

**NEW YORK STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**Mario M. Cuomo, Governor  
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**The Homelessness Prevention Program  
Outcomes and Effectiveness**

**1990**

**Office of Program Planning, Analysis and Development**

**and**

**Office of Shelter and Supported Housing Programs**

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# Executive Summary

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## A. Program Description and Implementation Status

### Background

The Homelessness Prevention Program was established to address the problem of homelessness by preventing it from occurring. Under the provisions of the program, local service providers and community based organizations can receive funds for services to eliminate situations thought to result in homelessness. *Activities eligible for funding include:*

- a. *Counselling* - program staff provide counselling to tenants on a variety of issues such as drug/alcohol abuse, domestic violence, housekeeping, budgeting and bill paying and other areas which may effect housing stability and likelihood of eviction.
- b. *Benefits / Entitlements Advocacy* - program staff intervene to ensure that clients are receiving the benefits to which they are entitled. They also intervene when there is a problem in the delivery of such benefits.
- c. *Landlord/Tenant mediation* - In cases where housing is threatened but legal proceedings have not yet been initiated, program staff attempt to mediate conflicts and facilitate fair and workable compromises between landlords and tenants.
- d. *Tenant Activities* - program staff educate tenants with regard to their legal rights and responsibilities as renters. They also help tenants organize so they can act collectively to remedy housing problems like code violations, landlord harassment etc.
- e. *Legal Services* - this represents the bulk of activity under this program. Legal advice and, if necessary, representation are provided to low income tenants who are at risk of losing their apartments through eviction. Those who have been the victims of illegal lock outs are also served with legal representation and advice. Tenants who have entered into unfair stipulation agreements with landlords also benefit from the provision of legal services to renegotiate a more balanced agreement.

### Implementation Status

These are currently 25 not-for-profit agencies under contract in 19 local social services districts to provide homelessness prevention services. The majority of these programs began servicing clients between March and May of 1990.

### Service Profile

The types and mix of services that are offered by local providers are determined during the selection and funding process. During this process, each prospective provider is required to submit a proposal which assesses local needs, explains the program with which the agency plans to meet these needs and describes the agency's capability for implementing the program. Providers who succeed in obtaining funding develop and

administer their proposed program under contract with local social services districts.

At present, most of the service provided through the Homelessness Prevention Program is legal in nature, including legal counsel, advice, and representation. Local programs also provide substantial amounts of entitlements advocacy services. Other services provided by local programs include community and tenant education; referrals to other social service providers; life skills training including budgeting and bill paying; and landlord/tenant mediation.

**Stage of intervention**

The majority of clients served by the Homelessness Prevention Program are in the late stages of the eviction process. In all but two programs, the majority of clients have been served with eviction notices or received eviction notices while in the program.

**B. Program Generated Benefits and Savings**

**Prevented Evictions and Prevented Homelessness**

We estimate that, at current levels of funding, the late stage intervention component of the Homelessness Prevention Program will prevent 3576 evictions annually. In so doing, the Homelessness Prevention Program will prevent an estimated 797 spells of homelessness.

**Cost Efficiency**

The costs of providing services under the Homelessness Prevention Program are very low. We estimate that the Homelessness Prevention Program incurs costs of \$443 per client. Expenditures per prevented eviction and per prevented homeless spell were \$824 and \$3,696 respectively.

**Net Savings Associated with the Homelessness Prevention Program**

One of the desirable and intended effects of many public programs is to prevent certain expenditures. In other words, public outlays are often made in the hope of avoiding a larger outlay of a different kind. In the case of the Homelessness Prevention Program, the outlay that can be avoided is the cost of housing clients in homeless shelters, hotels or motels. We estimate that the late stage eviction component of the Homelessness Prevention Program saves approximately \$11.5M in averted homeless shelter costs. The annual cost of the program is roughly \$2.9M including funds from local sources. This means that the Homelessness Prevention Program returns 4 dollars for every dollar of public funds invested. The net savings (savings - costs) associated with the evictions prevented by the program are estimated at \$8.6M.

It should be noted that only those benefits associated with late-stage intervention (intervention after an eviction notice or serious threat of eviction) could be estimated. The portion of the Homelessness Prevention Program's "total benefit" that is not reflected in our estimates may be significant. Consequently, we believe that this report understates the benefits produced by the Homelessness Prevention Program.

### C. Possible Reasons for Observed Program Effectiveness

We conclude that the Homelessness Prevention Program is highly cost effective. We believe that this is the result of three complimentary factors:

- o The Homelessness Prevention Program utilizes existing and experienced legal service providers who are well-organized and specialize in the provision of legal services to low-income clients. This results in very low cost-per-client ratios.
- o Local programs effectively target clients by focusing their efforts on late stage intervention. Prevention programs often serve many more clients than necessary because they cannot reliably identify the clients who will experience the negative outcome which they seek to prevent. Fortunately, Homelessness Prevention Program providers experience this problem to a lesser extent than usual because the functioning of the eviction process serves to identify clients who may soon become homeless. By emphasizing late-stage intervention, local program providers have taken advantage of a natural screening process to identify needy clients while avoiding the necessity of serving many who would not become homeless.
- o Program activities are highly effective. The mix of services currently provided by local programs is highly effective. Programs report that in roughly 80% of their cases, they are able to avert client eviction.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

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### A. The Extent of Homelessness in New York State

One of the most critical issues confronting New York State in the 1980's and 1990's has been the problem of homelessness. Homelessness is not new: the state has had a population of homeless individuals since the beginning of the century. But with the exceptions of the Depression and the 1960's, this population has been small and relatively stable. In the past decade the ranks of the homeless have swelled and the face of homelessness has changed from the stereotypical skid row alcoholic male, to include families with children (many headed by single women), young adults who have run away or been forced to leave their homes and the deinstitutionalized mentally ill.

#### Sheltered Homeless

On a given night in 1989, as many as 32,700 persons, including over 12,500 children, were sheltered in emergency accommodations in New York State. These accommodations included a variety of shelters provided by the state and by non-profit agencies, churches, synagogues and other private charities.

#### Unsheltered Homeless

In addition to the sheltered homeless, there are the unsheltered homeless--those who live in parks, on the street, in train or bus stations or in other public places. HUD estimates that for every one homeless individual sheltered in emergency housing, there are 1.3 who are not sheltered. Again, the stereotype of the street person has typically included the "skid row bum" and the "bag lady". Although many unsheltered homeless single adults do have problems with drugs or alcohol and mental illness, these stereotypes often do not apply.

The unsheltered component of the homeless population of single adults, although difficult to estimate, may be substantial. A recent New York City Transit Authority study, estimated that several thousand homeless adults sleep each night in subway trains and stations. Local New York City media have reported that groups of homeless people (sometimes as many as five hundred in one location) live in abandoned railroad tunnels, underground vaults and under highways.

There is little data available on unsheltered homeless families. The most common belief is that families who are homeless are more likely to seek assistance from emergency shelters and less likely to resort to the streets, parks or other public places. A study conducted by New York University, for the Human Resources Administration, found that 11% of families requesting emergency shelter from the city, had spent the previous night unsheltered in some public place. Comparison of this figure with the 18% estimate, reported in an HRA study of four shelters for homeless single adults, suggests that the pattern of sheltered vs. unsheltered does not differ greatly for families and singles. A greater proportion of homeless families

than was previously suspected spend some time living on the streets, in parks, or in other public places.

### Doubling Up

There is a third component of the homeless population-- the doubled up or marginally housed component. This population consists of families who are forced to live with other families to avoid living on the street or in homeless shelters. Some definitions of homelessness exclude doubled up families or consider this population to be marginally housed. But regardless of the definition applied, it is clear that the housing status of this group is in jeopardy because it is dependent on the complaisance of the host individuals or families.

Many areas of the state are believed to have significant numbers of *doubled-up families*, but this phenomena has been most thoroughly documented in New York City. It is widely believed that 100,000 families residing in New York City are currently living doubled up with other family members or friends.<sup>1</sup> Low vacancy rates and high rents are the suspected causes of what may be an increasing population of marginally housed families in the New York City area, as well as some of the surrounding areas like Westchester, Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

## B. Contents of This Report

This report uses various methodologies to estimate the impacts and cost savings which would result from an average year of program operation. These estimates are contained in Chapters 3 and 4. The chapter which precedes these findings describes the causes of homelessness and the role of the Homelessness Prevention Program.

A detailed description of the estimation methods that were used is contained in the methodological appendix (Appendix B). Our belief is that, for reasons explained in Appendix B, the estimates are somewhat conservative. In other words, we believe that the methods and assumptions that were employed tend to *understate true program benefits*.

## Chapter 2: The Nature and Scope of the Homelessness Prevention Program

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### A. Overview

Homelessness Prevention Programs across the state accomplish their goals using different techniques. This chapter describes the Homelessness Prevention Programs operating in New York State and the services which they provide.

### B. Eligible Services

Local service providers and community based organizations are funded to provide various services aimed at ameliorating many of the factors thought to cause homelessness. There are numerous services that are eligible for funding each intended to protect the housing status of low income tenants and ensure the habitability of their apartments. These services can be grouped into four intervention categories:

- a. **Counselling** - program staff provide counselling to tenants on a variety of issues such as drug/alcohol abuse, domestic violence, housekeeping, budgeting and bill paying and other areas which may effect housing stability and likelihood of eviction.
- b. **Benefits / Entitlements Advocacy** - program staff intervene to ensure that clients are receiving the benefits to which they are entitled. They also intervene when there is a problem in the delivery of such benefits.
- c. **Landlord/Tenant mediation** - in cases where housing is threatened but legal proceedings have not yet been initiated, program staff attempt to mediate conflicts and facilitate fair and workable compromises between landlords and tenants.
- d. **Tenant Activities** - program staff educate tenants with regard to their legal rights and responsibilities as renters. They also help tenants organize so they can act collectively to remedy housing problems like code violations, landlord harassment etc.
- e. **Legal Services** - this represents the bulk of activity under this program. Legal advice and, if necessary, representation are provided to low income tenants who are at risk of losing their apartments through eviction. Those who have been the victims of illegal lock outs are also served with legal representation and

advice. Tenants who have entered into unfair stipulation agreements with landlords also benefit from the provision of legal services to renegotiate a more balanced agreement.

The types and mix of services that are offered locally are determined during the selection and funding process. During this process each prospective provider is required to submit a proposal which assesses local needs, explains the program with which the agency plans to meet these needs and describes the agencies capability for implementing the program. Figure 2.1 indicates the services identified by each of the providers currently under contract with a local social services district. Table 2.1 contains client targets established for each provider.

**Figure 2.1 Direct Services Provided by Local Homelessness Prevention Programs**

	Counseling	Benefits Advocacy	Landlord/ Tenant Mediation	Tenant Activities	Legal Services
Albany	X	X	X	X	X
Allegany / Cattaraugus / Steuben			X	X	X
Chautauqua	X	X	X	X	
Clinton	X		X	X	
Columbia			X	X	
Erie	X	X	X	X	
Monroe	X	X	X		X
New York City / HRA		X			X
Onondaga	X			X	X
Ontario / Seneca		X	X	X	X
Orange			X	X	X
Rensselaer				X	X
Rockland		X			X
Suffolk		X		X	X
Ulster	X	X			X
Westchester			X	X	X

**Table 2.1 Clients to be Served by Local Homelessness Prevention Programs**

	Family cases	Single cases	Total cases
Albany	270	280	450
Cattaraugus	161	348	509
Chautauqua	(na)	(na)	45
Clinton	(na)	(na)	75 - 100
Columbia	60		60
Erie	(na)	(na)	200
Monroe	200		200
New York City / HRA	(na)	(na)	1865+
Onondaga	(na)	(na)	100
Ontario / Seneca	(na)	(na)	100
Orange	(na)	(na)	100
Rensselaer	(na)	(na)	200
Rockland	270	610	880
Steuben	280	376	656
Suffolk	(na)	(na)	125
Ulster	(na)	(na)	40-60
Westchester	190	800	990

### C. Survey of Local Programs

Currently there are 25 not-for-profit agencies who have contracted with 19 local social service districts or counties around the state and the Human Resources Administration in New York City to provide services through the Homelessness Prevention Program. The 25 local programs now in operation have developed independently and differently, presumably in response to local needs. In order to obtain a more detailed picture of local programs, we surveyed local program staff by telephone. The survey included questions concerning:

- o the number of clients (families and singles) served,
- o the services most often provided, and
- o current state of implementation.

The remainder of this chapter summarizes our findings concerning the types of programs that have been developed in local districts.

## D. Regional Service Profiles

Although the amount of inter-regional variation in program design was not large, it was significant. For this reason, data on the types of services offered by local programs are presented by region. Individual program descriptions are also provided in Appendix A.

### New York City

There are currently eight Homelessness Prevention Programs operating in New York City. These eight programs receive over 50% of available state Homelessness Prevention Program funding (\$1,181,000).

All of New York City's Homelessness Prevention Programs provide legal advice and representation. These legal services range from counsel and advice regarding tenant's rights, to the preparation of court papers and pro se advice.<sup>2</sup> Full legal representation in housing court is provided to a large proportion of New York City clients.

Legal service providers in New York City report being inundated with clients. These programs report few problems developing a caseload since they are well known throughout the city and have a reputation for assisting the poor with their legal needs. The programs have also been well-received by the courts. In the case of Bronx Office of Legal Aid, the court has provided office space in the courthouse and judges often refer clients "down the hall" for legal advice and representation.

In addition to legal services, many New York City programs (88%) also engage in benefits advocacy on behalf of their clients. These advocacy activities can be carried out either in concert with or in lieu of legal work. Often, eviction proceedings are commenced by landlords for nonpayment of rent. Many of these cases can be settled by intervention with the local income maintenance office, either with emergency funding or by ensuring that benefits to which clients are entitled are in place and delivered. Programs differ with regard to the extent to which they engage in this activity. Some engage in benefits advocacy only in the course of their other activities, while others consider this activity to be one of their primary services.

Activities aimed at involving tenants are also undertaken by providers in the metropolitan area. Interestingly, this type of service is facilitated by the specific nature of the housing market in the city where numerous individuals and families live in a building or buildings owned by the same landlord.

### Targeted Populations in New York City

Among the more unique approaches to homelessness prevention is one New York City program that deals specifically with clients who live in SRO's and those precariously housed persons who use soup kitchens and food pantries to meet their nutritional needs. Most of the activity of this program is focused on the area of benefits advocacy. This program ensures that all benefits to which individuals are entitled are received and also helps to arrange for other types of support services which may help clients to

maintain their housing. Clients served by this program receive a wide range of services based on other factors that place them at a high risk of homelessness. For example, one program reported the arrangement of home health care for a mentally disabled individual. Without this care, the client may have been evicted, because the client was unable to adequately keep house or attend to personal hygiene.

Another program dealing with a specific target population is a program dealing with clients who are HIV positive. This program provides the legal services discussed above but also engages in a substantial amount of benefits advocacy, making sure that clients are aware of programs available to them, helping them negotiate the application process and ensuring that the civil rights of this population are not violated.

#### **Westchester County**

Westchester County appears to be facing one of the most critical homelessness situations in the state. Although little data is available with which to assess contributing factors, it appears that this county is characterized by an extremely tight market for low-income housing units.

The Homelessness Prevention Program serving Westchester County includes 2 not-for-profit providers. These programs provide legal services and referrals to clients faced with eviction. Westchester County providers are also very involved in tenant activities. Through tenant organization and education, this program attempts to ensure that tenants fulfill their responsibilities as tenants and are not dispossessed of their housing illegally. It is hoped that this activity will help to maintain the limited stock of available low income housing.

#### **Orange, Ulster and Rockland Counties**

Several program approaches have been implemented in Orange, Ulster and Rockland counties. Ulster county is served by several specialized providers. One provider's activities focus on benefits advocacy. This includes educating clients about the public assistance and other benefits to which they are entitled, helping clients apply for benefits, and ensuring that benefits are received. The major goals of this organization are to help clients obtain or maintain housing that is both decent and affordable.

The second component of the program is the provision of legal services. Clients with eviction notices or threatened with eviction are referred to the legal service component for advice and legal representation.

In contrast to the multiple service provider approach used in Ulster county, the Orange and Rockland county programs are more sharply focused on the provision of legal services. The Rockland county program supplements these basic legal services with community and tenant education activities.

#### **Albany, Erie, Monroe, Onondaga, and Suffolk Counties**

Many of the programs that have been developed in the urban upstate counties provide several types of services. One of the most comprehensive program models is located in Albany county. This program consists of a legal services component, Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York; an eviction crisis intervention component, United Tenants of Albany; and finally a case management component for those who are chronically homeless, Homeless and Travelers Aid Society. These programs work in conjunction with one another and "cross-refer" as needed.

An interesting feature of the Albany program is that the crisis intervention component of the program has been expanded to include some court-related activities. United Tenants of Albany, Albany County's crisis intervention provider, reports that they accompany clients to court when legal representation is unavailable due to limited resources. By accompanying clients to court, staff provide support for the client. This court presence has reportedly been very successful in assisting clients to successfully negotiate the court system.

The Homelessness Prevention Program in Erie county originally planned to do outreach, education and landlord/tenant mediation providing legal assistance when necessary. During the course of implementation, this program found that the need for legal advice and representation was more extensive than originally believed. For this reason, the program now provides legal services to many of its clients along with the originally proposed community education activities. They have also set up a "court watch" system to oversee the housing court process with the ultimate goal of recommending procedural changes to make the eviction proceedings more accessible to tenants.

In Monroe county, case management is provided by a trained caseworker in the Monroe County Department of Social Services. This caseworker assists with housing-related problems, especially those related to obtaining and maintaining of benefits and emergency assistance. In the case of evictions or potential evictions, the caseworker refers clients to the legal service component where they receive legal advice and representation.

In Suffolk County, the Homelessness Prevention Program is twofold. It provides legal advice and representation when necessary but combines this legal service component with a social service component. The Suffolk County program provides a nine month follow up for those designated as chronically homeless. This group of clients receives case management services including counselling, budgeting and life skills training, as well as referrals to other service providers. The social service component of this program is geared to make clients more acceptable tenants through education and counselling.

The Homelessness Prevention Program in Onondaga county concentrates primarily on the provision of legal services to low income tenants facing eviction. It has also been involved in community activities to identify and address policy issues, especially with regard to public housing which threaten the housing stability of low income tenants.

### Rural Upstate Counties

The experience of these providers is somewhat different from those already discussed. Many programs include an outreach component, an adaptation that may be necessitated by the geographic dispersion of clients in these areas of the state. In some cases, programs have expended substantial programmatic resources, in the early stages of implementation, to make the communities in which they function aware of the program's existence. The major goal of these efforts has been raising public awareness with regard to issues threatening housing, especially eviction, and letting people in the community and other service providers know about the program and its services. Currently most have successfully completed this outreach phase and are handling caseloads commensurate with expectations.

Two of the programs funded and operating in rural counties, do not include a legal component although both refer clients to legal services as needed. The first of these programs focuses on benefits advocacy and serves as a referral source making clients aware of the services available in the community from other agencies like the Salvation Army, food pantries etc. The second of these programs focuses on the landlord/tenant mediation process. This program has found it difficult to enlist the cooperation of landlords. Outreach activities geared specifically to increasing landlord cooperation seem to be improving this situation.

## E. Eviction Prevention as a Program Goal

### Evictions as a Cause of Homelessness

Without exception, programs reported service profiles which focused on the prevention of landlord evictions. As already noted, this emphasis is the outgrowth of efforts to assess local needs. This consistency of approach therefore suggests that evictions are a major contributor to homelessness. Recent research is consistent with this assertion.

A survey of local social service districts outside of New York City, conducted by the New York State Department of Social Services, found that the most frequently cited reasons for becoming homeless among singles requesting shelter were:

- o transiency (18%),
- o eviction by primary tenant (16%), and
- o landlord eviction (14%).<sup>3</sup>

Among upstate families, the most frequently cited reasons for homelessness were:

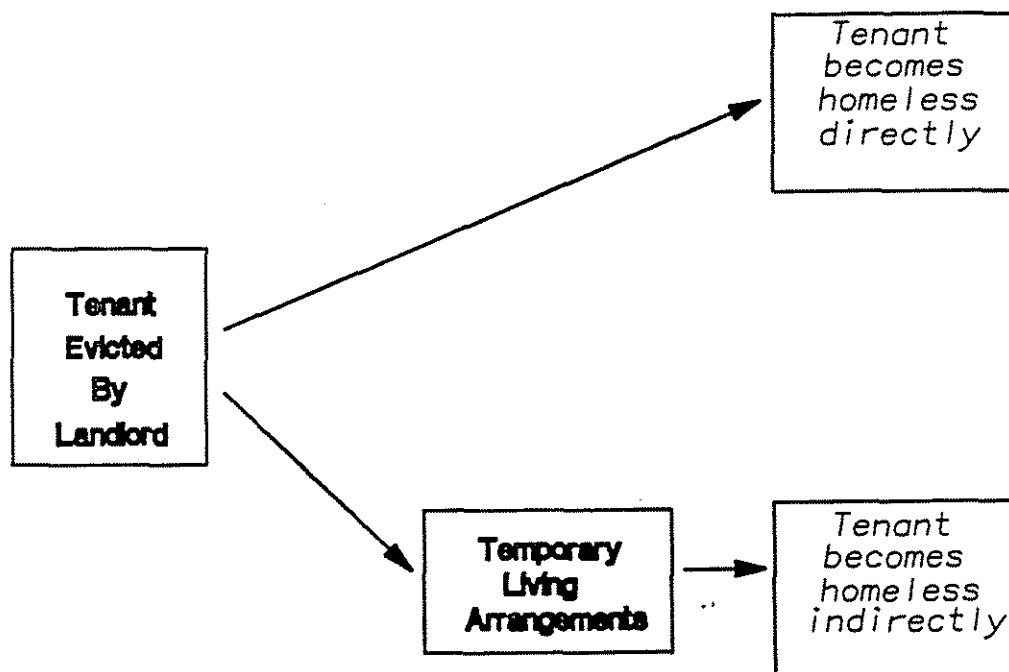
- o domestic violence (28%),
- o landlord eviction (25%) and
- o primary tenant eviction (12%).

A study conducted by New York University for the Human Resources Administration, examined the reasons for homelessness among those presenting themselves for emergency shelter in New York City. This study examined the reasons for homelessness by asking why those requesting emergency shelter had left the place in which they stayed the night before. Fifty eight percent (58%) of shelter requesters left the place they stayed the night before due to problems with other persons who shared the apartment. Seven percent (7%) left because of problems with the building in which they had been housed. Sixteen (16%) percent had been evicted.

Taken together, available data indicates that roughly one sixth of shelter requestors report that their need for shelter was the direct result of eviction. These proportions are large enough to suggest the link between homelessness and landlord evictions is significant. However, these data

understate the full extent of the role played by evictions, because they do not account for indirect effects. A large percentage of homeless persons become homeless after a period of transiency or a period in which they are doubled up with another family. A recent study of New York City's homeless shelter requesters found that 98% of requesters who had once been primary tenants had been doubled up before becoming homeless.<sup>4</sup> Transiency and doubled-up households are transitional states which may be caused by landlord evictions (see Figure 2.2). For this reason, the portion of persons who become homeless as the result of eviction is probably much higher than the one sixth that results directly.

Figure 2.2: Direct and Indirect Effects of Eviction



*"...data from several sources suggest that if indirect links between evictions and homelessness are included, between 25% and 30% of all shelter requests emanate from a landlord eviction."*

Rigorous estimation of the size of the indirect links between landlord evictions and homelessness is impossible with available data. However, data from several sources suggest that if indirect links between evictions and homelessness are included, between 25% and 30% of all shelter requests emanate directly or indirectly from a landlord eviction.<sup>5</sup>

With these data in mind it is, not surprising to find that local programs have emphasized eviction prevention. Local programs are probably responding to the strong causal link between landlord eviction and homelessness. In addition there may be other reasons for emphasizing eviction prevention

that relate to the feasibility, practicality and effectiveness of pursuing this goal. One reason is that evictees are a large, identifiable and serviceable group. It should be noted that needy and well-defined client groups are usually not so easily identified. Many "prevention" programs are at an inherent disadvantage because the clients most in need of service cannot be identified in advance. A large portion of the services rendered by these programs are therefore provided to clients who would never have experienced the outcome that the program seeks to prevent. For example, programs that attempt to prevent teenage pregnancy provide counselling and other services to all interested teens because those who will become pregnant cannot be identified in advance. This inherent identification problem makes it difficult for teen pregnancy prevention programs and many other prevention programs to achieve a high degree of program efficiency. In contrast, most Homelessness Prevention Programs are intervening late in the chain of events that leads to homelessness with a population that is very likely to experience the negative outcome of homelessness. This may be an important reason why many providers, in assessing local needs, have chosen to focus on eviction prevention.

## **F. Eviction Prevention Services Provided by Local Programs**

A useful way to categorize eviction prevention services is to divide services according to the clients stage in the eviction process. Pre-eviction services are those provided to clients who are under no specific threat of eviction but are part of a high risk group. Early-stage intervention services are services provided to tenants who are not yet being evicted but are engaged in a serious conflict with the landlord which could result in eviction. Late-stage eviction services are provided to clients who have been or about to be served with an eviction notice, locked-out by the landlord or when a disposition has already been made against the client in court. Full client data is not yet available from programs, however, in response to the survey of local providers, program staff were able to assess the types of services they usually provide.

### **Pre-Eviction Services**

Early intervention services are currently being provided by approximately 25% of the programs statewide. Typically, clients receiving these services are identified by homelessness prevention staff or referred to the program because they are perceived to be at risk of homelessness. These services include: case management, counselling and life skills training, referrals to other service providers for specialized assistance, tenant education regarding rights and responsibilities and benefits advocacy for individuals and families. For example, clients might be provided with instruction in proper shopping and budgeting practice in order to reduce the likelihood that the client will be unable to make timely rent payments. Other activities aimed at increasing community awareness and preventing the initiation of actions which may threaten housing include community and tenant education and tenant organizing.

### **Early Stage Eviction Services**

Between 40% and 50% of programs report the provision of early-stage eviction prevention services. These services aim to diffuse landlord/tenant conflicts which may result in housing loss in the future. Individuals and families receiving these services have often been informed by the landlord

that they have thirty days to vacate the premises. This communication may be in either written or verbal form. Often this is enough time for the program to effectively intervene.

Many of the services discussed under the heading of pre-eviction intervention are also applicable during the early stages of the eviction process. Programs may provide clients with a combination of case management, counselling, life skills training or other services. Another strategy which is often used at this stage of intervention is landlord/tenant mediation with the homelessness prevention staff serving as facilitators. In cases where the landlord is attempting an illegal eviction, program staff, by simply making the client or landlord aware of the illegal nature of the eviction, may avert the eviction.

#### **Late-Stage Intervention to Prevent Landlord Evictions**

Services provided in the late stages of the eviction process may best be understood as crisis intervention services. These late stage interventions occur when clients already in possession of a 72-hour notice, illegally locked out of their apartments, or cases in which a disposition against the client has already been made by the court, seek assistance from the program. Late-stage interventions are usually characterized by their specifically legal nature and the intensive legal service which they require. The majority of the cases currently being served by the Homelessness Prevention Program require these services. Of the programs outside of New York City, 89% provide legal representation and advice to clients facing eviction by landlord. In New York City, 100% of the programs provide these services.

As part of the services offered to late-stage clients. Most programs also advocate on behalf of the client to resolve any difficulties that the client might be having that could endanger his or her housing status. For example, 44% of the programs currently funded, outside of New York City, report direct intervention with local public assistance offices to resolve eligibility problems that might impede timely payment of public assistance grants or rent payments to landlords. Another 28% report that these activities are an important but limited component of the service they provide. In New York City, 88% of the programs report that benefits advocacy is a central component of the service they provide.

#### **Predominance of late-stage intervention and legal services**

Considering the Homelessness Prevention Program as a whole, it appears that late stage eviction intervention services predominate. The vast majority of programs surveyed reported that clients are coming to them in the late stages of the eviction process. They also report that the most used type late-stage intervention is legal services. Although local program managers envisioned this type of late stage intervention as part of their proposed services, many indicate that it is a greater proportion of their service provision than originally expected or intended. Most of the program staff responding to our survey expressed the belief that with time, program outreach and program success will lead clients to seek assistance in earlier stages of the eviction process when more options for intervention are available.

## Chapter 3: Program Impacts Associated with Late Stage Intervention Activities

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### A. Overview

Homelessness prevention programs can have several beneficial outcomes, including the prevention of hardships associated with eviction and homelessness. Some programs may also produce benefits in the form of improved family function and improved ability to obtain appropriate benefits from public assistance and other care systems.

Many program outcomes cannot be accurately assessed with available evaluation methods. Others may be measurable once the Homelessness Prevention Program is fully operational.

At present, two program outcomes can be reliably projected:

1. the number of landlord evictions prevented by late-stage interventions, and
2. the number of imminent spells of homelessness prevented by late-stage intervention.

This chapter estimates these two measures of program impact.

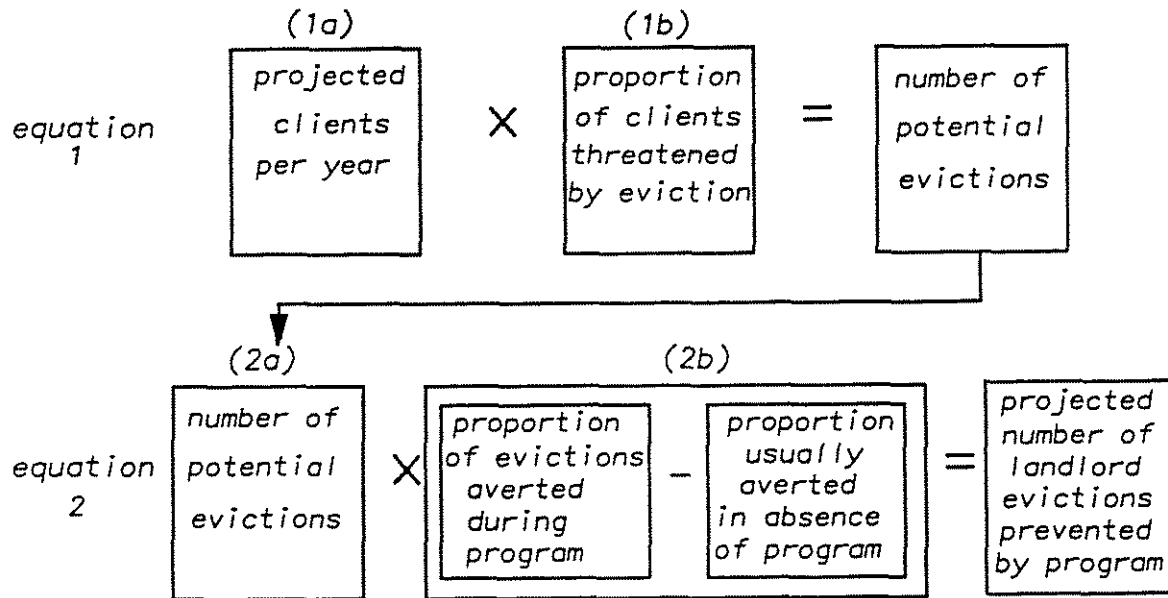
### B. Method for Estimating Landlord Evictions Prevented

Figure 3.1 depicts the method used to estimate the annual number of landlord evictions prevented. For the purpose of exposition, the estimation process has been divided into two equations. The first equation (equation 1) projects the annual number of late stage clients (those under serious threat of eviction) by multiplying two terms, projected clients (term 1a) and the proportion threatened by evictions (term 1b). Data for both of these terms were obtained from the survey of providers. Respondents to this survey were asked to estimate the annual totals for single and family clients that their program would serve once it became fully operational. Respondents were also asked what proportion of family and single clients served had received an eviction notice, or been under some other serious legal threat of eviction either before or during their involvement in the program. These proportions varied from program to program, but most programs reported rates between 70% and 80%.

Using the results from equation 1, equation 2 estimates the projected number of evictions prevented by Homelessness Prevention Programs. As with equation one, the survey of providers was the main source of data used to "fill in" the terms in this equation. Each program was asked to report the

proportion of closed cases in which an eviction had been prevented or forestalled long enough for the client to find suitable permanent housing. Consistent with earlier studies of legal intervention programs, most programs reported that they were able to avert eviction in 75 to 90% of their cases.

Figure 3.1: Method for Projecting Number of Evictions Prevented



**Base rate assumptions**

To accurately project the number of evictions prevented by the program, we need to know the rate at which clients would have avoided eviction in the absence of the program (i.e. the "base rate" of averted evictions). Figure 3.1 depicts the base rate in term 2b of equation 2.

Unfortunately, there is no available data that would allow us to exactly determine the base rate for the Homelessness Prevention Program; but we believe that the base rate is zero or close to zero. In other words, we believe that all, or nearly all, late-stage clients would be evicted in the absence of the program. One reason for this assessment is that our estimates include only clients in the latest stages of the eviction process. All of the clients that were included were served with a 72-hour notice of eviction or received communications threatening an eviction during their involvement with the program. We believe that, without the benefit of legal

counsel and other related services, virtually all of these clients would have been forced to leave their homes. This assertion is supported by several studies which report that unrepresented tenants have little chance of avoiding eviction because they lack the expertise needed to argue before a judge, negotiate the process by which trial dates are set, gather evidence that will be admissible, understand the intricacies of the legal arguments they must make, or file papers to stay an eviction while they develop their case.<sup>6</sup> Some evidence suggests, that in most cases, unrepresented tenants will lose by default because they fail to appear or fail to meet procedural requirements.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 3.1 Projected Evictions Prevented**

	Cases Served as of 9/90	Projected Cases Per Fully Operational Year	Projected-Annual Late Stage Clients	Projected Evictions Prevented
<b>Families</b>				
New York City	499	1951	1630	1256
Region 1 <sup>1</sup>	291	360	234	187
Region 2	197	755	670	339
Region 3	306	1151	726	476
Region 4	214	636	512	407
<b>Singles</b>				
New York City	183	665	546	432
Region 1	97	120	78	62
Region 2	48	193	166	79
Region 3	179	697	437	275
Region 4	42	120	83	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>2048</b>	<b>6648</b>	<b>5082</b>	<b>3576</b>

<sup>1</sup> Regions composed of the following counties. Region 1: Westchester; Region 2: Orange, Ulster, Rockland; Region 3: Albany, Erie, Monroe, Onondaga, Suffolk; Region 4: Upstate rural counties

The view of the local homelessness prevention providers we surveyed was that by the time clients have reached the late stages of the eviction process, all other options have been explored by the client. Program staff consistently reported that none of their clients would be able to successfully avert or forestall impending evictions in the courts. We therefore believe that a base rate of zero would be a reasonable assumption. However, to avoid any danger of overstating program impacts we used a base rate of 10% in our calculations. We believe that the use of this rate makes our impact estimates conservative.

### C. Estimated Number of Landlord Evictions Prevented by Late-stage Intervention

Table 3.1 contains the projected number of evictions prevented by late-stage intervention. This table also includes some of the data from the survey of providers used in the calculations.

We estimate that in an average, fully-operational year the homeless prevention program will serve 6648 clients, 5082 of whom will be at serious threat of eviction. In addition, we estimate that the Homelessness Prevention Program will prevent 3576 evictions that would occur in the absence of the program.

### D. Method for Estimating the Number of Homeless Spells Prevented by Late-Stage Intervention

Estimating the proportion of evicted clients who would become homeless

Not all landlord evictions result in homelessness, so not all prevented landlord evictions constitute prevented spells of homelessness. Little data exists with which to estimate the proportion of landlord evictions which result directly or indirectly in a spell of homelessness. A 1989, study performed by the Committee on Legal Assistance estimated that, in New York City, roughly 60% of all low income families evicted by landlords ultimately had to resort to the city's emergency shelter system for housing.<sup>8</sup> An alternative estimate of 34% can be derived using data from Chapter 2 and recent caseload figures compiled by the New

**Table 3.2 Estimated Percent of Evictees Who Become Homeless**

	Vacancy <sup>2</sup> Rate	Estimated Percent of Evictees Who Become Homeless
New York City	.0096	.3437
Region 1 <sup>1</sup>	.0090	.3668
Region 2	.0280	.1151
Region 3	.0435	.0729
Region 4	.0653	.0475

<sup>1</sup> Regions composed of the following counties. Region 1: Westchester; Region 2: Orange, Ulster, Rockland; Region 3: Albany, Erie, Monroe, Onondaga, Suffolk; Region 4: Upstate rural counties

<sup>2</sup> New York City data from: Housing and Vacancy Report New York City 1987. City of New York, Department of Housing Preservation and Development. April 1987.

Data for regions outside New York City is the regional average of vacancy rates supplied by counties in response to the August 1990 Homeless Survey. Conducted by the New York State Department of Social Services, Division of Income Maintenance.

**Table 3.3 Estimated Number of Homeless Spells Prevented**

	Projected Number of Prevented Evictions	Estimated Percent Of Evictees Who Become Homeless	Projected Number of Homeless Spells Prevented
<b>Families</b>			
New York City	1256	.3437	432
Region 1 <sup>1</sup>	187	.3668	69
Region 2	339	.1151	39
Region 3	476	.0729	35
Region 4	407	.0475	19
<b>Singles</b>			
New York City	432	.3437	148
Region 1	62	.3668	23
Region 2	79	.1151	9
Region 3	275	.0729	20
Region 4	62	.0475	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3576</b>		<b>797</b>

<sup>1</sup> Regions composed of the following counties. Region 1: Westchester; Region 2: Orange, Ulster, Rockland; Region 3: Albany, Erie, Monroe, Onondaga, Suffolk; Region 4: Upstate rural counties

York City Human Resources Administration.<sup>9</sup> Since the lower figure produces more conservative estimates it was used in the calculations which follow.

To derive the rates needed to estimate outcomes for singles and for residents of counties outside New York City, the 34% figure for New York City was adjusted to reflect the availability of permanent housing in counties outside New York City. These adjustments were based on vacancy rates reported for counties in each in region.<sup>10</sup>

Table 3.2 contains the adjusted values used for this report. As this table indicates the values used for upstate counties (except region 1, Westchester county) were considerably lower than those observed in New York City.

## **E. Findings on the Number of Homeless Spells Prevented by Late-Stage Intervention**

Table 3.3 contains the projected number of homeless spells averted by late stage intervention. As this table shows, we project that in an average year the homeless prevention program will prevent 3576 eviction by late-stage intervention in the eviction process and thereby prevent 797 spells of homelessness. <sup>11</sup>

## Chapter 4: Cost Effectiveness and Savings Associated with the Homelessness Prevention Program

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### A. Summary of Findings and Chapter Overview

The conclusion of this chapter is that the Homelessness Prevention Program saves 4 dollars for every dollar of public investment. We estimate total program generated savings of \$11,544,050; total program cost of \$2,946,072; and net savings (savings - costs) of \$8,597,978.

The first section of this Chapter describe the methods used to make these estimates. In addition, this chapter assesses the operation of the Homelessness Prevention Program by examining various expenditure-outcome ratios. Likely reasons for the cost efficiency of the Homelessness Prevention Program are summarized in the last section of this chapter.

### B. Program-Generated Savings

#### Total Savings

One of the desirable outcomes of many public programs is that they produce a "saving" in the form of avoided public expenditures. One potential saving which is associated with the Homelessness Prevention Program is the cost of housing client families in homeless shelters. Table 4.1 presents estimated savings associated with the avoidance of imminent spells of homeless. Total savings from late-stage intervention services are estimated to be \$11,544,050.

#### Cost Estimates

The desirability of public programs depends on costs as well as benefits. Based on a review of activities to date and contracted obligations we project first-year encumbrances for the Homelessness Prevention Program to be \$2,946,072. Because it is projected on an annual basis and is therefore consistent with the benefits projections presented in Chapter 3, this figure will be used in all of the cost-efficiency measures that are presented in this chapter.

#### Net Savings and Returns to Public Investment

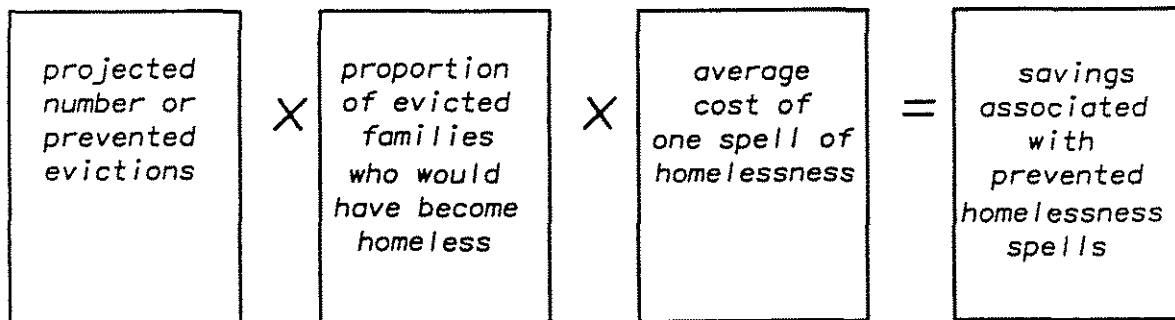
Based on the foregoing estimates, it appears that the Homelessness Prevention Program generates net savings (total savings - program costs) of \$8,597,978. A comparison of savings and costs reveals that the Homelessness Prevention Program returns 4 dollars in averted homeless shelter expense for every dollar spent on the program. The 400% return rate estimated for the Homelessness Prevention Program is very high despite the fact that not all of the returns which are associated with the program have been counted. Evaluations which quantify a higher percentage of returns than we have been able to measure generally find return rates of 200% to 300% for programs thought to be highly effective.

Clearly, the Homelessness Prevention Program deserves a very high cost effectiveness rating.

### C. Expenditure-Outcome Ratios

One way of assessing cost effectiveness is to calculate the amount of expenditure required to produce a specific program outcome. This amounts to expressing program costs on a per client or per outcome basis.

Figure 4.1: *Projected Savings from Prevented Spells of Homelessness*



A common measure of this type is the expenditures-per-client ratio. In general terms, the expenditures-per-client ratio measures the cost of doing business. More specific information can be obtained on a dollars-per-outcome basis. This section contains two such measures, cost per prevented eviction and cost per prevented homeless spell.

**Table 4.1 Projected Savings Associated with Prevented Spells of Homelessness**

	Projected Number of Homeless Spells Prevented	Cost of Average Spell of Homelessness <sup>2</sup>	Projected Savings
<b>Families</b>			
New York City	432	\$14,174	\$6,123,168
Region 1 <sup>1</sup>	69	\$41,261	\$2,847,009
Region 2	39	\$9,533	\$371,787
Region 3	35	\$2,614	\$91,490
Region 4	19	\$754	\$14,326
<b>Singles</b>			
New York City	148	\$11,545	\$1,708,660
Region 1	23	\$15,377	\$353,671
Region 2	9	\$3,030	\$27,270
Region 3	20	\$288	\$5,760
Region 4	3	\$303	\$909
<b>Total</b>	<b>797</b>		<b>\$11,544,500</b>

<sup>1</sup> Regions composed of the following counties. Region 1: Westchester; Region 2: Orange, Ulster, Rockland; Region 3: Albany, Erie, Monroe, Onondaga, Suffolk; Region 4: Upstate rural counties

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B for derivation of these estimates.

Table 4.2 contains expenditure-outcome ratios associated with the Homelessness Prevention Program. A review of the data for New York State indicates that:

- o Public outlays associated with the Homelessness Prevention Program amount to approximately \$443 per client.
- o Expressed on a "per outcome" basis, the cost of the Homelessness Prevention Program is \$824 per prevented landlord eviction and \$3,696 per prevented homelessness spell.

These expenditure - cost ratios are lower than might be expected based on experience with other "prevention" programs. The most likely reason for this is that providers have organized screening, scheduling and consultation services to maximize the number of clients that can be served. Many grantees funded under the Homelessness Prevention Program have been providing legal services to low-income clients for several decades. Public funding for legal services for low-income clients has not been replete, so it might be expected that these agencies have learned to do more with less. The Homelessness Prevention Program appears to have tapped a large

reservoir of experience concerning the most efficient ways to provide legal services to the poor.

**Table 4.2 Expenditure-Outcome Ratios**

	Projected Expenditures <sup>2</sup>	Expenditure Per Case <sup>3</sup>	Expenditure Per Prevented Eviction <sup>4</sup>	Expenditure Per Prevented Spell of Homelessness <sup>5</sup>
New York City <sup>6</sup>	\$2,085,572	\$797	\$1236	\$3,596
Region 1 <sup>1</sup>	\$75,000	\$188	\$301	\$815
Region 2	\$187,000	\$197	\$447	\$3,896
Region 3	\$366,000	\$198	\$487	\$6,655
Region 4	\$232,500	\$308	\$496	\$10,568
Average Expenditure		\$443	\$824	\$3,696

<sup>1</sup> Regions composed of the following counties. Region 1: Westchester; Region 2: Orange, Ulster, Rockland; Region 3: Albany, Erie, Monroe, Onondaga, Suffolk; Region 4: Upstate rural counties

<sup>2</sup> Expenditures are combined for families and singles

<sup>3</sup> Data on projected cases used in these calculations is presented in Table 3.1.

<sup>4</sup> Data on prevented evictions used in these calculations is presented in Table 3.1.

<sup>5</sup> Data on prevented spells of homelessness used in these calculations is presented in Table 3.2.

<sup>6</sup> New York City figures are calculated based on total program expenditures which include \$904,572 in local monies. (Programs in other regions of the state were totally state funded.) If only state expenditures are considered, expenditure-outcome ratios for New York City programs would be \$451 per case, \$700 per prevented eviction and \$2,036 per prevented spell of homelessness.

#### D. Possible Reasons for Observed Program Effectiveness

The foregoing estimates indicate that the Homelessness Prevention Program generates large amount of savings and is highly cost effective. The data suggest that this is the result of three complimentary factors:

- o The Homelessness Prevention Program utilizes existing and experienced legal service providers who are well-organized and specialize in the provision of legal services to low-income clients. This results in very low cost-per-client ratios.
- o Local programs effectively target clients by focusing their efforts on late stage intervention. Prevention programs often serve many more clients than necessary because they cannot reliably identify

the clients who will experience the negative outcome which they seek to prevent. Fortunately, Homelessness Prevention Program providers experience this problem to a lesser extent than usual because the functioning of the eviction process serves to identify clients who may soon become homeless. By emphasizing late-stage intervention, local program providers have taken advantage of a natural screening process to identify needy clients while avoiding the necessity of serving many who would not become homeless.

- o Program activities are highly effective. The mix of services currently provided by local programs is highly effective. Programs report that in roughly 80% of their cases, they are able to avert client eviction.

## Notes

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1 A Shelter is not a Home. Manhattan Borough President's Task force on Homeless Families. 1987

2 *Pro se* refers to those cases in which tenants go to court unrepresented and attempt to provide their own defense.

3 August 1990 Homeless Survey. Conducted by the New York State Department of Social Services, Division of Income Maintenance.

4 Knickman, James R., et al. A study of Homeless Families in New York City: Characteristics and Comparisons with Other Public Assistance families. Prepared for the Human Resources Administration by the Health Research Program, Urban Research Center, Graduate School of Public Administration, New York University. 9/89

5 For example, an estimate can be made using data contained in Knickman et al (see footnote 4). Eighty one percent (.8174) of the families in this sample of homeless requesters were not primary tenants the night before their request. Of these 91% requested shelter for reasons other than eviction. Consequently, 74% (.8174 \* .91) made shelter request from transitional states for reasons other than eviction. This is the maximum possible proportion which could be homeless as an indirect result of eviction. To estimate the actual indirect effect we must adjust this percentage downward to reflect the fact that not all homeless requesters have been primary tenants and therefore couldn't have been evicted. We must also account for the fact that not all primary tenants become homeless as the result of eviction. Forty six percent (.4642) of those entering from transitional states were once primary tenants. Thirty two percent of those who had been primary tenants reported being evicted from the place where they were last primary tenants. The indirect effect of homelessness is therefore estimated to be 9% (.74 \* .4642 \* .32) which yields a total effect of 27% (.16 + .9).

6 Committee on Legal Assistance of the Bar Association of the City of New York, "Preventing Homelessness Through Representation of Tenants Faced With Eviction", The Record of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, Vol. 44, No. 3, April 1989, pp 239.

7 For example, in New York City, 60% of all summary proceedings in city housing courts end in default judgements. Although no data specifically on cases brought by landlords against unrepresented tenants is available, we believe that the default judgement rate for these cases is probably much higher than the 60% average.

8 Committee on Legal Assistance, p.245.

9 An estimated 27% of shelter requests emanate from landlord evictions (see footnote 5). The New York Human Resources Administration estimates that 10,800 public assistance families were sheltered during FY 1990 and that 8,500 public Assistance families were evicted during the same period. The 34% is derived by dividing the number of eviction-related families by the total number of evictions ( $(10,800 * .27) / 8500 = .34$ ).

<sup>10</sup> This adjustment method was chosen because the vacancy rate is a measure of how long it takes an evicted family to find suitable housing in the local housing market. Rates were interpolated linearly in proportion to a housing seek time index derived by subtracting 1 from the reciprocal of the vacancy rate. In other words, the rates for regions outside New York City were derived by solving the equations  $x/\text{Index}_x = .3437 / \text{Index}_{\text{NYC}}$  where the index =  $(1/\text{local vacancy rate} - 1)$ . In essence, the adjustment procedure assumes that the vacancy rate is a measure of the probability of finding a vacant apartment at a given moment. The use of 1 less than the reciprocal of this probability is based on the principle that the reciprocal of the probability of an event minus 1 is the number of trials required on average before an event occurs. For example, the number of rolls of six-sided die that are required on average before a 1 is produced is 5  $(1/.2 - 1)$

<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that the regional adjustment procedure used (see Table 3.2) is somewhat approximate in nature and that the vacancy rate data that were used was not consistently measured. Consequently, estimates of homeless spells prevented for regions outside New York City may be inaccurate.

**Appendix A:  
Program Descriptions**

**Appendix B:  
Methodological Notes**

# Methodological Notes

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## A. Data Sources Used for this report

### **Provider Survey**

Due to the early stage of program implementation existing data on the programs was sparse. In order to gather as much information as possible within time and resource constraints, some representative of each program, and often two or three representatives, were contacted and asked to provide information on the Homelessness Prevention Program with which they were involved. This survey, referred to in this report as the Provider Survey, was conducted in late September and early October of 1990, in order to obtain the most current information possible. The survey provided in-depth data on the types of services these programs are providing to low income individuals and families whose housing is threatened as well as current figures regarding cases served and specific characteristics of those cases.

### **Data from The Welfare Management System**

In order to estimate cost incurred for homeless spells, data for counties outside of New York City was derived from the Welfare Management System (WMS). This database is maintained by the New York State Department of Social Services and includes information on all PA and food stamp recipients outside of New York City. The data used in this analysis is from January, 1989 to June, 1990.

### **HRA Cohort Study**

The New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA), provided data on a cohort of families leaving shelters in June of 1988, which was used to estimate homeless spell length. HRA also provided estimates for average costs per day in the city shelter system. Using this data, we were able to calculate the average cost per spell of homelessness for families in the city.

### **Data from the Bar Association of the City of New York**

Another source of data for this evaluation are reports on the links between evictions and homelessness issued by the Committee on Legal Assistance and the Committee on Legal Problems of the Homeless of the Bar Association of the City of New York. These reports contained a considerable amount of evidence concerning the factors linking evictions and homelessness, which provided the theoretical framework for many of the estimation procedures used in this report. These reports are the source of estimates concerning the percentage of those who are evicted who become homeless. Without this critical piece of data it would not have been possible to estimate the number of homeless spells prevented by the program or the cost savings resulting from these prevented spells of homelessness.

### **August 1990 Homelessness Survey**

Data on homeless spell lengths in counties outside New York City was obtained from August 1990 Homelessness Survey conducted by the Department of Social Services, Division of Income Maintenance. The methods used to analyze this data are described in Appendix C.

## B. Data Limitations

Many methodological difficulties arise from the fact that most Homelessness Prevention Programs have only been operating for several months. Programs seldom achieve a full measure of their eventual effectiveness in the first few months of operation. Consequently, data on the first few months of operation is often misleading.

A larger problem is that client data is unavoidably incomplete. Many of the clients served in the early stages of the program have not yet had their cases closed. In other words, data on the results of providing service are unavailable because the majority of clients are still being served.

Due to these limitations we are not able to report full program outcomes. However, we are able to make reliable projections of the benefits that the Homelessness Prevention Program will produce. The estimates contained in this report relate to the outcomes that will accrue to clients annually and reflect the effectiveness likely to be observed after programs become fully operational. A more detailed picture of the services provided by the Homelessness Prevention Program might be possible in the future when a sufficient amount of client-specific data becomes available.

### Selection Bias

One problem with this research was the inability to rigorously control selection of clients by local programs. Traditional experimental methods, in which a control and an experimental group are defined by random assignment, would allow for precise estimates of program impacts. Time and resource constraints made this type of elaborate research design unfeasible.

The lack of an experimental design means that it is possible that apparent program effects were in fact caused by client selection and not the result of the services provided to clients. This is a common program evaluation problem which derives from the fact that there is often an incentive for programs to choose only those clients who can most easily be served. In this way, the program can achieve a high rate of "success" even though the program produces little actual benefit to clients.

*"...it seems highly unlikely that selection bias is a serious problem"*

Ideally, we would wish to account for client selection effects in our evaluation of the Homelessness Prevention Program. Because we cannot, we must instead assess the possibility that the observed effect of the program is not an indication of program benefits but rather the result of client selection bias. In this regard, it seems highly unlikely that selection bias is a serious problem. There is no evidence to suggest that programs are choosing the "easiest" cases. Rather, it appears that Homelessness Prevention Programs are choosing those clients who are a highest risk of eviction. Therefore, the Homelessness Prevention Programs are servicing those clients who may be among the most difficult to serve, requiring substantial time and resources, rather than those who might be the easiest to serve, (i.e. those at no risk of eviction or homelessness). Many programs report that they do not have the resources to serve all potential clients so they triage, and serve those who are in the greatest need. As a result, they are serving those clients who are at the highest risk of eviction and homelessness. Any bias introduced in this situation would lead to conservative conclusions regarding the programs effectiveness.

## Base rate assumptions

Because a control group was not available, it was necessary to find an alternative source of information on the base rate at which positive outcomes (in this case averted evictions) occur in the absence of the program. Unfortunately, there is no available data that would allow us to exactly determine the base rate for the Homelessness Prevention Program; but we believe that the base rate is zero or close to zero. In other words, we believe that all, or nearly all, late-stage clients would be evicted in the absence of the program. One reason for this assessment is that our estimates include only clients in the latest stages of the eviction process. All of the clients that were included were served with a 72-hour notice of eviction or received written communications threatening an eviction during their involvement with the program. We believe that, without the benefit of legal counsel and other related services, virtually all of these clients would have been forced to leave their homes. This assertion is supported by several studies which report that unrepresented tenants have little chance of avoiding eviction because they lack the expertise needed to argue before a judge, negotiate the process by which trial dates are set, gather evidence that will be admissible, understand the intricacies of the legal arguments they must make, or file papers to stay an eviction while they develop their case.<sup>1</sup> Some evidence suggests, that in most cases, unrepresented tenants will lose by default because they fail to appear or fail to meet procedural requirements.<sup>2</sup>

The view of the local homelessness prevention providers who we surveyed was that by the time clients have reached the late stages of the eviction process, all other options have been explored by the client and it is highly-unlikely that these tenants would be able to successfully avert or forestall their evictions in the courts. We therefore believe that a base rate of zero would be a reasonable assumption. However, to avoid any danger of overstating program impacts we used a base rate of 10% in our calculations. We believe that the use of this rate makes our impact estimates conservative.

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## C. Impacts are Conservatively Estimated

<sup>1</sup> *Committee on Legal Assistance of the Bar Association of the City of New York, "Preventing Homelessness Through Representation of Tenants Faced With Eviction", The Record of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, Vol. 44, No. 3, April 1989, pp 239.*

<sup>2</sup> *For example, in New York City, 60% of all summary proceedings in city housing courts end in default judgements. Although no data specifically on cases brought by landlords against unrepresented tenants, we believe that the default judgement rate for these cases is probably much higher than the 60% average.*

**Selection of Assumptions**

There are several reasons why we believe our estimates to be conservative. The main one is that when alternative statistical assumptions were available, we chose those that would produce the most conservative estimates. The result of these conservative assumptions is a conservative conclusion regarding program effectiveness.

**Pecuniary vs Non-Pecuniary benefits**

Another reason for the conservative nature of the conclusions presented on the effectiveness of the Homelessness Prevention Program is that cost savings related to many program benefits were not included. Only a portion of the programs benefits have been included in the analysis. This portion of estimated benefits includes only those benefits accruing from the prevention of homelessness as a result of eviction. We could not estimate prevention of homelessness as a result of any of the other various reasons someone might become homeless. A more tangible omission involves the limitation of the estimates to imminent evictions and homelessness spells (those related to current and immediate threats to the viability of clients living arrangements). We do not know the extent to which the services rendered by providers improve the client's functioning in ways that enable the client to avert one or more future threats of homelessness.

**Quality of Life Benefits**

We also could not estimate those benefits which derive from increasing the client's quality of life. Many Homelessness Prevention Programs routinely provide instruction, advocacy and other services that improve the client's quality of life in addition to reducing the client's likelihood of becoming homeless. Services in this category include counselling and education regarding family issues, budgeting and bill paying, drug and alcohol abuse, and domestic violence. These services may be provided directly or clients may be referred to programs which specialize in a service area.

To some extent, the impact of providing these services will be evident in reductions in the number of evictions and homeless spells among clients. However, a large portion of the benefit that accrues to this type of service provision is simply that the client's life is improved, either in addition to or in the absence of other outcomes related to evictions or homelessness. In other words, these services have an intrinsic value that goes beyond what can be measured by reductions in evictions or homeless spells. Few would argue that services that improve family functioning or improve the clients ability to receive fair treatment in the housing market are unimportant or without value. It is also clear that these services have a pecuniary value in the private market. Therefore, the direct services provided by many Homelessness Prevention Programs constitute a benefit which is valuable without regard to the prevention of evictions or homelessness. Simply put, these services are part of what the public "gets for its money." Unfortunately, the extent to which the Homelessness Prevention Program provides these benefits could not be assessed.

**Summary of Outcomes which could not be quantified**

The effect that the foregoing limitations has on the data is difficult to judge. It is a certainty that program benefits have been underestimated but the extent to which this has occurred is an open question.

**Appendix C:  
Estimates of Homeless Spell Length and Cost**

# Estimates of Homeless Spell Length and Cost

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## A. Background

In order to estimate program-generated savings it is necessary to know the current cost of maintaining clients in homeless shelters. When a spell of homelessness is avoided by the Homelessness Prevention Program this cost is also avoided. In other words, the average cost of a homeless spell represents the average savings that is obtained each time a spell of homelessness can be prevented.

A key determinant of the costs associated with maintaining clients in homeless shelters is the homelessness spell length, the amount of time which the client must remain in the shelter until permanent housing can be found. In simplest terms, the shelter-related costs associated with the average client or client family is the average cost per period multiplied by the average number of periods. For example, if the average family remains homeless for two months and the average shelter for families costs \$1000 per month, then the average spell of homelessness for families costs \$2000 (\$1000 per month times 2 months).

Although the method for determining the average cost of a homeless spell is straightforward there is considerable confusion and controversy about the correct figure to use. In large part, this has been caused by a lack of data on the homeless spell lengths experienced by different client groups. Various methods have been used to provide approximations for missing data on spell length, and, as a result, there is a profusion of inaccurate and often conflicting estimates for spell length. Our review of the literature on homelessness prevention programs revealed that several errors are common. In some cases, the average spell length associated with one population (e.g. street homeless) has been inappropriately used applied to another (e.g. families in shelters). Some authors have substituted median spell length as a proxy for the average or mean rate. This practice might be appropriate in many policy arenas because median values and mean values can be nearly equivalent. However, the distribution of homeless spell lengths is such that the median and mean spells lengths will be very different.

One common and very misleading misapplication of data on homeless spell is to use the average length of time that clients in shelters have been so housed as if it were the average spell length. The distinction between these two measures is subtle but important. The correct measure of spell length is the average or mean amount of time that clients remain in the homeless shelter. This figure is calculated by summing across all clients not just those who are still in shelters. In fact, the average length of time that clients have been in shelters will always be a far longer than the average spell length figure that should be applied. Consequently, using this measure

instead of average spell length will produce an overestimate of the costs associated with the average spell of homelessness.

This same tendency to overestimate occurs to an even greater extent when twice the average "time in shelter" is used instead of average spell length. In at least one publication, the average spell length was inappropriately estimated by doubling the average time that clients currently in shelters have been there. This procedure was based on the logic that on average every homeless client is halfway through their spell of homelessness. While true, this fact does not imply that average spell length for all clients can be inferred by doubling the length of the stays that have been experienced by those clients who remain in shelters. As noted above, the spells of those still in shelters will always be longer than the average and will therefore result in overestimation average spell length. Doubling these stays serves only to double the amount of the overestimate.

Because spell length is an integral part of the procedure used to produce the estimates of program impacts and program savings that are presented in Chapters 3 and 4, the accuracy of these estimates is critically important. All of the published estimates which we reviewed suffered from one or more of the methodological flaws described above. Consequently, we chose to develop our own estimates for average spell length. This chapter describes the methods and data which were used to derive these estimates.

## **B. Estimation Method Used for this Report**

The best way to estimate spell length is to use longitudinal or tracking data that follows a cohort of homeless people from the beginning of their *homeless spell to the end*. Unfortunately, data of this kind takes a very long time to develop because the researcher must wait for the last client in the entry cohort to leave homelessness. By the time this happens, the estimates that can be derived will already be dated.

### **Data Source for New York City Families.**

An alternative method which has gained wide acceptance and use is survival analysis (sometimes called hazard rate analysis). This method statistically adjusts for the fact that not all of the observed spells have ended. A variant of survival analysis called product limit survival analysis was applied to data on a cohort of 123 families entering New York City shelters in June of 1988. These data were provided by New York City's Human Resources Administration. Despite the fairly small sample size, we believe that the resulting estimates are the best available for two reasons. First, survival analysis is a fairly robust technique and produces accurate estimates even when the sample size is small. Second, there are no alternative estimates which employed appropriate methodology.

### **Estimates Upstate clients and NYC Singles**

The remaining estimates were made by an approximation technique which takes advantage of a principle of caseload dynamics. Specifically, the method that we used relies on the fact the average spell length times the average entry cohort size equals the size of the caseload. Reversing this formula we divided caseload size by estimated entry cohort size to estimate spell length.

Upstate estimates were made by applying this method to data obtained from the August 1990 Homeless Survey, conducted by the New York State Department of Social Services, Division of Income Maintenance.

New York City data were derived from the following information supplied by the New York City Human Resources Association:

- o 320 single clients enter the New York City singles shelters for the first time in an average month.
- o the average daily census of homeless singles in New York City in 1990 was 8752 persons.

This daily census figure included both new and old case and therefore cannot be used, "as is," with the new entrants figure which includes only new cases. For this reason, the census figure was adjusted downward by 39% (to 3413) in accordance with the finding of a 1984 study of a national sample which found the 39% of single shelter users in large cities were repeat users.<sup>1</sup> The ratio of this adjusted census (3413) and the new intake average (320) approximates the length of the first spell of shelter use that would be observed for single shelter users in New York City (10.7 months).

### C. Estimated Cost of Homeless Spells

The cost of maintaining clients in homeless shelters depends on two factors:

- o the amount of time the client or client family usually spends in the shelter, and
- o the rate that is paid to the provider.

The first factor was estimated in the previous section of this chapter and the estimates are contained in Table B.1. This table also contains data on the second factor, average monthly costs, which were obtained from two sources. Data for the average monthly costs of stays in New York City shelters were provided by New York City's Human Resources Administration. Data for all upstate regions were compiled by averaging expenditures for homeless clients present on the WMS system, who became homeless between July 1, 1989 and June 30, 1990.

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<sup>1</sup> A Report to the Secretary on the Homeless and Emergency Shelters. U.S. Dept of Housing and Urban Development. 1984.

## D. Accuracy of Homeless Estimates

We believe the estimates given in Table B.1 are accurate, but several caveats deserve note. The sample of New York City families was somewhat small, however, the hazard rate method of estimate is fairly accurate even in small samples and the resulting estimate of 4.8 months is roughly comparable with other recent research.

The entry cohort to caseload ratio used for all other estimates is approximation technique which works well when certain assumptions are not violated. To some extent "steady state" assumptions were violated because homelessness caseloads were declining during the period under study. However, these declines were not large, so our estimates will be fairly accurate.

**Table C.1 Homelessness Cost Data Used For Impact Estimates**

	Average Monthly Cost of Homeless Shelter, Hotel or Motel <sup>2</sup>	Average Length of Homeless Spell in Months	Cost of Average Spell of Homelessness
<b>Families</b>			
New York City	\$2,953	4.8	\$14,174
Region 1 <sup>1</sup>	\$2,662	15.5	\$41,261
Region 2	\$1,986	4.8	\$9,533
Region 3	\$1,634	1.6	\$2,614
Region 4	\$838	.9	\$754
<b>Singles</b>			
New York City	\$1,079	10.7	\$11,545
Region 1	\$1,788	8.6	\$15,377
Region 2	\$1,045	2.9	\$3,030
Region 3	\$722	.4	\$288
Region 4	\$379	.8	\$303

<sup>1</sup> Regions composed of the following counties. Region 1: Westchester; Region 2: Orange, Ulster, Rockland; Region 3: Albany, Erie, Monroe, Onondaga, Suffolk; Region 4: Upstate rural counties

<sup>2</sup> New York City data provided by Human Resources Administration. Upstate estimates Welfare Management System (WMS) data for 12 month ending 6/90 by the Office of Program Planning Analysis and Development (OPPAD)

*1 A Report to the Secretary on the Homeless and Emergency Shelters. U.S. Dept of Housing and Urban Development. 1984.*

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM

SPONSOR	SUBCONTRACTOR	COUNTY	GRANT	CONTRACT TERM
Albany Co. DSS	United Tenants of Albany Legal Aid Society of Northeastern N.Y. Homeless & Travelers Aid Society	Albany	\$ 87,000	3/1/90 - 2/28/91
Allegany Co. DSS	Southern Tier Legal Serv.	Allegany	16,000	3/1/90 - 2/28/91
Cattaraugus Co. DSS	Southern Tier Legal Serv.	Cattaraugus	25,000	3/1/90 - 2/28/91
Chautauqua Co. DSS	Chautauqua Opportunity, Inc.	Chautauqua	30,000	3/1/90 - 2/28/91
Clinton Co. DSS	North Country Legal Services	Clinton	35,000	3/1/90 - 2/28/91
Columbia Co. DSS	Columbia Opportunity, Inc.	Columbia	32,000	3/1/90 - 2/28/91
Erie Co. DSS	Housing Assistance Ctr., Inc.	Erie	49,000	3/1/90 - 2/28/91
Monroe Co. DSS	Monroe County Legal Assistance Corporation	Monroe	101,000	3/1/90 - 2/28/91
NYC Human Resources	Legal Aid Society	New York	500,000	3/1/90 - 6/30/91
	Brooklyn Legal Services (A)		150,000	3/1/90 - 6/30/91
	Brooklyn Legal Services (B)		54,000	3/1/90 - 6/30/91
	MFY Legal Services		115,000	3/1/90 - 6/30/91
	Queens Legal Services		90,000	3/1/90 - 6/30/91
	Bronx Legal Services		124,000	3/1/90 - 6/30/91
	Housing Conservation Coord.		78,000	3/1/90 - 6/30/91
	Legal Action Ctr. for Homeless		70,000	3/1/90 - 6/30/91
	TOTAL		1,181,000	
Onondaga Co. DSS	Legal Services of Central New York, Inc.	Onondaga	49,000	3/1/90 - 2/28/91
Ontario Co. DSS	Legal Assistance of the Finger Lakes	Ontario	31,000	3/1/90 - 2/28/91
Orange Co. DSS	Mid-Hudson Legal Services, Inc.	Orange	85,000	3/1/90 - 2/28/91

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

<b>SPONSOR</b>	<b>SUBCONTRACTOR</b>	<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>GRANT</b>	<b>CONTRACT TERM</b>
Rensselaer Co. DSS	Legal Aid Society of Northeastern, NY	Rensselaer	20,000	3/1/90 - 2/28/91
Rockland Co. DSS	Legal Aid Society of Rockland County	Rockland	48,000	5/1/90 - 4/30/91
Seneca Co. DSS	Legal Assistance of the Finger Lakes	Seneca	16,500	3/1/90 - 2/28/91
Steuben Co. DSS	Southern Tier Legal Services	Steuben	27,000	3/1/90 - 2/28/91
Suffolk Co. DSS	Nassau/Suffolk Law Services Comm., Inc.	Suffolk	80,000	3/1/90 - 2/28/91
Ulster Co. DSS	Rural Ulster Preservation Company	Ulster	54,000	3/1/90 - 2/28/91
Westchester Co. DSS	Mt. Vernon United Tenants Coalitions Linked to Urban Strategy	Westchester	75,000	5/1/90 - 4/30/91
<b>TOTAL GRANTS</b>			<b>\$ 2,041,500</b>	

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Albany County Department of Social Services (ACDSS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** United Tenants of Albany  
Legal Aid Society of Northeastern N.Y.  
Homeless & Travelers Aid Society

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$87,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 3/1/90 - 2/28/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Albany County Department of Social Services has a subcontract with the above three organizations to provide a comprehensive set of services to families and individuals who are at risk of being homeless. The services include case management, eviction prevention and legal services. The program provides social services to those families experiencing problems; crisis intervention to help families combat threatened evictions; and litigation services for court representation. In total, 450 individuals and families are expected to receive services under this program during the first contract year.

Data collected by the Albany County DSS Division of Public Assistance in 1989 clearly reflected that evictions combined with a severe shortage of low income housing, particularly within the City of Albany, were major causes of homelessness within Albany County. Recognizing that personal and inter-personal abilities and problems contribute heavily to the circumstances surrounding eviction, the concentrated supportive services and education provided under this contract in areas such as budgeting, home management, mental health, employment, parenting, inter-personal relations, substance abuse, etc., are expected to reduce the number of unnecessary evictions.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** 112 State Street, Albany, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** Albany County

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Allegany County Department of Social Services (ACDSS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Southern Tier Legal Services (STLS)

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$16,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 3/1/90 - 2/28/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The Allegany County Department of Social Services will use its \$16,000 grant to subcontract with Southern Tier Legal Services. The project provides legal representation, community outreach and housing opportunity services. STLS will represent approximately 30 clients who are facing eviction, illegal lock outs or who have defaulted on the court process. Legal services will also conduct a tenant outreach and education program to offer information regarding tenant's rights.

Allegany County, Cattaraugus County and Steuben County combined their contracts into one with Allegany County being the lead agency. Although each county submitted its own application, it was initiated as a joint effort and all three counties are subcontracting with Southern Tier Legal Services. This enables the subcontractor to hire a full-time attorney who is providing legal services in the three counties.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** County Office Building, Belmont, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** Allegany County

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Cattaraugus County Department of Social Services (CCDSS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Southern Tier Legal Services (STLS)

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$25,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 3/1/90 - 2/28/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The Cattaraugus County Department of Social Services will use its \$25,000 grant to subcontract with Southern Tier Legal Services. The project provides legal representation, community outreach and housing opportunity services. STLS represents approximately 50 clients who are facing eviction, illegal lock outs and tenants who default on the court process. Legal services will also conduct a tenant outreach and education program to offer information regarding tenant's rights.

Allegany County, Cattaraugus County and Steuben County combined their contracts into one with Allegany County being the lead agency. Although each county submitted its own application, it was initiated as a joint effort and all three counties are subcontracting with Southern Tier Legal Services. This enables the subcontractor to hire a full time attorney who is providing legal services in the three counties.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** 265 North Union Street, Olean, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** Cattaraugus County

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Chautauqua County Department of Social Services (CCDSS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. (COI)

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$30,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 3/1/90 - 2/28/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Chautauqua County Department of Social Services has subcontracted with Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. which provides mediation and advisory services to prevent eviction. This program aims to prevent the eviction of up to 200 families, and places heavy emphasis on education and advocacy. Chautauqua County DSS has found in its experience with the homeless population that ignorance of tenant rights and responsibilities on the part of tenants, landlords, and in some cases the courts, has led to many unnecessary evictions. The focus on tenant/landlord education/mediation and tenant advocacy should help reduce the number of evictions leading to homelessness in the County. In the event that mediation services do not prove successful, COI retains counsel to defend the tenants.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** Chautauqua Co. Department of Social Services  
R. Hall Clothier Building  
Mayville, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** Chautauqua County

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Clinton County Department of Social Services (CCDSS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** North Country Legal Services

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$35,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 3/1/90 - 2/28/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

CCDSS has used its grant to hire a housing specialist who will aid individuals and families with a history of landlord-tenant problems. These services will be provided to an estimated 75-100 individuals and families during the first year of operation. The type of services that are available to at-risk tenants are counseling, budget preparation, referral, advocacy, intervention, and tenant's rights information. CCDSS has found in its experience with this population, that ignorance of the rights and responsibilities of both the tenant and the landlord is a primary cause of eviction and homelessness in Clinton County. This program is expected to lower the number of evictions and, consequently, to reduce the number of newly homeless persons. The grant also funds North Country Legal Services to provide training for tenants regarding their rights and will, as necessary, litigate on behalf of tenants.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** 30 Durkee Street, Plattsburgh, N. Y.

**AREA SERVED:** Clinton County

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Columbia County Department of Social Services (CCDSS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Columbia Opportunities, Inc. (COI)

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$32,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 3/1/90 - 2/28/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Columbia County Department of Social Services has contracted with COI for the provision of intervention services. COI utilizes a community dispute resolution model that attempts to resolve landlord-tenant problems prior to litigation. In the event the mediation effort is not fruitful, an attorney will be utilized for appropriate litigation. The project will serve approximately 60 families and individuals.

As in other counties, Columbia County has identified tenant/landlord ignorance of tenant/landlord rights and responsibilities as a major cause of unnecessary evictions leading to homelessness. This program's goal is to reduce those evictions and the corresponding litigations and homelessness.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** 610 State Street, Hudson, New York

**AREA SERVED:** Columbia County

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Erie County Department of Social Services (ECDSS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Housing Assistance Center, Inc. (HAC)

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$49,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 3/1/90 - 2/28/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Erie County Department of Social Services has subcontracted with Housing Assistance Center to provide outreach, tenant education and client advocacy. The project is prepared to mediate disputes with landlords and provide attorneys when litigation is necessary. The primary goal of the program is to prevent needless evictions leading to homelessness. Housing Assistance Center will emphasize the tenant education component, hoping to prevent as much litigation as possible. The program is expected to serve 125 households.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** 95 Franklin Street, Buffalo, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** Erie County

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Monroe County Department of Social Services (MCDDS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Monroe County Legal Assistance Corporation (MCCAC)

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$101,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 3/1/90 - 2/28/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Monroe County Department of Social Services has subcontracted with Monroe County Legal Assistance Corporation (MCCAC) for case management and legal services for 230 cases. MCCAC has combined the skills of a trained caseworker with a lawyer to assist families in preventing eviction and, when appropriate, design a support services plan that meets their needs. Cases are taken largely in Rochester City Court, but a portion will emanate from outlying areas. As in other areas of this state, this combined approach of education and legal assistance will help prevent unnecessary evictions leading to homelessness.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** 111 Westfall Road, Rochester, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** Monroe County

## HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** NYC Human Resources Administration

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Legal Aid Society  
Brooklyn Legal Services (two offices)  
MFY Legal Services  
Queens Legal Services  
Bronx Legal Services  
Housing Conservation Coordinators  
Legal Action Center for the Homeless

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$1,181,000.00

**CONTRACT TERM:** 5/1/90 to 4/30/91

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The Human Resources Administration is subcontracting with eight not-for-profit organizations which will retain housing for individuals and families at risk of becoming homeless. The overall program builds on a successful city and state effort to prevent evictions for selected families. This new series of grants extends services to individuals and all families on public assistance in the city of New York who face eviction. The target population identifies particularly vulnerable populations, i.e. people with AIDS, the elderly and large families. The services provided are budget counseling, entitlement advocacy and representation in housing court. Services are extended to include advocacy and housing court representation in four out of the five boroughs in the city and creates a network of legal and community advocates who help retain the limited number of apartments still affordable to the city's low-income population.

In addition to the emphasis placed on housing court representation to prevent evictions, the Department is funding other models which attempt to keep people in their homes by educating them as to their rights and responsibilities by encouraging low income tenants to form associations to negotiate better conditions. Most notably, the Housing Conservation Coordinators is a community-based organization that seeks mediative solutions to housing issues.

Individual descriptions of these seven contracts are provided on the following pages.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** 250 Church Street, New York City

**AREA SERVED:** New York City

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** New York City Human Resources Administration

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** The Legal Aid Society

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$ 500,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 5/1/90 - 6/30/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

This is a city-wide Homelessness Prevention Project serving the Bronx, Staten Island, Harlem, Rockaway and most of Brooklyn. The work includes legal representation in Housing Court and entitlement advocacy, predominantly for the purpose of ensuring that tenants can pay their rent.

The program has employed 8 attorneys and two paralegals and has paid for 1/2 of an attorney's salary with project funding. These individuals provide representation in late intervention and post-eviction cases.

The sponsor contracted to provide legal representation to families and singles in approximately 740 cases, and advice to families and singles in 200 cases.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** 15 Park Row, 22 floor, New York, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** New York City

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** New York City Human Resources Administration

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A

**GRANT AMOUNT :** \$ 150,000

**CONTRACT TERM :** 5/1/90-6/30/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY :**

This project serves clients in the Williamsburg and eastern sections of Brooklyn. Program funding has allowed the project sponsor to hire two attorneys, one paralegal and one social worker who serve tenants at risk of homelessness, who are either in the late stages of an eviction proceeding, or who have been illegally evicted. This focuses upon clients who are not serviceable under the HRA-funded Homelessness Prevention Project in that they are not eligible for Emergency Assistance to Families.

The project sponsor contracted to provide services in 200 cases.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS :** 260 Broadway, Brooklyn, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED :** Eastern Brooklyn

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** New York City Human Resources Administration

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation B

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$ 54,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 5/1/90 - 6/30/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

The focus of this project is to prevent homelessness among low-income HIV-infected people in western Brooklyn. Program funding has been used to hire one paralegal and to pay for part of the salaries of a staff attorney and a supervising attorney. These individuals provide advice and representation in cases involving evictions, loss or denial of government benefits and family problems including domestic violence. The sponsor contracted to provide advice and referral in about 140 cases, and legal representation in about 60.

**SPONSOR ADDRESS:** 105 Court Street, Brooklyn, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** Western Brooklyn

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** New York City Human Resources Administration

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** MFY Legal Services, Inc.

**GRANT AMOUNT :** \$ 115,000

**CONTRACT TERM :** 5/1/90-6/30/91

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION :**

The sponsor provides legal services to low-income individuals and families in East Harlem. The project's staff of two lawyers and a part-time paralegal work in Housing Court to oppose evictions, and with the Income Maintenance division of HRA to ensure that clients receive entitlements allowing them to pay their rent. The sponsor contracted to provide legal representation to as many clients as possible.

**SPONSOR ADDRESS :** 41 Avenue A, New York, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED :** East Harlem

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** New York City Human Resources Administration

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Queens Legal Services Corporation

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$ 90,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 5/1/90 - 6/30/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

This project provides counseling, representation, and support services to public assistance tenants in south-east Queens. Project funding has been used to hire one staff attorney and one paralegal, and to pay for a portion of the salary of a unit director. These individuals represent clients in the late stage of the eviction process and in situations involving illegal lockouts. The project also conducts regular training sessions for HRA workers to help them work more effectively with client families, and work with Income Assistance centers to help them assist their clients with housing-related programs.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** 89-02 Sutphin Boulevard, Jamaica, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** South-east Queens

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** New York City Human Resources Administration

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Bronx Legal Services

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$ 124,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 5/1/90 - 6/30/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

This project provides legal services to prevent evictions throughout the Bronx. Funds have been used to provide three housing attorneys who represent tenants in summary proceedings; restore illegally evicted persons to tenancy; secure entitlements needed by tenants to pay rent; and who provide community-advocate training to personnel of community-based organizations.

The sponsor contracted to provide services to at least 125 clients.

**SPONSOR ADDRESS:** 579 Courtland Avenue, Bronx, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** Bronx

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** New York City Human Resources Administration

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Housing Conservation Coordinators

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$ 78,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 5/1/90 - 6/30/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

This project serves clients on the west side of Mid-Manhattan. It provides a lawyer and a tenant organizer to prevent evictions, provide housing counseling and entitlement advocacy. The project sponsor contracted to provide eviction prevention services in 30 cases, housing counseling to 120 tenants and assistance in obtaining entitlements to 100 clients.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** 777 10th Avenue, New York, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** West Manhattan

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** New York City Human Resources Administration

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Legal Action Center for the Homeless

**GRANT AMOUNT :** \$ 70,000

**CONTRACT TERM :** 5/1/90-6/30/91

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION :**

This project differs from the others funded under this program in that the focus of services is to serve marginally housed and homeless adults. The intent is to reach individuals who, because they have already been homeless for some time and are not facing evictions, would ordinarily not be served by the other project sponsors. This project serves clients in Manhattan.

Project funding has been used to hire two paralegals and pay for part of the salaries of two supervising attorneys who offer advocacy for: public assistance; orders of protection; home health care; visiting nurses; and other benefits necessary for adults living in Single Room Occupancy hotels to maintain their housing, and who offer assistance advocacy to clients in "soup kitchen" legal clinics for entitlements to help such people attain housing. The project sponsor contracted to provide services in 150 cases.

**SPONSOR ADDRESS :** 220 East Fourth Street, New York, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED :** Manhattan

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Onondaga County Department of Social Services (OCDSS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Legal Services of Central New York, Inc.

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$49,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 3/1/90 - 2/28/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Onondaga County Department of Social Services has used its \$49,000 grant to subcontract with Legal Services of Central New York. The project provides legal representation, community outreach and housing services. LSCNY expects to represent about 100 clients who are facing eviction or are illegally locked out. Prevention services also includes a tenant outreach and education program which offers information regarding tenant's rights. The outreach and education component is eventually planned to become the primary emphasis of this program, with the hope to avoid illegal evictions and unnecessary court proceedings.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** 421 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** Onondaga County

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Ontario County Department of Social Services (OCDSS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Legal Assistance of the Finger Lakes (LAFL)

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$31,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 3/1/90 - 2/28/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Ontario County is using its HPP grant to subcontract with LAFL for the provision of legal assistance services. The project plans to serve 100 families who are referred to LAFL from OCDSS or from the community. LAFL provides assistance to those families facing homelessness where civil legal proceedings can be used to prevent the eviction. LAFL assists people in landlord-tenant matters, domestic violence situations and mortgage foreclosures. Their emphasis is the prevention of illegal/unnecessary evictions or loss of residence through ignorance of tenant or spousal rights or inability to work out an appropriate bank payment schedule. It is the goal of this project to avoid civil litigation where possible, and ensure the families receive the appropriate legal counsel when litigation cannot be avoided.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** 3871 County Road #6, Canandaigua, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** Ontario County

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Orange County Department of Social Services (OCDSS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Mid-Hudson Legal Services, Inc.

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$85,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 3/1/90 - 2/28/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Orange County Department of Social Services (OCDSS) has subcontracted with Mid-Hudson Legal Services, Inc. to serve 115 families who are at risk of becoming homeless. Mid-Hudson intervenes in the legal process to prevent evictions and thereby reduce the need for additional emergency housing services such as shelters and motels. The program promotes the use of an existing mechanism to channel rent monies directly into code violation repairs; minimizes the incidence of illegal eviction; and educates individuals about their rights and responsibilities as tenants.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** Box Z, Quarry Road, Goshen, New York

**AREA SERVED:** Orange County

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Rensselaer County Department of Social Services (RCDSS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Legal Aid Society of Northeastern, N.Y. (LASNNY)

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$20,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 3/1/90 - 2/28/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Rensselaer County Department of Social Services (RCDSS) uses its grant to contract with LASNNY for the provision of legal assistance to 200 families. LASNNY's program provides direct legal assistance such as legal counseling, negotiation and litigation services as well as educating clients about their legal rights and responsibilities.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** 133 Bloomingrove Drive, Troy, New York

**AREA SERVED:** Rensselaer County

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Rockland County Department of Social Services (RCDSS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Legal Aid Society of Rockland County (LASRC)

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$48,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 5/1/90 - 4/30/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Rockland County Department of Social Services (RCDSS) uses its \$48,000 grant to subcontract with Legal Aid Society of Rockland County. RCDSS has found a large number of evictions leading to homelessness are the result of tenant ignorance of their rights and that they often have no legal advice or representation during eviction proceedings. The project provides legal representation, community outreach and housing opportunity services. LASRC represents clients who are facing eviction, illegal lock out and tenants who default on the court process. Legal Aid also provides a tenant outreach and education program which offers information regarding tenant's rights.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** Building L, Sanatorium Road, Pomona, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** Rockland County

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Seneca County Department of Social Services (SCDSS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Legal Assistance of the Finger Lakes (LAFL)

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$16,500

**CONTRACT TERM:** 3/1/90 - 2/28/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

SCDSS subcontracts with LAFL for the provision of legal and support services to families and individuals faced with eviction. The SCDSS program focuses primarily on public assistance recipients, but is available to other people who, if evicted, would require placement in a shelter. Legal representation focuses on landlord-tenant disputes and domestic violence cases.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** 2226 County House Road, Waterloo, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** Seneca County

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Steuben County Department of Social Services (SCDSS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Southern Tier Legal Services (STLS)

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$27,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 3/1/90 - 2/28/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The Steuben County Department of Social Services uses its \$27,000 grant to subcontract with Southern Tier Legal Services. The project provides legal representation, community outreach and housing opportunity services. STLS represents 60 clients who are facing eviction, illegal lock outs and tenants who default on the court process. Legal services also include a tenant outreach and education program to offer information regarding tenant's rights.

Allegany County, Cattaraugus County and Steuben County combined their contracts into one with Allegany County being the lead agency. Although each county submitted its own application, it was initiated as a joint effort and all three counties are subcontracting with Southern Tier Legal Services. This enables the subcontractor to hire a full time attorney who is providing legal services in the three counties.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** P. O. Box 631, Bath, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** Steuben County

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Suffolk County Department of Social Services (SCDSS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Nassau/Suffolk Law Services Committee, Inc. (NSLSC)

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$80,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 3/1/90 - 2/28/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Suffolk County Department of Social Services uses its HPP grant to subcontract with Nassau/Suffolk Law Services Committee for the provision of legal and support services to households at risk of becoming homeless. The project is located at Law Services' Riverhead Office which serves some of the poorest communities in Suffolk County. The project serves approximately 90 households referred from Suffolk County DSS. NSLSC uses a social worker/attorney case model to serve both the legal and other human services needs that people face in a crisis situation.

As in other areas of the state, Suffolk County has found that ignorance of tenant/landlord rights and responsibilities has led to many unnecessary evictions. These evictions combined with the severe shortage of affordable housing in Suffolk County has exacerbated the homeless situation. The combination of case management and legal counsel will assist easing this situation.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** Box 2000, 11 Oval Drive, Hauppauge, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** Suffolk County

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Ulster County Department of Social Services (UCDSS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Rural Ulster Preservation Company (RUPCO)

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$54,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 3/1/90 - 2/28/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Ulster County Department of Social Services uses its HPP grant to subcontract with RUPCO. This program provides a comprehensive array of services to approximately 60 households facing homelessness. RUPCO insures that any legal services needs are met under a subcontract agreement with Mid-Hudson Legal Services. The program is structured to provide a system of case management that addresses both the short and long-term needs of households to stabilize and improve their housing and financial conditions.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** 268R Clinton Avenue, Kingston, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** Ulster County

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Westchester County Department of Social Services (WCDSS)

**PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR:** Mount Vernon United Tenants (MVUT)  
Coalitions Linked to Urban Strategy (CLUSTER)

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$75,000

**CONTRACT TERM:** 5/1/90 - 4/30/91

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Westchester County Department of Social Services contracts with two not-for-profit housing organizations for the provision of intervention services. Both organizations utilize a community dispute resolution model that attempts to resolve landlord-tenant problems prior to litigation. In the event that mediation efforts do not resolve the dispute, both organizations will utilize an attorney for housing court litigation. The project plans to serve an estimated 100 families and individuals.

**SPONSOR'S ADDRESS:** 112 East Post Road, White Plains, N.Y.

**AREA SERVED:** Westchester County