

Minnesota Children's Summit 2005: Smart Policies, Strong Families
Monday, March 28, 2005
Practicing Family Impact Analysis
1:45-2:45 p.m.

Housing for the Homeless

- Goal: Looking at problem through family lens.
- Plan: Brief Intros, brief discussion of issue, work on analysis together (help to understand how family impact can be used).

Background on Family Impact Analysis

- Do not have to compete checklist, a few may be very helpful.
- Purpose – present facts in a meaningful manner
- Do not have to be experts on a policy to get started in using it to get to policymakers. Tool provides focus.
- Equally well-informed individuals can have different perspectives.
- Intention not to pass judgment, but to learn skills – do not necessarily need analysis checklist, but the skills may transfer – meetings, letter writing, etc.

Background on Topic

- About 8,000 homeless a night
- About 20,000 in precarious housing
- Of 8,000, about 13,000 families
- Not all long-term homeless, about 10-15% long-term, more than 50% of resources to these individuals.
- Need housing to receive services, services to maintain housing.
- Plan involves estimated \$580 million need
- In \$580 million
 - Construction/maintenance of house
 - Ongoing rental assistance
 - Ongoing services (mental health, substance abuse)
- Hoped for \$400 million, need to find \$180 million more.
- \$10-\$12 million for ongoing services
- Of service dollars found \$10 million from another part of affordable housing preservation.
- Look at 6 principles:
 - Affordable?
 - Does it end it? Does it intervene only when necessary?
 - Recognize interdependence? Family resources?
 - Encourage individuals and families to collaborate as partners?
 - Take into account on effects on different types of families?
 - Are those most vulnerable included in policy?

Family Impact Analysis

- Last (Principle 6) is the easiest – if you are long-term you are the most low on the rung of the ladder, Pro: focus on most vulnerable.
- What does housing low end say about society?
- Would more recently poor be the best targets? Have jobs, working poor?
- One point in plan does not feel all resources should go to long-term homeless – but it is the focus. Question of primary versus secondary prevention?
- Government officials target many of homeless programs- leads to restructuring. Focus on long-term, take away the role of poverty in homelessness.
- Could be a con: Takes away from other programs.
- Plan is open to all, housing first strategy –worst for youth that are unaccompanied, does not work best for this group – focus on the family.
- Significant % of homeless youth fleeing from abusive homes, many working, in school, providing long-term housing would be good.
- Cultural groups, violating cultural norms – parents don't agree – runaway.
- Many just cannot afford.
- Changing individual behavior versus large systems – this policy tries to do both.
- Clarification of issue?
- Not transitional or time-limited. Can stay as long as they need to – no pressure/deadline. Some private, some particular unit services set without services to get one into community.
- How many families?
- 200-400 for \$20 million, not all costs included.
- Estimates need to construct enough for about 4,000 families – plan to fund very small piece. Important for analysis – can everything be completed?
- How different families, section 8?
- Only portion through new construction, using existing Section 8 housing. More independent than Section 8.
- In line with requirements? How align with existing housing projects?
- 2 issues = households that don't get Section 8 housing – criminal issues, etc, Not Clear, 2-90 million to come from federal government –
- Principle 1: Family Support
 - Con: Support not strengthened when resources may be withdrawn without notice.
 - How does family size impact?
 - Working group included corrections – criminal background major deterrent
 - That one think policy attempts to address, provides them with services and support. Pro 2: Services help with meeting known needs.
- Principle 5: Family Diversity
 - Con: eligibility may be harder to include large families
 - Pro: If implementation
- Policy can attempt to get away from less flexible forms of funding
- Important to integrate services. If this works, really good changes.
- Have we discussed eligibility?

- Hard to discuss not yet stipulated. Move to Principle 2: How does it work to keep families together? Others, for example, shift families.
 - See 2 pieces: families often get split up, this provides way or them to stay together. Point 2: provides stability (e.g., children have consistent school, neighbors).
- Who determines who a family is?
 - Has not seen definition. Welfare has specific definitions as economic unit.
- Student studying homeless family. Structuring family around food. Allows families to serve all functions in the policy.
- With this project, has there been a conversation with neighborhood organizations to see how they feel? Not part of neighborhood plan? May make it much more difficult.
- On family relationships, the role of foster care. Policymakers see long-term homelessness as bad parents – this policy needs to address this issue and promote stability.
- Value of supportive housing – decrease in the number of children removed from home.
- Reiterates importance of support.
- Analyzing does not take care of if supportive piece. Often looking at 6 pieces – step back, look at bigger picture (e.g., funding, family economics,) and pieces together.
- Is this tool appropriate to different types of families? Other invisible groups? What are the shortcomings of this tool? Should not use tool as only tool.