	44.5%	54.5%

**It should be noted that most of the HPRP subrecipient agencies were not previously users of HMIS and with HPRP do not enter all service data for clients receiving services from other areas of their program that are not federally funded and do not require entry into HMIS. As a result, the numbers of services other than case management likely do not accurately reflect the true level of services received.*

As can be seen, HMIS data show that very few clients received any level of job-related services, including services by other departments within the HPRP agency or by other agencies. Likewise, less than 1/3

[2] Change in Income = a + b(Income at Intake)+c(# of HH Members)+d(Total Services/Month)+e(Agency Locational Score)

[3] Income at Exit = a + b(Income at Intake)+c(# of HH Members)+d(Total Services/Month)+e(Agency Locational Score)

received assistance with credit repair, credit counseling or financial literacy. On average less than 1/2 received more than 1 case management contact per month. Credit repair and case management are HPRP-eligible expenses and should more accurately reflect the level of ancillary services provided. The three primary services needed to move life-long or situational poor to long-term self-sufficiency are assistance with education/job placement, financial counseling and case management. The rates for these three services confirm that the program is being viewed by the 6 primary state-funded HPRP homeless prevention agencies as a short-term rental program and not a comprehensive self-sufficiency program. The structure of the HPRP program at the federal level is that of a housing program and not a comprehensive services program. The limitations to HPRP make it difficult, if not impossible, for funded agencies to provide comprehensive supportive services. In addition, there is no verification available to indicate if non-HPRP services are recorded in HMIS for agencies that receive no other federal funds and no other mandate to use HMIS.

SEARCH has only exited 20 clients according to the HMIS database. Of those only 20% were enrolled for less than 4 months, with 35% (7 clients) being enrolled 6 months or more. Comparing SEARCH to the other 6 agencies, 70% of the 20 clients received more than 1 case management contact per month; 25% received job-related assistance and 10% received financial counseling. SEARCH's exited clients averaged $1,126 per month in income at exit with an average increase in income of $285 per month. Again, the SEARCH program is unique in that it is serving ex-offenders being released from jail or prison. The much smaller case load, the size of the agency and the education and training of the staff makes it much easier for SEARCH to provide more comprehensive services through evidence-based models.

In summary, the analyses of HMIS data, client surveys, former client surveys and staff surveys indicate that:

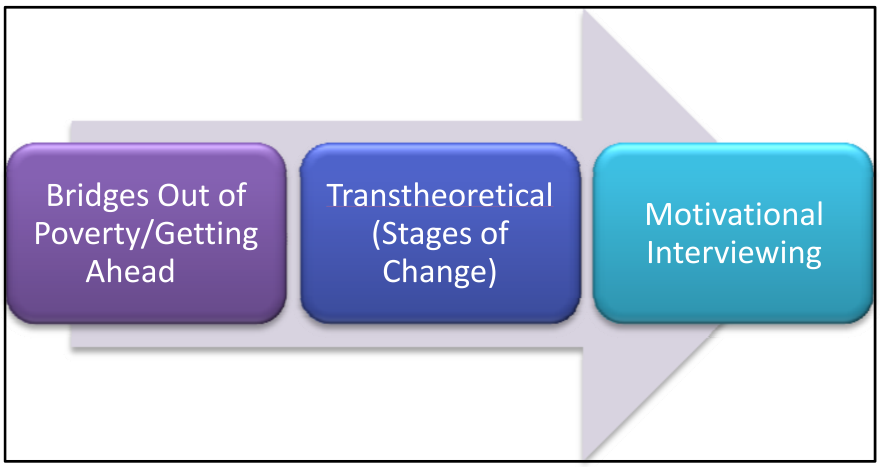
- Most clients are limited to 3 months of assistance – too short a time for realistic permanent move to stability;
- The program appears to be structured similarly at each of the 6 agencies, reducing variances due to program differences;
- Comparing the effect that the agency has on the outcomes, it appears that proximity to jobs, transportation and other support services along with the income of the area explains the differences;
- Income at intake appears to be a primary explanation for income change;
- Total and per capita income at intake does not appear to explain need at intake nor is it correlated to the number of total services or services per month;
- Though income difference has very wide intra-agency variance, much of the variance is negated as they range from extreme negatives to extreme positives; and
- The lack of large variances in most of the variables and the wide but negating variance in changes in income result in very limited variation with very little explanation of outcomes.

Best Practice and Conclusions

Best Practice

MKP Consulting, through experience and research, has identified a set of three nationally recognized evidence-based models that, when linked together, form a cohesive "best practice" for addressing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness. The figure below shows the three-step approach that is explained in this section:

Figure 4 – Best Practice Model for Preventing Homelessness



Bridges Out of Poverty/Getting Ahead: The team of Philip E. DeVol, Terie Dreussi Smith and Ruby K. Payne have developed a widely-accepted model of strategies for professionals to assist clients in exiting poverty. Based on earlier work by Ruby Payne in assisting educators in understanding the impacts of generational poverty on learning, the program is devised to identify and address the mental maps that different income groups use in the development of their life skills. The uniqueness of this program, and what makes it vital for the homeless prevention programs, is the identification of the type of poverty facing the client. The authors have developed "Hidden Rules Among Classes" that identifies the differences in perception and approaches between those in generational or long-term poverty, those of middle income who are facing a unique situational poverty, and those of upper income. How each group perceives and addresses issues involving possessions, money, social emphasis, food, appearance, time, education, destiny, family structure, world view, love/acceptance, driving forces and humor determines how well different service models will work. A summary of the differences between those in generational or long-term poverty and those of middle income who have encountered a crisis resulting in situational poverty is provided in the table below:

Table 16 – "Hidden Rules" Between Those in Generational and Situational Poverty*

Issue	Generational/Long-term Poverty	Middle Income
Possessions	People	Things
Money	To be used/spent	To be managed
Personality	For entertainment	For achievement and stability
Social Emphasis	Social inclusion of those well-liked	Self-governance and self-sufficiency
Food	Quantity is important	Quality is important
Clothing	Individual style, expression of unique personality	Quality, acceptance and labels are important
Time	Present is most important	Future is most important
Education	Valued and revered as an unattainable abstract, not a reasonable reality	Crucial for success and making money
Destiny	Believes in fate and inability to mitigate chance	Believes in choice and ability to change future with good choices
Family Structure	Matriarchal	Patriarchal
World View	Sees world in terms of local setting	Sees world in terms of national setting
Love/Acceptance	Conditional based personality and likability	Conditional based on achievement
Driving Forces	Survival, relationships, entertainment	Work, achievement
Humor	About people	About situations

* Payne, DeVol, Smith: *Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities,* 2001.

Those who have faced long-term poverty perceive things differently than those of moderate or middle income who are facing an unexpected one-time crisis into poverty. Therefore, it is critical that clients be identified not just for the immediate presenting situation but also for their poverty history and their perceptions in each of these categories. Secondly, once identified, a service model must be implemented that takes into account these differing perceptions and views of self, situations and society.

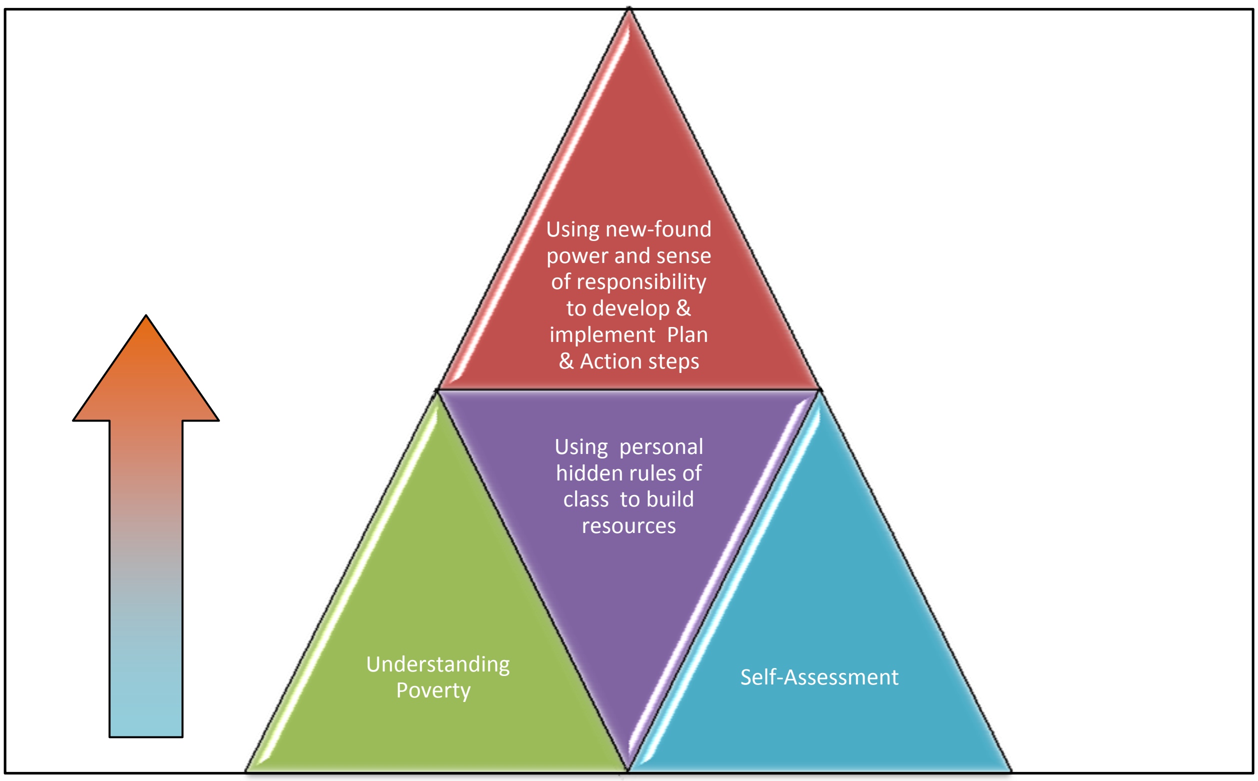
The Bridges Out of Poverty model has several core constructs that can be applied to helping individuals exit long-term or situational poverty:

1. While many aspects of identity can be differentiated in analysis, economic class is the basic differentiator for this model;
2. People in poverty give concrete information and an accurate mental model of their poverty;
3. Clients should be engaged as problem solvers, but the mental model must first be identified to determine the problems to be solved and their solutions;
4. Wealth disparity has great impact on individuals and their mental models, world views, approaches to life;
5. It is important to help individuals understand their own economic and societal experiences in order to help them build and access bridges out of poverty; and
6. Using the "hidden rules" of class can help focus individualized solutions and can bring people together to solve community-level problems.

Bridges Out of Poverty is not a treatment model but a set of concepts that can be used as the underpinning for the implementation of proven service and treatment models. From the Bridges Out of Poverty construct has come the "Getting Ahead in a Just-Getting' By World" model to exit poverty. It is aimed at facilitating lower-income individuals and families in building economic stability. The program is self-directed with professionals providing the tools for the client to create his/her own path to a stable and secure life. In most settings, it is conducted in a group setting, but it has also been developed to function in a one-on-one situation. The program is an educational approach to facilitating change. It encompasses the Transtheoretical (Stages of Change) and Motivational Interviewing models.

The "Getting Ahead" program begins with assisting the client(s) in understanding poverty and how it works in and affects the individuals' lives. The program explains the "Hidden Rules" (above) and helps the client in understanding his/her own set of rules and mental maps. Using motivational interviewing techniques the model assists the client in understanding his/her own resources and power to exit poverty and to develop a set of solutions and action steps. The pyramid below is a summary of the Getting Ahead Mental Model Triangle:

Figure 5 – Getting Ahead Process Pyramid



Transtheoretical (Stages of Change) Model: Critical to the success of the Getting Ahead model is its use of the Transtheoretical Model developed at the University of Houston. This model that is used to identify an individual's stage of readiness to change and assist in moving him/her through each stage was originally developed for treating addictive behaviors. It has proven successful in a number of settings for a number of populations, including moving individuals out of poverty and into self-sufficiency. The model identifies 6 stages that an individual goes through when facing an issue that needs resolution, be it an addictive behavior, poverty or homelessness. These stages are:

1. **Precontemplation** – There is no recognition of a problem or intention to take action in the foreseeable future to resolve the problem. Often the person realizes that there is a problem but maintains an external locus of control, believing that the problem is external and not his/her responsibility or in his/her power to change. At this stage, an understanding of poverty is needed to assist the person in recognizing that there are hidden rules to economic class and that each class has resources at its disposal.
2. **Contemplation** – There is a recognition of a problem and an intention to change within the next 6 to 12 months, but the person does not know how to change and often has not yet developed an internal locus of control, believing he/she can effect change. At this stage, a self-assessment can be effective in determining his/her hidden rules and mental map as well as understanding that he/she can build resources.
3. **Preparation** – There is an intention to take action within the immediate future, usually once a set of action steps can be determined. At this stage, the individual uses his/her personal hidden rules of class to build the resources necessary.
4. **Action -** Specific modifications/changes have been taken to resolve the problem and continue until the problem is resolved. At this stage, the individual, with the assistance of a case worker, develops his/her own self-directed plan and implements self-designed action steps to complete the plan.
5. **Maintenance** – Specific relapse prevention techniques are employed to prevent a return to the life style or circumstance. The individual continues to take responsibility for his/her economic situation and revisits his/her goals frequently to ensure that there is no deviation from the set path.
6. **Termination** – All temptation to return to negative behaviors or situations has ceased and the individual is totally self efficacious, confident that he/she will not return to the negative or troublesome life style or situation. At this point, the individual no longer focuses on getting out of poverty and staying out of poverty and now begins focusing on how to best move further up the economic ladder toward wealth.

Motivational Interviewing (MI): William Miller and Stephen Rollnick developed a method to enhance the effectiveness of the Stages of Change model by using a non-confrontational, non-adversarial approach to helping clients become aware of their stage of change, the problems caused by their behaviors and the risks involved by continuing their behaviors. Additionally, the model is aimed at assisting clients in developing a client-driven service plan that will move the client to successfully exiting the behavior or life style that brought them to seek services. It is also directive in its approach in that the counselor or case manager attempts to (1) influence the client to make changes and (2) help direct the client in the methods for achieving change. The Getting Ahead model is based on Motivational Interviewing.

***Developing a cohesive model to prevent homelessness*:** Moving out of a political framework, such as that which directed the HPRP regulations, is one of the primary goals in the development and implementation of a homeless prevention model. HPRP is a subprogram of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and was developed to help those who “fell” into homelessness or near homelessness. The very assumption was that the economic recession is the sole cause of eminent homelessness, placing the locus of control externally for both entering and exiting poverty. As a result, the regulations demand that funds be spent on housing, utilities and very limited case management. There has been a clear disconnect between the intent to provide short-term housing payments to middle-income households who are facing a one-time crisis and the reality that those who have no other options, who fit the “but for this would be homeless” mold are not generally middle-income with middle-income “hidden rules” and other resources and support systems but are those with long-term poverty or poverty mental maps. Additionally, regardless of the income level prior to the 2008 recession, the locus of control must move from the external to the internal in order for the household to truly exit the risk of homelessness. The structure of HPRP is based on the assumption that entering homelessness is out of the control of the individual and, by default, exiting homelessness is also out of the individual’s control. Providing rental assistance until the economy recovers is not a solution to the individual’s situation or the community’s problem.

Additionally, because the program was quickly crafted and literally thrown out to entitlement jurisdictions who hastily awarded contracts to subrecipient agencies, the agencies receiving the funds have faced many of the same problems as their clients. Again, the locus of control is external with the regulations dictating that the funds must be used solely for housing assistance without an understanding of the needs of the clients. The federal intent was that these funds would supplement supportive services, when in fact, the increase in clients due to HPRP has placed a severe strain on the agencies’ ability to provide adequate ancillary services. Agencies have vastly increased their case load as households have come to them for housing assistance, but have not seen an increase in their supportive services budget to effectively assist clients in becoming self-sufficient. Referral agencies also have not seen an increase in funds and cannot manage the expansion necessary to provide services to HPRP recipients.

In analyzing the data from HMIS and client/former client surveys along with accepted practices in exiting poverty, homelessness and unhealthy behaviors, MKP Consulting has determined that using the evidence-based practices of “Bridges Out of Poverty/Getting Ahead”, Stages of Change and Motivational Interviewing can move the locus of control from external to internal for the client and the agency, merging the three models into a cohesive “best practice” will result in long-term self-sufficiency for the greatest number of participants in a homeless prevention program.

SEARCH employs the Transtheoretical Model with Motivational Interviewing to its programs, including the Jail Inreach homeless prevention program. This two-pronged model has proven successful at SEARCH as well as at Star of Hope’s Transitional Living Center and other transitional supportive housing programs. One aspect that makes the model successful is the term of service – it is not an emergency service program of 90 days or less, but extends to one to two years. This allows the participants to effectively and permanently move through the various stages of change with the help of the client-driven/semi-directed counseling of Motivational Interviewing.

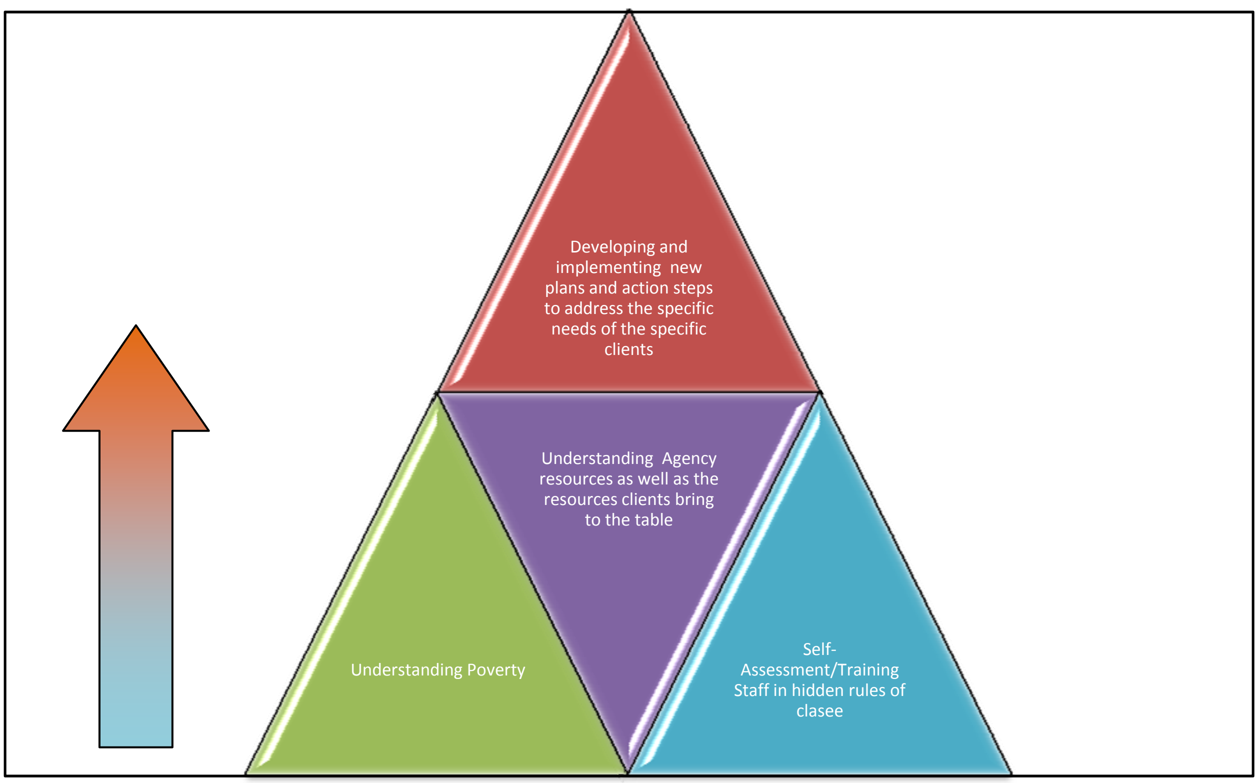
When dealing with a population that is not yet homeless but encompasses both long-term and generationally poor as well as moderate- and middle-income who have faced a crisis leading to situational poverty, the Transtheoretical/Motivational Interviewing model can only be effective if there is a clear identification and understanding of the differing perceptions of the two populations. By identifying the “hidden rules” of each client, a more accurate determination of the stage of change can be made. The case manager or counselor can better understand the source of resistance to change as well as the help the client identify the hidden resources to effect change. Using motivational interviewing to facilitate a client-driven action plan, the locus of control and power to change moves from external to internal and the outcomes will be more permanent.

SEARCH and other homeless providers, such as Star of Hope's Transitional Living Center have developed a very successful modification to the Transtheoretical/Motivational Interviewing model replacing homelessness as the presenting condition/behavior. However, neither the local programs nor most national programs employing this "treatment" model are addressing the currently housed at risk of homelessness that is the target of HPRP. SEARCH's homeless prevention program, evaluated for this project, is designed to provide services to those who are incarcerated and are about to be released to homelessness if intervention does not occur. This is a different population from independently housed renters who are facing eviction or utility termination.

In analyzing the HMIS data, particularly with an underlying map of small-area economics, it is evident that the agencies evaluated have a majority of their clients as either generationally/long-term poor or situationally poor, with several additional clients fitting the other category. Therefore, each needs to either develop a two-pronged approach to exiting poverty and risk of homelessness or be able to address one population category and refer the other to an appropriate agency that is addressing that form of poverty.

To effect a best practices model, a leader such as the Coalition for the Homeless needs to facilitate the education of the member agencies and assist them in the development of a Bridges Out of Poverty program as well as in the expansion of resources. Taking from the Getting Ahead pyramid above, the Coalition for the Homeless can become the facilitator in moving the local agencies ahead. The Bridges to Sustainable Communities has taken the Getting Ahead program and Bridges Out of Poverty to a community level with the intent that community leaders and facilitators can advance the entire locale. This can be applied to a community of like agencies serving like populations.

Figure 6 – Getting Ahead Pyramid Adapted for Agency Progress



This community of agencies, facilitated by an umbrella agency such as the Coalition for the Homeless must first understand poverty and the hidden rules of class as well as the concepts of Stages of Change and Motivational Interviewing. Then they must develop intake instruments that assist in identifying both the hidden rules and the individual's stage of or readiness for change. With trained staff, the agencies can then implement this evidence-based model in a way that empowers the client and results in permanent economic change and housing stability.

General Conclusions

Incomplete HMIS data and insufficient follow-up data prevent a true determination of the success of the homeless prevention aspect of the State-funded HPRP programs. However, a few issues have presented themselves in meeting with program managers, surveying program staff, surveying clients and analyzing data:

1. Federal Structure:
    a. The program has been structured at the federal level as a housing assistance program, and not a self-sufficiency program. Therefore, the agencies have not been provided the financial resources or leeway to use HPRP funds to the extent needed to provide a comprehensive service delivery approach to self-sufficiency.
    b. The program was designed and released quickly, in what appears to be a short-sighted and somewhat haphazard manner with programmatic and regulatory changes coming from HUD well after agencies were funded. With little time to design a delivery system and with changes in the program structure, agencies have faced confusion and the inability to develop innovative approaches to services.
    c. Only those agencies with fully-functional/fully-funded comprehensive service delivery programs following nationally recognized evidence-based models have been able to utilize HPRP for ancillary housing funding rather than to view HPRP as a housing-only assistance program.
2. Local Structure:
    a. Based on conversations with agencies receiving multiple sources of HPRP funding, it is clear that the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs has provided the fewest non-federal restrictions and the most efficient reimbursement structure of the three local funding streams. This has provided the State-funded agencies with more opportunity to fund case management and some eligible supportive services such as credit repair and limited legal services. Additionally, the agencies have been able to rely on State HPRP reimbursements to be timely for keeping rents and utilities current and not causing agency shortfalls.
    b. The State-funded agencies that were evaluated consisted of 2 small assistance ministries receiving funds and management through the umbrella organization of ACAM; 2 larger suburban assistance ministries managing the program in house; 2 inner-city programs – one an assistance ministry and one a local branch of the national Salvation Army. A 7th site – SEARCH – was also included though the program was structured with a different population and too few clients to be compared to the other 6 agencies.
    c. Of the 7 agencies, SEARCH appears to be in the best position to provide the most comprehensive and evidence-based service delivery model. Receiving federal funds

requiring the use of Transtheoretical/Motivational Interviewing models, having staff with degrees in social work or psychology, and requiring regular in-service trainings in the models have provided that agency with the ability to implement a state-of-the-art program that can address all of the needs of their clients in a replicable and nationally recognized manner. However, what may be lacking in the SEARCH model is a component that identifies differences between generational/life-long poverty and short-term/one-time situational poverty and then adapts the Transtheoretical/MI model to address the difference. SEARCH has primarily served the literally homeless, most of whom have a long-term history of poverty. The current structure of their homeless prevention program also deals with the same type of population – incarcerated offenders about to exit the penal system. There is little need, given their structure and population, to differentiate between middle-income who have hit a one-time crisis resulting in poverty and those who have experienced poverty and hold the "hidden rules" of low-income individuals. (*The models mentioned here are outlined below in the "Best Practice" section).*

d. The remaining 6 agencies have a successful history of providing short-term, and often one-time, assistance to those who are at risk of homelessness. While Salvation Army does provide shelter services, the social service division is aimed at providing subsistence assistance as are the other 5 agencies. For the assistance ministries, HPRP is a new approach to serving their client base. Most have been providing one-month or partial-month rent and utility assistance. Expanding the assistance to at least 3 months has been seen as a great advantage to their existing programs and has given many of the clients the "leg-up" needed to get back on their feet. However, the needs presented at entry indicate that most of the clients require at least 6 months to 9 months to truly stabilize and become self-sufficient, including becoming current with bills other than rent and utilities, such as car payments, credit card debt, payday loans and other past-due bills. The respite from paying rent, coupled with being re-employed, would give the household the opportunity to become current with those bills not covered by HPRP assistance.

Possible next steps in moving the agencies to a more evidence-based model and providing more comprehensive data for future analysis are outlined in the figure below:

Figure 7 – Next Steps for Implementing Best Practices in Harris County