

HEADING HOME



STEELE

**A Plan to End Homelessness
in Owatonna and Steele County**

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Executive Summary

The *Heading Home Steele* plan seeks to prevent and end homelessness in Owatonna and Steele County by using evidence-based service models and combining public and private resources. Our vision is a community where all persons have options for safe temporary or emergency housing and choices for a permanent place to live.

According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, there are approximately 2 million homeless Americans during the course of a year. In Minnesota, the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation has conducted a comprehensive *Statewide Survey of People Without Permanent Shelter* every three years since 1991. The most recent Wilder survey (January 2009)¹ reports there are an estimated 7,400 persons who are homeless or precariously housed on any given night in Minnesota. According to the River Valleys Continuum of Care², on the night of the most recent homeless survey (January 2009), there were 217 persons in southeastern Minnesota experiencing homelessness.

The crisis of homelessness has not been ignored by localities or the nation. In fact, over the past two decades much has been learned from the private and public agencies working to prevent homelessness and helping to move people out of long-term despair. What we have learned is that we can go beyond *managing homelessness* to actually *ending it*.

Heading Home Steele sets forth six goals focused on three populations³ who are currently faced with the greatest challenges in temporary and permanent housing choices in Owatonna/Steele County. *Heading Home Steele* also suggests ways to strengthen community and public policy support for ending homelessness.

¹ Wilder Research, <http://www.wilderresearch.org>

² SEMN Regional Plan to End Long-term Homelessness

³ Chronic homeless adults with disabilities; unaccompanied minors and homeless youth; homeless offenders re-entering community after prison release

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Heading Home Steele Goals:

1. Expand resources to fund supportive services for adults with serious persistent mental illness and chronic disabilities living in scattered sites throughout the community.
2. Develop an outreach plan for unaccompanied youth under 22 years old and secure funding for support services.
3. Develop housing options with support services for former offenders within the community.
4. Build community support for affordable housing solutions by providing awareness outreach and prevention education initiatives.
5. Seek greater public and private investment and strengthen public policies that sustain adequate affordable housing and support services for persons who are homeless or may become homeless.
6. Utilize the community's spectrum of services to prevent and end homelessness.

"Ending homelessness is the right thing to do and makes great economic sense."

- Governor Tim Pawlenty

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Mission

Heading Home Steele seeks to prevent and end homelessness in Owatonna and Steele County by developing local housing and supportive services that uses evidence-based models and combines public and private resources.

Our vision is a community where all persons have options for safe temporary or emergency housing and choices for a permanent place to live.

"We can either waste money keeping people homeless or spend those dollars on a long-term solution that produces positive results for people and their communities."

- Corporation for Supportive Housing

Background

In 2000, the National Alliance to End Homelessness set forth *A Plan, Not a Dream: How to End Homelessness in Ten Years*⁴. Using research and innovative program data from around the country, the plan outlined a new vision ... one that included strategies to end the problem of homelessness by providing affordable housing, needed services, and by preventing homelessness from occurring in the first place.

The federal government announced its commitment to end homelessness in the FY-2003 federal budget and reinvigorated the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) to coordinate national efforts. The U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities, and the National Association of Counties all passed resolutions in 2003 to end chronic homelessness in ten years. Since then over 220 communities have undertaken efforts to end homelessness and 150 communities have completed plans to end homelessness.

In March 2004, Minnesota adopted a statewide plan to end the cycle of homelessness with *Minnesota's Business Plan to End Homelessness*⁵ and *Heading*

⁴ National Alliance to End Homelessness, available on website at <http://endhomelessness.org>

⁵ Minnesota's Business Plan to End Homelessness (2004) is available online at <http://www.mnhousing.gov/initiatives/housing-assistance/homelessness/index.aspx>

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Home Minnesota, a coordinated public-private partnership to end homelessness, has funded four regional *Heading Home Initiatives* in Hennepin, Ramsey and St. Louis counties and Southeast Minnesota.

Minnesota has well-established government agencies that have proven track records on issues of homelessness and affordable housing⁶ - the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency has demonstrated national leadership in its creative approach to providing affordable housing, and the Interagency Task Force on Homelessness promotes coordination and efficient programming across agencies.

The "Heading Home Steele" plan is intended to be a complementary effort to both the state's plan and the Heading Home Southeast Minnesota Plan to End Homelessness⁷.

Local Context

The median income for residents in Owatonna and Steele County generally ranks above the state norm and our overall rates of unemployment and poverty are comparatively low. Many industries enrich the quality of life existing locally and regionally. There is an active, involved business community and political leaders who support citizen participation in local problem solving. In Steele County there is a strong public and non-profit human service network.

Ironically, it is because of these factors that homelessness can be somewhat invisible and conditions of people in poverty go unnoticed. There are people couch hopping and living in woods and vehicles in Owatonna, and, there are many more people, next door, down the street, or on the nearest farm, who are unable to meet their basic needs living throughout Steele County.

⁶ "Bring Minnesota Home," Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless, <http://mnhomelesscoalition.org>

⁷ Southeastern Minnesota Regional Plan to End Long-term Homelessness (2005) is available online at http://www.threeriverscap.org/programs_coc.html

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We are a wealthy community and fortunate to have a myriad of resources; yet we are still challenged with the same barriers to ending homelessness as exist in other communities in Minnesota and across the nation:

- ***Affordable housing***

Housing is considered "affordable" if it consumes 30% or less of a household's gross income. The 2009 "Fair Market" rent⁸ in Steele County is currently at \$457/month for an efficiency apartment, \$555/month for a one-bedroom, and \$701 for a two-bedroom. A majority of the homeless population lives on limited earnings or fixed incomes. Many adults with disabilities must rely solely on assistance benefits. The monthly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments for an individual are \$674 in Steele County. If SSI represents an individual's sole source of income, \$202 in monthly rent is affordable!

Rental subsidies can sometimes help with housing costs, but resources are limited. The Federal Department of Housing & Urban Development's Section 8 program has a portable subsidy arrangement and provides priority preference for homelessness in Steele County on its waiting list (standard voucher wait time in Steele County at the time of this report is two years, with a homeless preference still requiring an open voucher). While housing assistance programs may have funding available, they are often restrictive (such as no deposit payments or money is available for one-time help or crisis assistance only). In addition, some subsidized housing has restrictions that prevent certain segments of the homeless population (felony offenders) from gaining access to permanent housing at an affordable level.

- ***Funding and Service Silos***

Although there is a fairly strong commitment to collaboration in our region, our "system" remains largely fragmented with funding and services lacking the integration needed to go beyond "managing the homeless" to "ending

⁸ National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), [website http://www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org)

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homelessness." For the most part, local collaborative initiatives have focused on *long-term homelessness*, mostly involving single adults. Less has been developed for homeless youth, offenders, and families.

- ***Myths and Stigma***

Housing proposals seeking to prevent or end long-term homelessness often face public pushback because of fear, misunderstanding, stigma, or bias.

State and local ordinances aimed at ensuring safe neighborhoods can add to the difficulty in securing temporary or transitional housing for those with credit problems or criminal backgrounds.

Planning Process

The Steele County Community Services Coordination Team (CSCT) established a "Heading Home Steele Committee"⁹ in May of 2008. The work reflected in this document includes input from the entire committee as well as information from local agencies that identified local needs and developed strategies to specifically address ending homelessness with disabled adults, youth, and offender populations.

The River Valleys Continuum of Care (CoC) is a regional planning consortium that organizes and delivers housing and services to meet specific needs of people who are homeless. The planning region consists of 20 counties in southeast and south central Minnesota and allocates federal resources to projects based on a community ranking process. The CoC is a partner in the "Heading Home Steele" planning process. Steele County is a participant in a 20 county Human Services Consortium, which provides oversight to the regional Continuum of Care.

Scope

The following definitions encompass those whose needs are being addressed in *Heading Home Steele*:

⁹ See Appendix A for full listing of members

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- Households experiencing **long-term homelessness** include "individuals, unaccompanied youth, and families with children lacking a permanent place to live continuously for one year, or have been homeless at least four times in the past three years, excluding any period of institutionalization or incarceration." *State of Minnesota*
- A **chronic homeless** person is "an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years." *Federal HUD*
- **Homeless youth** means a person 21 years of age or younger who is unaccompanied by a parent or guardian and is without shelter where appropriate care and supervision are available, whose parent or legal guardian is unable or unwilling to provide shelter and care, or who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. *State of Minnesota*
- **Youth at-risk of homelessness** means a person 21 years of age or younger whose status or circumstances indicate a significant danger of experiencing homelessness in the near future. *State of Minnesota*

Existing Local Resources

Steele County has a long track record of developing local partnerships with public, non-profit, and private-sector stakeholders to address solutions to community challenges. A variety of local and regional agencies, both public and private, have considerable knowledge in serving people experiencing housing instability and homelessness.

The following list identifies the principle local services now addressing housing stability and permanency efforts in Owatonna and Steele County. The list also identifies the organization that operates the services, indicating its non-profit, public, or private status. Almost without exception, services are supported through a combination of private and public funding (local, state, federal government).

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Emergency Shelter

Annually

*Agency does not have current capacity to track LTH.

#Serve # LTH Need

CARE Program Private, non-profit agency	Emergency shelter for motel stays for former offenders.	4	*	0	2009
Steele County Salvation Army Private, non-profit agency	Emergency shelter vouchers. Available to homeless people who are working with an agency to put a permanent housing plan in place. Red Kettle Campaign funded.	74 85	* *	74 75	2008 2009
Semcac Private, non-profit agency	Emergency shelter voucher through EFSP (federal monies). Available to homeless residents with a permanent housing plan in place.	6 3	* *	3 0	2008 2009
Owatonna Ministerial Association Private	Emergency shelter voucher. Currently there are no guidelines in place. If there is money, help will be given. Owatonna area churches fund.	8	*	8	2008
Lily Sparrow House Private, non-profit	2 units, for women and their families transitioning through homelessness. Average length of stay 30 days. Donation funded.	New			2008
Hospitality House Private, non-profit	Hospitality House provides housing for up to 5 single homeless males transitioning into housing and jobs. Cost of stay will be based on income.	New 40	* *	* *	2008 2009
Minnesota Department of Corrections – Field Services Public agency	Emergency funding available to house offenders for 2 weeks to 1 month if the offender is 1) a first time release from state prison, and 2) indigent. Must be submitted by corrections agent and be pre-approved.	5	*	0	2008
Veteran's Administration Public agency	Emergency shelter vouchers available to veterans, up to two nights. Owatonna VFW and Owatonna Legion funds one night each.	3	*	0	2008

Transitional Housing

Annually

*Agency does not have current capacity to track LTH.

Serve # LTH Need

Steele County Transitional Housing Private, non-profit	Progress Program and Steele County Transitional Housing provides services to 14 households by providing rent subsidies and	40 30	* *	40	2008 2009
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agency	case management to homeless families.				
Steele County Transitional Housing Private, non-profit agency	HOPE program provides services to 7 households fleeing domestic violence with rent subsidies and case management services.	14	*	1	2008
MN State Department of Corrections Public agency	Lease 1 unit with 2 beds for high-risk offenders (ISR/PRM only) from local landlord. The length of stay is 30-90 days.	15	*	5	2008

Supportive Housing for Adults with Disabilities who are long-term homeless

Annually

Serve #LTH Need

Owatonna Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Public agency	Bridges Ending Long-term Homeless Initiative Fund. 5-15 voucher subsidies for adults with a verifiable serious and persistent mental illness who meet the state long-term homeless definition and are below 50% of area median income.	7	7	0	2008
		15	15	5	2009

Supportive Housing for Adults with Disabilities

Annually

*Agency does not have current capacity to track LTH.

Serve # LTH Need

Owatonna Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Public agency	Bridges Program. Subsidies to persons with a verifiable serious and persistent mental illness if they are financially eligible which is determined by HRA. 20 subsidies.	34	0	10	2008
		34	0	10	2009
Owatonna Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Public agency	Adult Mental Health Initiative Bridges-Like Program. Subsidies to persons with a verifiable serious and persistent mental illness if they are financially eligible which is determined by HRA. 13 subsidies.	20	0	0	2008
		15	0	10	2009
Cedar Ave Apartments Private, for-profit company	An apartment building with four 2 bedroom, one efficiency and one 1 bedroom units available for households with mental illness who are in transition.	15	*	16	2008
		12	*	16	2009

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Permanent Housing/Subsidized Housing

Annually

*Agency does not have current capacity to track LTH.

		# Serve	# LTH	Need	
Owatonna Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA)	Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. 113 vouchers with priority preference given to homeless households and households with domestic violence.	185	0	160	2008
Public agency		113	0	160	2009

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Project Home Private, non-profit agency	End long-term homelessness by assisting 28 households in five county area in securing and financing housing until qualified for a permanent housing program or are able to afford housing on their own. Provide intensive case management and connect, coordinate, and monitor community resources that will empower the individual or family to function independently. Uses the state definition for long-term homelessness.	15 17/35	15 17/35	20 10	2008 2009	Steele/5 counties
Heather Court Apartments 635-639 Hilltop	Rural Development project; off street parking; rent includes all utilities except electric; coin-op laundry; some walk-in showers. 36 units	60	*	0	2008	
North Court Townhomes 1512 St Paul Road	Rural Development tax-credit project; off street parking; Rent includes water, sewer, garbage; some walk-in showers; balcony/patio; coin-op laundry. 29 units	29 53	* *	0 110	2008 2009	
Cedardale North 324 Cedardale Drive	Rural Development project; off street parking; rent includes all utilities except electric; coin-op laundry some walk-in showers. 16 units	16 20	* *	0 44	2008 2009	
Cedardale West 325 Cedardale Drive	Rural Development project; off street parking; some walk-in showers; coin-op laundry; rent include all utilities except electricity. 16 units	16 23	* *	0 53	2008 2009	
Cedardale Townhomes 315 22nd Street SE	Section 8 & tax credit project; heat is included in rent; W/D hook-ups in unit; storage space available; detached garages \$25/month; playground/picnic area. 30 units	30	*	0	2008	
Park View Heights 429 St. Paul Place	Section 8 project; off-street parking; rent includes water, sewer & garbage; some walk-in showers; balcony/patio; W/D hook-ups in unit. 48 units	51 45	* *	60 69	2008 2009	
Lincoln Square Apts. 435 16th Street NE	44 units are Section 236; 11 are Section 8. Remodeled; disposal; wall unit air conditioners; dishwasher; microwave; party room; playground/picnic	72	*	40	2008	
Ivanhoe Townhomes 615/625 Linn Avenue	Section 8 project; off-street parking; rent includes all utilities; W/D hook-ups in-unit; utility room. 12 units	12 14	* *	0 6	2008 2009	

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Ellendale Square 7th St. & 2nd Ave. Ellendale	Rural Development project; residents pay electric; coin-op laundry; emergency pull-cord system; resident provides wall A/C unit; comm. room w/ kitchen; no elevator. 16 units	16	*	0	2008
Maple Trail Apartments 165 24th Place NW	HUD subsidized households pay 30% of adjusted gross monthly income for rent; controlled access entry; activity room; laundry facilities; courtyard & paved walking trail; community room & kitchen; approved pets; 26 units	26	*	0	2008
Medford Manor 216 SE 1st Street Medford	Section 8 project; off-street parking; residents pay electric; some walk-in showers; coin-op laundry; emergency call system. 20 units	20 28	* *	0 16	2008 2009
Cedardale Place 2211 Hartle Ave.	Section 8 senior/disabled; residents pay electric; detached garages - \$25/month; wall-unit A/C supplied by resident; coin-op laundry; comm. room; library. 68 units, 3 units are long term homeless	68	3	0	2008
Prairie Villa 455 2nd Street SE Blooming Prairie	Section 8 project; off-street parking; resident pays electric; comm. room; some walk-in showers; coin-op laundry; emergency call system. 15 units	15 17	* *	0 3	2008 2009
Ivanhoe Apts. 220/230 18th St. SW	Section 8 project; two 2-story buildings; off-street parking; rent includes all utilities; comm. room; coin-op laundry; some walk-in showers; emergency call system. 64 units	64 76	* *	0 10	2008 2009
Cedardale South 345 Cedardale Dr.	Rural Development project; off-street parking; community room; rent includes all utilities except electricity; coin-op laundry; emergency call system. 36 units	36 40	* *	0 11	2008 2009

Treatment Facilities

Annually

*Agency does not have current capacity to track LTH.

		# Serve	# LTH	Need	
Intensive Residential Treatment Setting (IRTS), also known as Safe Harbour	For treatment in a residential setting for mental illness, primary. May have chemical dependence as secondary. There is a need for more facilities of this nature. 9 units.	67	*	0	2008
Mineral Springs Board and Lodge	Not subsidized. For men only. 12 units.	12	*	0	2008

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Westside Board and Lodge	GRH county subsidized. Residents are elderly, mental health, drug/alcohol recoverers, men or women. Not a treatment facility. Referred to as a Boarding Care Home. 35 units.	35	*	0	2008
West Hills Lodge Halfway House	Must be referred. Is a chemical dependency halfway house. There is a need for sober housing in Steele County, which would be for residents who are done here to get into housing. Many have felonies and cannot rent just anywhere. 15 units.	8 Steele 61 Total Total	*	22 Steele 239	

Homeless Prevention & Other Housing Assistance

Annually

*Agency does not have current capacity to track LTH.

		# Serve	# LTH	Need	
CARE Program Private, non-profit agency	Assistance with rent or deposit to get into housing or keep housing. For former offenders.	11	*		2009
Semcac - HPRP Private, non-profit agency	Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program(HPRP). Provides eviction prevention and re-housing of HUD defined homeless persons. Additional on-going rental subsidies are also available. Serves 7 households through 3-2011. HUD funding through Stimulus Package.	New			2009
Semcac – CAT ARRA Private, non-profit agency	Crisis financial assistance to newly un- and under-employed who have unexpected or emergent household expenses that jeopardizes stability. Housing assistance only with proof of extenuating circumstances. 10 households through 9-2010. Funded through Stimulus Package.	New			2009
Semcac - FHPAP Private, non-profit agency	Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP). Provides eviction prevention assistance with past due rent for residents staying in current housing. Services: rent, light case mgmt., budget counseling, info and referral. Average 1 household per month. State funded.	15 25	* *	0 0	2008 2009
South Central Human Relations Center Private, non-profit agency	Crisis Housing Fund. These funds are used to help individuals with SPMI maintain their housing while in residential treatment for MI and/or CD. Funds can be used to pay mortgage, rent and/or utilities. Case managers apply directly to MN Housing for funding.	6	*	0	2008

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<p>Steele County Human Services Family Support & Assistance</p> <p>Public agency</p>	<p>Emergency County Aid is intended to provide a cost-effective intervention that resolves a current shelter crisis that the eligible household cannot otherwise meet with their own resources. Assistance available once in a 12-18 month period.</p>	<p>77 * 10 2008</p> <p>88 * 30 2009</p>
<p>Semcac - RHASP</p> <p>Private, non-profit agency</p>	<p>Rural Housing Assistance and Stability Program (RHASP). Provides assistance to HUD defined homeless residents with 1st month's rent and/or deposit. Average 1 household per month. HUD funded.</p>	<p>4 * 0 2008</p> <p>9 * 0 2009</p>
<p>Steele County Salvation Army</p> <p>Private, non-profit agency</p>	<p>Provides eviction prevention assistance for past due rent for residents staying in current housing. Services: rent, light case mgmt., budget counseling, info and referral. Funded by Steele County resident donations.</p>	<p>102 * 102 2008</p>
<p>Steele County Transitional Housing</p> <p>Private, non-profit agency</p>	<p>Provides eviction prevention assistance for past due rent for residents staying in current housing up to \$500. One time help only. United Way of Steele County and Steele County funded.</p>	<p>20 * 20 2008</p> <p>20 * 20 2009</p>
<p>Owatonna Ministerial Association</p> <p>Private</p>	<p>Provides assistance to renters to help pay for rent and/or deposit. If there is money, help is given. Funded by Owatonna area churches.</p>	<p>Unknown 2008</p>

Strategies to End Homelessness

Goal #1: Expand resources to fund supportive services for adults with serious persistent mental illness and chronic disabilities living in scattered sites throughout the community.

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Additional services and housing is needed to fully assist the chronically homeless adult population in Owatonna and Steele County. The "chronically homeless," as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), is an unaccompanied homeless adult with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

Evidence exists that housing stability reduces the need for high cost services such as hospitalizations, unnecessary emergency visits, and detox. Communities are safer and benefit when services are provided to chronically homeless adults. As homeless adults become stable they will begin to contribute to the community by working, paying taxes, and spending on their basic needs.

Housing for the adult chronically homeless population is best addressed using scattered sites within the community. Supportive services and case management are the critical components to ensuring housing stability for this population.

Strategies:

- Increase funding to expand the availability of supportive services, case management and housing subsidies for individuals with mental health/chemical dependency conditions in scattered housing sites within the community.
- Continue developing partnerships with other organizations to provide for an array of support services and treatment options.
- Build strong landlord-tenant connections to enhance availability of scattered community housing sites.
- Improve and maintain communication between tenants with mental illness, local landlords, law enforcement, and case management to reduce the disorderly use violations for those actively involved with legitimate supportive housing program.

Strategy A:

Increase funding to expand the availability of supportive services, outreach services, case management and housing subsidies for individuals with mental health/chemical dependency conditions in scattered housing sites within the community.

Lead Entity: Steele County Human Services

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Action Steps	Potential Partners	Timeline
Support legislative efforts to add support funding to the existing housing resources/subsidies	Hearth Connection Local legislative delegation Minnesota Housing	Annually
Increase Community Social Services Advisory Board's priority with regard to providing for supportive services funding	Steele County Human Services, South Central Human Relations Center, Owatonna Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Minnesota Housing	August 2008 through December 2009
Develop supportive housing project consisting of 15 – 1BR units of affordable housing with services for SPMI households	South Central Human Relations Center, Steele County Human Services, Owatonna HRA, CREST Mental Health Group	2011

Strategy B:

Continue developing partnerships with other organizations to provide for an array of support services and treatment options.

Lead Entity: Steele County Human Services

Action Steps	Potential Partners	Timeline
Identify needed support services for homeless individuals	South Central Human Relations Center, Project Home, Owatonna HRA, Steele County Transitional Housing, Steele County Community Services Coordination Team	August 2008 through December 2009
Develop research based supported employment programs	Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), South Central Human Relations Center	August 2008 through December 2009

Strategy C:

Build strong landlord-tenant connections to enhance availability of scattered community housing sites.

Lead Entity: Owatonna HRA

Action Steps	Potential Partners	Timeline
Coordinate and enhance existing landlord connections	Project Home, City of Owatonna Landlord Association (COLA), Steele County Human Services, South Central Human Relations Center, Steele County Public Health, Steele	Monthly

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	County Community Services Coordination Team	
Develop affordable housing for people with physical disabilities	Steele County Human Services, Developer Accessible Spaces INC	January 2008 through December 2009

Strategy D:

Improve and maintain communication between tenants with mental illness, local landlords, law enforcement, and case management to reduce the disorderly use violations for those actively involved with legitimate supportive housing programs.

Lead Entity:

Action Steps	Potential Partners	Timeline
Maintain signed Release of Information between all parties	Local landlords, Law Enforcement Center (LEC), individuals with SPMI	Annually
Participate in Homeless Response Team meetings	Local landlords, LEC	Monthly/Quarterly

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Goal #2: Develop an outreach plan for unaccompanied youth under 22 years old and secure funding for support services.

Unaccompanied minors and homeless youth are an undefined population within Owatonna and Steele County whose housing needs remain largely unmet. Some with young children need emergency housing options and assistance in finding permanent living arrangements.

Youth who are homeless present unique challenges because of their age as well as barriers found among adult homeless populations- criminal record, limited or no income, poor or no credit history, and mental health, chemical, and disability conditions.

Strategies:

- Develop identification system to help identify youth and assess services needs. Determine at what point youth will actually accept the services available to them.
- Obtain funding for case management and related services needed to assist youth in reaching personal and housing stability.
- Develop service and funding options to address needs of youth "at risk" of homelessness.

Strategy A:

Develop identification system to help identify youth and assess services needs. Determine at what point youth will actually accept the services available to them.

Lead Entity:

Action Steps	Potential Partners	Timeline
Develop Identification/Assessment Tool	Steele County Human Services, Blooming Prairie Public Schools, Medford Public School, Owatonna Public Schools, Steele County Community Services Coordination Team	2009-2011

Strategy B:

Obtain funding for case management and related services needed to assist youth in reaching personal and housing stability.

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Lead Entity:

Action Steps	Potential Partners	Timeline
Apply for any and all appropriate grants	Minnesota Department of Human Services, Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH),	Funding cycle FY 2009

Strategy C:

Develop service and funding options to address needs of youth "at risk" of homelessness.

Lead Entity:

Action Steps	Potential Partners	Timeline
Apply for any and all appropriate grants	Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), HUD – Family Unification Program/HRA-SCHS	Funding cycle FY 2009

Goal #3: Develop housing options with support services for former offenders within the community.

Persons being released from prison and jail face a wide array of re-entry challenges. Finding gainful employment and housing with a criminal record is challenging. Local ordinances may limit where offender housing may be located. Neighborhoods are often reluctant to embrace the development of offender housing. Rental subsidies available to low-income persons may exclude those with certain criminal backgrounds. Sex offenders face even more restrictions on where and with whom they can live. In addition, stable housing can be hard to access because of mental health and/or physical health issues. Often times, offenders are released from incarceration with limited supplies of medication and face the added challenge of getting timely psychiatric/medical care for their conditions.

On average, there are more than twenty-five individuals who are released as homeless offenders into our community each year and local probation personnel are expected to assist with their re-entry. For quite a few years, our community has made extensive use of local hotels for temporary housing. In our local county jail, we have tracked "housing status" with those inmates working with the CARE re-entry program. The rate of homelessness for these individuals in the program is 50% at point of release.

Housing stability is one factor that reduces the likelihood of re-offending and builds on overall community safety. Supportive housing programs improve community safety by identifying where individuals live and connect them with services.

Strategies:

- Secure funding for short-term non-sex offender housing options including congregate as well as scattered community sites.
- Continue developing partnerships with other organizations to provide for an array of support services and treatment options.
- Build strong landlord-tenant connections to enhance availability of scattered community housing sites.
- Improve and maintain communication between former offenders, local landlords, law enforcement, and case managers to reduce the disorderly

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use violations for those actively involved with legitimate supportive housing program.

- Build community awareness and solicit community and local business support.

Strategy A: Secure funding for short-term housing options for former offenders including congregate as well as scattered community sites.

Purchase 1 to 3 large homes for up to 5 males in each home transitioning into housing and jobs. Cost of stay will be based on income.

Lead Entity: Friendship Group

Action Steps	Potential Partners	Timeline
Work with local agencies, county board, local legislators and the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) to obtain funding to create and maintain such sites	Friendship Group, Property Carriers Investment Group LLC, local builders, employment agencies	Within 1 year

Strategy B: Continue developing partnerships with other organizations to provide for an array of support services and treatment options.

Lead Entity: Community Assessment and Reintegration Program (CARE Program)

Action Steps	Potential Partners	Timeline
Continue to collaborate to see new services developed, to ensure a non-duplication of services	Employment services, social services, private treatment providers, Department of Corrections, medical community, South Central Human Relation Center, Steele County Court Services, Steele County Community Services Coordination Team, United Way agencies	Monthly
Develop new services in areas with gaps	CONTACT, Employment Services, Semcac, Steele County Detention Center, Steele County Human Services, local churches	2011

Strategy C:

Build strong landlord-tenant connections to enhance availability of scattered community housing sites.

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Lead Entity: CARE Program

Action Steps	Potential Partners	Timeline
Continue to collaborate with landlords and seek out new landlords	Private landlords, COLA, CARE Program, Minnesota Department of Corrections	Monthly
Meet bi-annually or as needed with frequently used landlords to provide support and information	CARE Program, local landlords, COLA, Minnesota Department of Corrections	Bi-annually

Strategy D:

Improve and maintain communication between former offenders, local landlords, law enforcement, and case managers to reduce the disorderly use violations for those actively involved with legitimate supportive housing program.

Lead Entity: CARE Program

Action Steps	Potential Partners	Timeline
Maintain signed Release of Information between all parties	Local landlords, LEC, former offenders	Annually
Participate in Steele County Community Services Coordination Team meetings	Local landlords, LEC	Monthly/Quarterly

Strategy E:

Build community awareness and solicit community and local business support.

Lead Entity:

Action Steps	Potential Partners	Timeline
Hold informational meetings to educate and inform. Seek resources to assist offenders with temporary housing, mentorship, sponsorship, etc	Community organizations, Rotary Club, Exchange Club, United Way agencies, employers, AA	October 2008 Annually
Publish newspaper articles	<i>Owatonna People's Press, BP Times, NRHEG Star Eagle</i>	As needed

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Goal #4: Build community support for affordable housing solutions by providing awareness outreach and prevention education initiatives.

Often neighborhood concerns (*Not in my backyard - NIMBY*) interfere with the development of housing solutions needed for ending homelessness or for ensuring availability of adequate affordable housing. The myths and stigma associated with people who have mental health conditions, who are homeless, who are recently released from jail, and who are poor often create doubt and fear among existing residents when new developments are planned.

Strategy:

- Establish a process where proponents of housing options (builders, low income/homeless residents/service providers) can coordinate their efforts at public hearings and/or neighborhood meetings to share information, address concerns, and alleviate fears.

Strategy A:

Establish a process where proponents of housing options can coordinate their efforts at public hearings and/or neighborhood meetings to share information, address concerns, and alleviate fears.

Lead Entity: Steele County Community Services Coordination Team

Action Steps	Potential Partners	Timeline
Develop a call list for local leaders, community members who support various housing options, experts in the area of the type of housing and tenants from other low-income housing. CSCT Services Flow Chart Lifestyle, Inc. vacancy list	Developers, landlords, case managers, law enforcement, neighborhood residents supporting the effort, COLA, <i>Owatonna People's Press</i> Steele County CSCT Lifestyle, Inc.	June 2008 Reviewed monthly
Develop fact sheets or presentations to educate public relating to types of housing and tenants	Steele County Community Services Coordination Team	April 2009
Present on the <i>Owatonna Today Show</i>	<i>Owatonna Today Show</i> staff, Heading Home Steele representatives	May 2009
Publish newspaper articles	<i>Owatonna People's Press, BP Times, NRHEG Star Eagle</i>	Quarterly

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Conduct door-to-door visits with neighbors	Developers	As needed
Create a Heading Home Steele web page on Steele County website	Kelly Harder, Steele County IT staff	May 2009
Develop business partnerships	Local businesses	As needed
Interview with local radio	CSCT members, KRFO, KAT, KOWZ	Annually

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Goal #5: Seek greater public and private investment and strengthen public policies that sustain adequate affordable housing and support services for persons who are homeless or may become homeless.

Federal and state investment and public-private partnerships in local housing solutions are essential. This includes policies that support rental subsidies, construction, and supportive services as well as funding packages that favor different ways for homelessness to be addressed at the local level.

Strategies:

- Build upon existing partnerships with the state and federal governments and the River Valleys CoC to address new, coordinated ways of funding housing and services.
- Leverage funding opportunities through public-private initiatives such as "Heading Home" and River Valleys CoC.

Strategy A:

Build upon existing partnerships to address new, coordinated ways of funding housing and services.

Lead Entity:

Action Steps	Potential Partners	Timeline
Develop an "exception or modified" process to the existing 3 strikes tenant policy for those individuals actively working and enrolled in a housing program.	LEC, Steele County Human Services, CARE Program, South Central Human Relations Center	2009
Present at Steele County Board and city councils within Steele County and have sign on to the Heading Home Steele County Plan to End Homelessness.	Steele County Board, Blooming Prairie City Council, Ellendale City Council, Medford City Council, Owatonna City Council	March 2009
Meet with legislators to educate and inform of local needs as identified in the Heading Home Plan	Kelly Harder, Kory Kath, Dick Day, Patti Fritz, Tim Walz	May 2009
Work with Heading Home Minnesota to develop	Kit Hadly, Heading Home Minnesota	March 2009

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additional intervention to eradicate homelessness in Steele County.		
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Strategy B:

Leverage funding opportunities through public-private initiatives such as "Heading Home" and River Valleys CoC.

Lead Entity:

Action Steps	Potential Partners	Timeline
Leverage funding opportunities through public-private initiatives such as "Heading Home" and/or other foundations	Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), Minnesota Housing, foundation and grants available through public/private resources, Local businesses/ Service Teams MHFA/ Rental Rehabilitation Programs/ Long term homeless emphasis HUD	As needed to support initiatives to accomplish goals of plan
Purchase property to support housing for homeless single men	Friendship Group, Property Carriers Investment Group LLC, local builders, employment agencies.	June 2009
Leverage church funding with local non-profit or government agency for support staffing	Owatonna Ministerial Association, Steele County Community Services Coordination Team	2010

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Goal # 6: Utilize the community’s spectrum of services to prevent and end homelessness.

By using the community’s spectrum of services, the Steele County Community Services Coordination Team (CSCT) works to bring awareness and collaboration about homelessness and prevention to the general public. The group consists of area agency representatives (non-profit, county, city, and private) who meet monthly to discuss homelessness and the wide array of issues that accompany homelessness in Steele County. In addition, the group serves as a forum for raising and discussing concerns, issues, and problems that involve services in Owatonna and the surrounding Steele County communities.

Strategies:

- Improve coordination of resources to better serve the needs of people facing homelessness.
- Identify the needs and resources within the community to support households faced with homelessness.

Strategy A:

Improve coordination of resources to better serve the needs of people facing homelessness.

Lead Entity: Steele County Community Services Coordination Team

Action Steps	Potential Partners	Timeline
Meet for Steele County CSCT meetings	Member agencies	Monthly
Gather for COLA meeting	Housing providers, COLA	Annually

Strategy B:

Identify the needs and resources within the community to support households faced with homelessness.

Lead Entity: Steele County Community Services Coordination Team

Action Steps	Potential Partners	Timeline
Host a Project Community Connect	Steele County CSCT, local service providers (haircuts, dental, blood pressure, employers, etc), local	January 2010 Annually

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	businesses	
Meet for Steele County CSCT meetings	Member agencies	Monthly
Conduct Housing Market Analysis and Demand Estimates/ Housing Study	Owatonna HRA	January 2009 every 3 years
Maintain Services Resource Directory	Semcac, United Way	Quarterly
Maintain listing of all rental properties	City of Owatonna, COLA,	December 2009

Appendix A: Heading Home Steele Committee

- Barb Schiltz, Community Assessment & Reintegration Program (CARE), South Central Human Relations Center
- Dean Rudloff, Pastor and Member at Large
- Dennis Werner, City of Owatonna HRA Commissioner & Sacred Heart Church Social Justice
- Jessica Wolf, Project Home, South Central Human Relations Center
- Karla Tull, Steele County Salvation Army
- Julie Anderson, Steele County Transitional Housing
- Kelly Harder, Director, Steele County Human Services
- Linda Moore, South Central Human Relations Center
- Mary Ulland-Evans, River Valleys Continuum of Care
- Mary Vrieze, Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services
- Michele Lammi, Semcac
- Nancy Bokelmann, City of Owatonna Housing Redevelopment Authority
- Pat Fagan, Owatonna Ministerial Association
- Sue Geary, Landlord/ Developer/City of Owatonna Landlord Association
- Susan Thompson, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
- Val Elzen, Supervisor, Steele County Human Services

Appendix B: Terms and Definitions

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines **homeless or homeless individual or homeless person** to include—

1. an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and
2. an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is —
3. a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);
4. an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
5. a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

HUD defines **homeless youth** as a person under 18 years of age that meets the criteria for homeless or homeless individual or homeless person.

HUD defines **chronic homeless** as either (1) an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more, OR (2) an unaccompanied individual with a disabling condition who has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.”

The State of Minnesota defines as **homeless** any individual, unaccompanied youth or family that is without a permanent place to live that is fit for human habitation.” Doubling-up is considered homeless if that arrangement has persisted more than 1 year.

The State of Minnesota defines an individual, unaccompanied youth or family as **long-term homeless** if they are without a home for a year or more OR have had at least four (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years. Any period of institutionalization or incarceration (including transitional housing, prison/jail, treatment, hospitals, foster care, or refugee camps) shall be excluded when determining the length of time the household has been homeless).

Homeless youth means a person 21 years of age or younger who is unaccompanied by a parent or guardian and is without shelter where appropriate care and supervision are available, whose parent or legal guardian is unable or unwilling to provide shelter and care, or who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The following are not fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residences:

- a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;
- an institution or a publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;
- transitional housing;
- a temporary placement with a peer, friend, or family member that has not offered permanent residence, a residential lease, or temporary lodging for more than 30 days; or
- a public or private place not designed for, nor ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. Homeless youth does not include persons incarcerated or otherwise detained under federal or state law.

Youth at risk of homelessness means a person 21 years of age or younger whose status or circumstances indicate a significant danger of experiencing homelessness in the near future. Status or circumstances that indicate a significant danger may include:

- youth exiting out-of-home placements;
- youth who previously were homeless;
- youth whose parents or primary caregivers are or were previously homeless;
- youth who are exposed to abuse and neglect in their homes;

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- youth who experience conflict with parents due to chemical or alcohol dependency, mental health disabilities, or other disabilities; and
- runaways.

Runaway means an unmarried child under the age of 18 years who is absent from the home of a parent or guardian or other lawful placement without the consent of the parent, guardian, or lawful custodian.

Definition Links:

www.hud.gov

www.wilder.org

www.deed.state.mn.us/youth

Supportive housing is permanent affordable rental housing with linkages to services necessary for persons to maintain housing stability, live in the community, and lead successful lives.

Supportive housing includes a landlord-tenant relationship and services offered in conjunction with housing.

- *Single-site* housing is located in one building or in one area. Single-site supportive housing can be as small as a duplex or as large as an apartment building.
- *Scattered-site* housing may be single-family homes, townhomes, duplexes or apartments throughout the community.

Studies of supportive housing nationwide and in Minnesota show a better use of housing and service resources that result in improved outcomes for persons without substantially increasing costs

Minnesota's Business Plan to end Homelessness, 2004

Housing First is a housing-service model based on the premise that issues such as mental illness and chemical dependency cannot be addressed without a stable place to live. Without housing, services and supports cannot be effective.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Blueprint for Change: ending Chronic Homelessness
for Persons with Serious Mental Illness and/or Co-Occurring
Substance Use Disorders, 2003

Veteran defined. The word "veteran" as used in Minnesota Statutes, except in sections 136F.28, 196.21, and 243.251, means a citizen of the United States or a resident alien who has been separated under honorable conditions from any branch of the armed forces of the United States after having served on active duty for 181 consecutive days or by reason of disability incurred while serving on active duty, or who has met the minimum active duty requirement as defined by Code of Federal Regulations, title 38, section 3.12a, or who has active military service certified under section 401, Public Law Number 95-202. The active military service must be certified by the United States Secretary of Defense as active military service and a discharge under honorable conditions must be issued by the Secretary.

Appendix C: Contacts and Resource Links

ADOPTION COUNSELING / PLACEMENT

Catholic Charities-Owatonna	507-455-2008
Children's Home Society	800-952-9302
Downey Side Families for Youth	507-446-8503
Lutheran Social Services	888-205-3769
Steele County Human Services	507-444-7500

BREASTFEEDING EDUCATION

Le Leche League	507-446-0489
Public Health	507-444-7650

CHEMICAL USE / ADDICTIVE BEHAVIORS (Evaluation/Counseling/Education/Treatment)

Family Focus	507-451-0511
West Hills Lodge (Halfway House)	507-451-1172
(Self Help Programs)	
AA/Al-Anon/Alateen	507-451-8610
Cocaine Anonymous	800-925-6159
Steele County Human Services	507-444-7500

CHILDBIRTH CLASSES

Owatonna Community Education	507-444-7900
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CHILDCARE / PRESCHOOL

Christian Family Daycare Center	507-444-0601
Kid's Korner Educare	507-451-0312
Medford Tiger Club (school age)	507-451-5250
Owatonna School Age Child Care	507-444-7900
Sunshine Tree Day Care Center	507-451-0795
Tiger Town Kids	507-214-5437
Wee Pals Child Care Center	507-451-8355
Associated Preschool	507-451-0041
Blooming Prairie Preschool	507-583-6615
Ellendale Preschool	507-684-3181
Good Shepherd Preschool	507-451-6821
Head Start (Semcac)	
Owatonna Sites I & II	507-451-8180
Owatonna Sites III & IV	507-446-5897
Medford Preschool	570-451-5250
Migrant Early Head Start and Head Start	507-455-2203
Montessori Children's House	507-451-2885
St. Isidore's Preschool	507-451-5876
St. Mary's Preschool	507-446-2300
Trinity Nursery School	507-451-8247
Parent Provider Connect	507-455-2560

CLOTHING / HOUSEHOLD

Birthright	507-455-1622
Salvation Army	507-455-1444
Steele County Clothesline	507-451-2550

COUNSELING

Associates in Psychiatry & Psychology	507-455-0992
Catholic Charities-Owatonna	507-455-2008

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Crisis Resource Center	800-451-1202
Fernbrook Family Center	507-446-0431
Lutheran Social Services	507-451-7811
Mental Health Professionals	507-446-8123
South Central Human Relations Center	507-451-2630
Or	800-722-0590

EDUCATION

Early Childhood Family Education/Community Ed.	
Blooming Prairie	507-583-6615
Ellendale	507-684-3181
Medford	507-451-5250
Owatonna	507-444-7900
Blooming Prairie Schools	507-583-4426
Ellendale Elementary	507-684-3181
Medford Public School	507-451-5250
Owatonna Public Schools	507-444-8600
El Shaddai School	507-455-9345
Owatonna Christian School	507-451-3495
Recovery School of So. MN	507-214-2057
St. Isidore's School	507-451-5876
St. Mary's School	507-446-2300
Sylvan Learning Center	507-444-4010

EMPLOYMENT & VOCATIONAL SERVICES

Advance Services	507-444-4103
Cedar Valley Services	507-451-5897
CHOICES	800-657-3716
Doherty Staffing Solutions	507-444-9088
Experience Works	507-446-1494
Express Employment Professionals	507-455-3002
Manpower	507-451-3404
MN Workforce Center	507-446-1470
Specialty Personnel Services	507-451-5773
Spherion	507-451-3400
Straight River Enterprises	507-444-2427

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Children's Remedial Fund (health care)	507-444-8415
Department of Human Services, Steele County	
MFIP, Food Stamps, MA, Child Care, Child Support	507-444-7500
Energy Assistance	507-451-7134
Or	800-944-3281
MN Care	800-657-3672
MN Unemployment Insurance	507-446-1470
Owatonna Ministerial Assoc	507-456-3040
Social Security Administration	800-772-1213

(Budgeting)

CCCS	800-780-2890
LSS Financial	888-577-2227
Semcac	507-451-7134
U of MN Extension (food)	507-444-7685

FOOD

Ellendale Community Food Shelf	507-684-2731
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Fare For All	507-213-0465
Food Support- Department of Human Services, Steele County	507-444-7500
MAC (Mothers & Children)	877-500-8699
Meals-on-Wheels	
Blooming Prairie	507-583-7369
Ellendale	507-684-3311
Medford	507-213-0465
Owatonna Mobil Meals	507-455-3195
MN Extension-Nutrition Education	507-444-7693
Owatonna Schools—Food Service	507-444-8628
NAPS (Nutrition Assist. Program for Seniors)	877-500-8699
Salvation Army	507-455-1444
Semcac Senior Dining	
Blooming Prairie	507-583-7369
Ellendale	507-684-3311
Owatonna	507-455-3195
Steele County Food Shelf	507-455-2991
WIC	507-444-7660

HOUSING

COLA- City of Owatonna Landlord Association, Sue Geary	507-451-1431
Hospitality House (Emergency 60 days-Transitional housing-Single Men)	507-444-4042
Habitat for Humanity	507-446-0112
Lily Sparrow House (Emergency 30 days-Mothers with children)	507-451-9093
Owatonna HRA (Bridges Program – SPMI, Section 8 Vouchers)	507-774-7318
Project Home	507-455-8116
Salvation Army (Emergency)	507-455-1444
Semcac (Emergency)	507-451-7134
Steele County Human Services	507-444-7500
Steele County Transitional Housing	507-446-9315

IMMIGRATION INFORMATION

Centro Campesino	507-446-9599
Cultural Diversity Network	507-446-1492
English Language Learning	507-444-7925
Somali American Organization	507-451-2072
US Citizenship & Immigration Services	800-375-5283

INFORMATION & REFERRAL

Salvation Army	507-455-1444
Semcac	507-451-7134

LEGAL ASSISTANCE / ADVOCACY

Centro Legal Inc	651-652-1890
Southern MN Regional Legal Services-Albert Lea	800-223-0280
Minnesota Attorney General's Office	800-657-3787

LIBRARIES

Blooming Prairie Public Library	507-583-7750
Owatonna Public Library	507-444-2460

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SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES

Advocates for Developmental Disabilities	507-451-9769
Disability Linkage Line	866-333-2466
Early Childhood Special Education	
Blooming Prairie	507-583-6615
Ellendale	507-684-3181
Medford	507-451-5250
Owatonna	507-444-8600
Gillette Children's Hospital	800-719-4040
Goodwill/Easter Seals of MN	507-281-9651
MN Children w/Special Health Needs	800-728-5420
Owatonna Park & Rec Therapeutic	507-444-4390
PACER.....	800-537-2237
Telephone Equipment Distribution	800-657-3663

SUPPORT GROUPS / PROGRAMS

American Red Cross	507-451-2777
Autism	507-451-7715
Big Brothers/Big Sisters	507-451-5922
CARE Program	507-451-2630
Center for Family Unity	507-455-1190
Children's Grief Support Group	507-446-0936
Compassionate Friends	507-451-8933
Gluten-Free	507-451-5752
Healthy Seniors Program	507-774-7648
Medford Senior Care Connection	507-213-0465
Men Who Batter	507-451-2630
Rebuilding	507-455-4104
Semcac Senior Advocacy	507-446-0177
SeniorPlace	507-444-4280
TRIAMI	507-835-7036

TRANSPORTATION

Blooming Prairie Senior Bus	507-583-7369
SCAT Bus	800-597-7228
Semcac Volunteer Driver Program	866-238-9389
Taxi First Choice	507-444-0020
Tonna Taxi	507-451-4215

UTILITIES

Blooming Prairie Utilities	507-583-6683
Semcac Energy Assistance	507-451-7134
..... Or	800-944-3281
Heat Share	866-455-6472
Owatonna Public Utilities	507-451-2480
Steele-Waseca Co-op	507-451-7340

EMERGENCIES / PROTECTION

Ambulance/Fire/Police/Sheriff/State Patrol	911
Child Protection	507-444-7500
Crime Victims Resource Center (24/hrs)	800-349-6680
Crisis Nursery (24/hrs)	763-591-0100
MN Poison Control Center	800-222-1222
Owatonna Hospital	507-451-3850
Road Conditions	800-542-0220

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State and Regional Agencies

Minnesota Housing Finance Agency <http://www.mnhousing.gov> click on homeless and housing assistance, click on Heading Home Minnesota Business Plan To End Long Term Homelessness.

River Valleys Continuum of Care, <http://www.threeriverscap.org/> click on Programs, click on Continuum of Care.