

Municipality of Anchorage
Department of Health and Human Services

Overview of Homelessness
in
Anchorage, Alaska

July 27, 2009

**Municipal Department of Health and Human Services
Safety Links Program
July 2009**

Introduction

Over the past several years, the Municipal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has worked with the community to produce shelter trend reports. These reports are used to assess shelter capacity and overflow, as well as track trend in services. This report is an overview of shelter trends. The report also includes information of known funding from the DHHS or Municipal Department of Neighborhoods. The DHHS has three primary Divisions that work closely to support homeless shelters in the community:

Administration Division The Grants & Contract Section administers Emergency Shelter Grant, Maintenance & Operation monies and the Human Services Community Matching Grant (directly administered by United Way) which support the operation and services of shelters.

Human Services Division The Safety Links Program secures federal and state grant monies to serve the homeless and to provide case management services for public inebriates. The program is expecting \$776,469 Recovery and Reinvestment Act monies to serve homeless and near homeless individuals and families. The Program also administers the Alaska Homeless Management Information System (AKHMIS). AKHMIS is funded by grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC). Participating emergency shelters include: Catholic Social Services' Brother Francis Shelter and Clare House; Salvation Army McKinnell Shelter, and Covenant House, Alaska. These shelters enter data into AKHMIS which provides information to HUD for the city's Annual Homeless Assessment Report. The Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC) is exempt from entering data due to federal guidelines. The Anchorage Rescue Mission provides 69 beds for the homeless, but does not participate in the AKHMIS.

Health Services Division The Reproductive Health Clinic (RHC) sends a Nurse Practitioner to Covenant House Alaska the first Tuesday of each month to do a Young Women's Pap Clinic. RHC offers Pap smear testing, exams and screenings for sexually transmitted diseases.

This report presents an overview of homelessness in Anchorage and information from:

- **AWAIC Shelter** for individuals and families who are victims of domestic violence.
- **Catholic Social Services (CSS) Clare House Shelter** for women and children who are homeless.
- **Covenant House, Alaska Shelter** for homeless youth.
- **Salvation Army McKinnell Shelter** Serves homeless families, including single parents and couples.

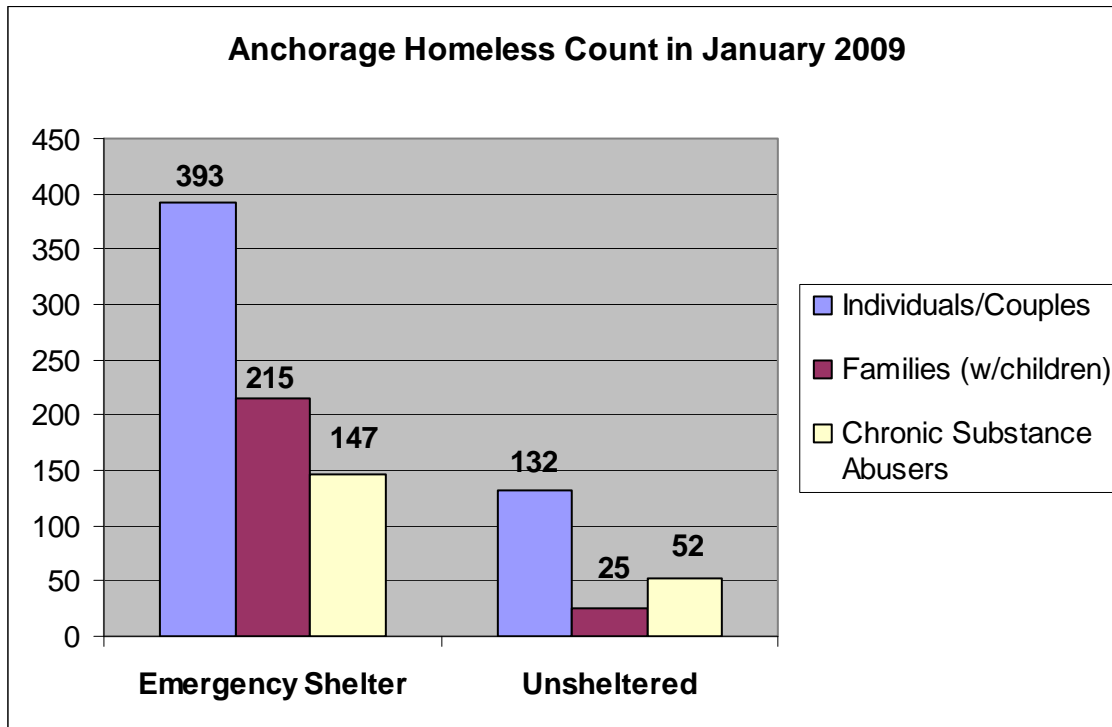
**Municipal Department of Health and Human Services
Safety Links Program
July 2009**

- **CSS Brother Francis Shelter** Beneficiaries are primarily single homeless men (80%) and women (20%), of which 41% are AK Native/American Indian, 36% are Caucasian, and 10% are Black.
- **Municipal Transfer Station** Emergency shelter for intoxicated individuals picked up in public locations. The majority of admissions are male (78%), AK Native/American Indian (85%) followed by Caucasian (12%).

Overview of Homelessness in Anchorage, Alaska

The chart below shows the number of individuals/couples, families, and chronic substance abusers who were identified as “homelessness” on one day in January 2009. The figures meet the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD’s) definition of homelessness as: *Those who lack a fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence, including persons whose primary nighttime residence is a supervised public or private shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations.* The *chronic substance abuser* is a subpopulation recognized by HUD. And which must be reported by HUD grantees each year as part of the “inventory” of homeless subpopulation groups. These figures do not include persons who are couch surfing or older children (college age) living with their parents.

Of particular note, are the 240 homeless families, which comprise 61 households. The chart shows 215 individuals in these families. This homeless count does not include individuals who were sheltered at the Anchorage Rescue Mission.



Source: DHHS Safety Links Program, AKHMIS

Information in this report show that shelters for victims of domestic violence, women and children, and families have been operating over capacity this entire year. There is

**Municipal Department of Health and Human Services
Safety Links Program
July 2009**

not a clear trend that show shelters used primarily by single men, such as Catholic Social Services (CSS) Brother Francis Shelter or the Municipal Transfer Station are over capacity. The Abused Women’s Aid in Crisis has been overcapacity by 36% from March through June of this year. Salvation Army McKinnell Family Shelter is at capacity and has an average of 67 families waiting for shelter. CSS Clare House is also at capacity and has a wait list for 30 families of women and children.

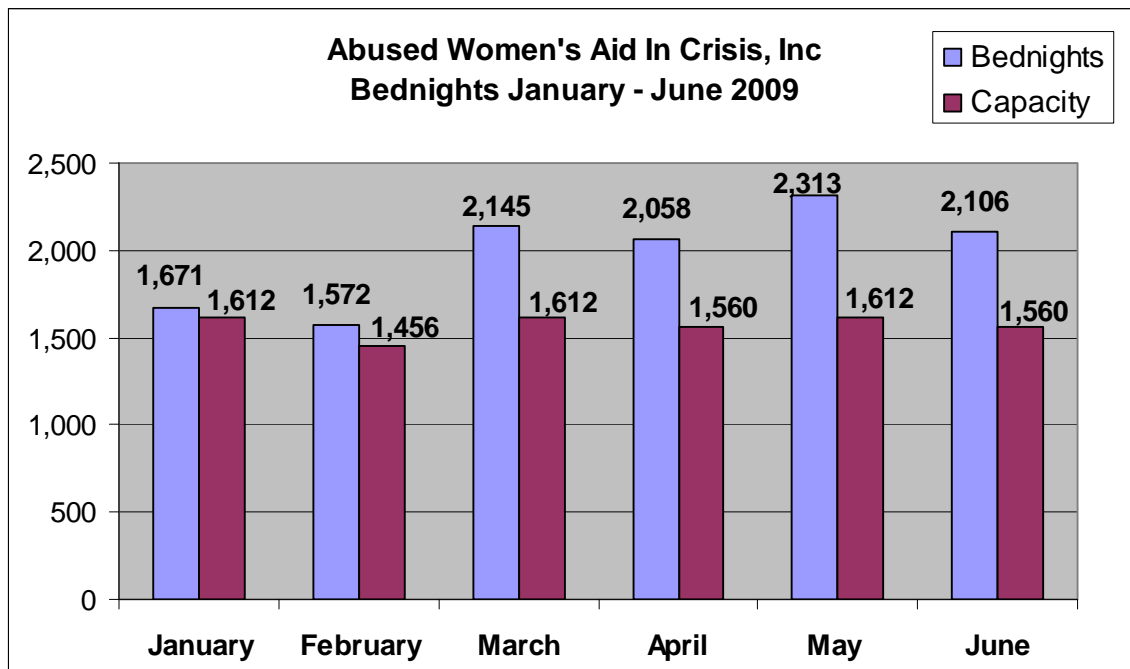
Abused Women’s Aid in Crisis, Inc. (AWAIC)

AWAIC, Inc. is a non-profit agency committed to eliminating domestic violence by helping people live and love without violence. AWAIC is governed by a volunteer board of directors and funded by federal and state sources, the Municipality of Anchorage, United Way, corporate, foundation, and private donations.

In 1992 there was an unlimited bed capacity at AWAIC. Beginning January 1993, AWAIC established a 52-bed capacity. The shelter provides battered women and their children a stay of up to three weeks. Extensions to stay are made on a case-by-case basis.

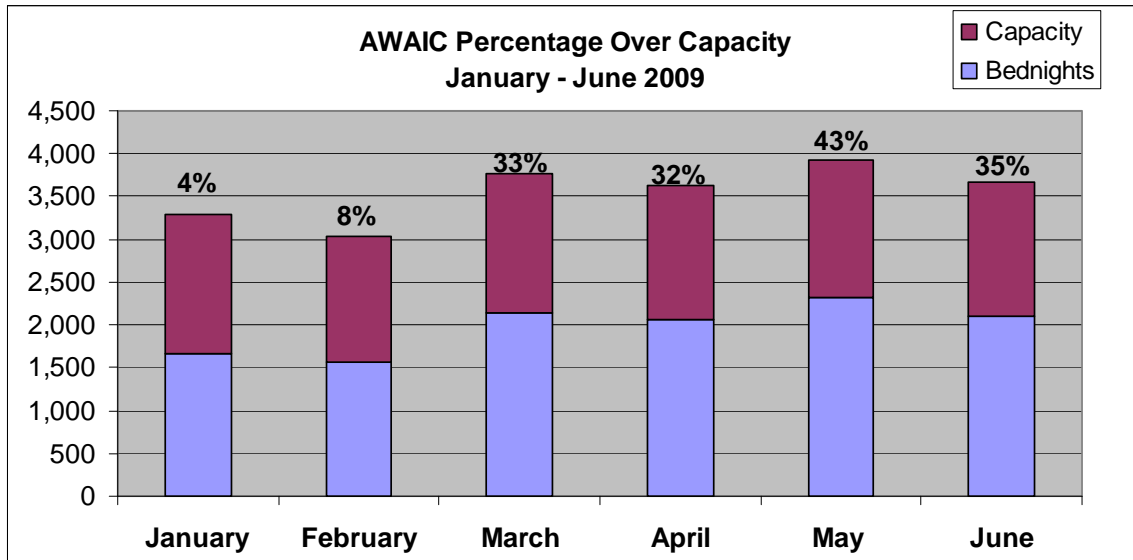
With simple calculation, using AWAIC’s total 52 bed capacity for each month it would appear the agency was overcapacity as follows in the chart below. For example, for the month of January calculate 31 days x 52 beds = 1,612.

The charts below show that AWAIC has been operating over capacity the entire year.



**Municipal Department of Health and Human Services
Safety Links Program
July 2009**

The chart below shows that AWAIC has been over capacity by an average of 36% from March through June 2009. AWAIC is working with the community to respond to the high demand for needed services.



DHHS Support

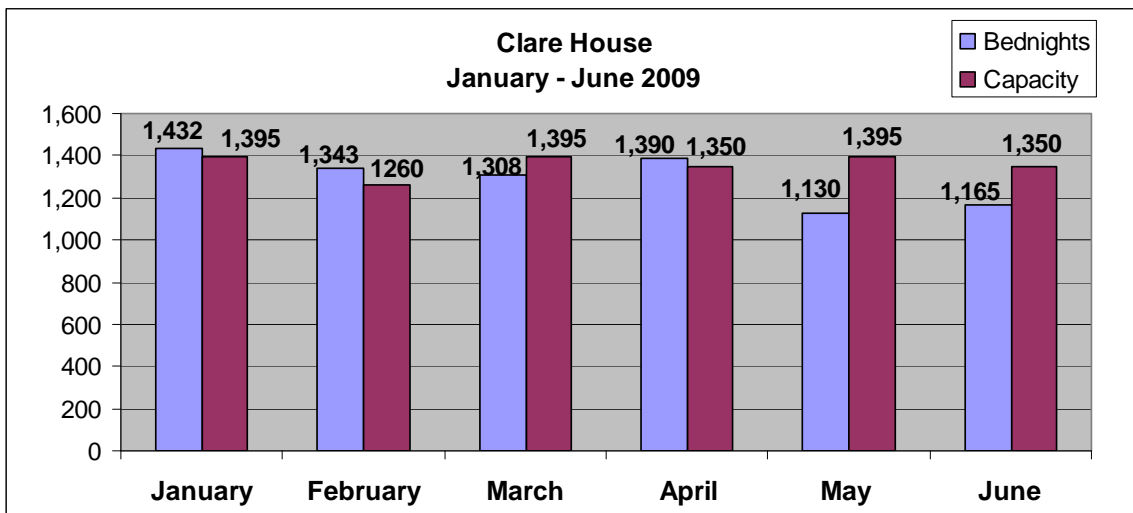
The DHHS works closely with AWAIC through two primary projects: the Moving Forward Program and the Anchorage Domestic Violence Prevention Project (ADVPP). The DHHS Safety Links Program applies for money each year through HUD’s Supportive Services Program for the Moving Forward Program and in turn provided \$134,885 this past year. In addition, AWAIC received \$406,050 from the ADVPP (April 2006 through September 2009) for an In-Take Coordinator who also provides Emergency Financial Assistance to victims for medical care, transportation, rent and utility deposits and arrears, and relocation when necessary. AWAIC was also awarded HUD Emergency Shelter Grant Program, Operation and Maintenance monies by DHHS in 2007 for \$4,850 and in 2008 for \$4,854. United Way manages the Human Services Community Matching Grant, and provided AWAIC with \$85,776 for July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

**Municipal Department of Health and Human Services
Safety Links Program
July 2009**

Catholic Social Services Clare House

Catholic Social Services Clare House, is an emergency shelter that provides temporary, 24-hour shelter for homeless women and their children. The program also provides meals, referrals for child care and substance abuse/mental health and case management services to help women in their transition from homelessness to independent living. Clare House serves single women and women with children. Within the last 5 years there has been an increase in family sizes (women with 4 or more children). Stays, in general, are limited to 30 days.

Clare House maintains 45 beds for women with children. This year Clare House has been over capacity for: January @ 3%; February @ 6%; and, April @ 3%. Clare House utilizes an ongoing wait list of homeless families who call daily to check their status on this wait list to enter the shelter. As adequate space opens which will accommodate a family in need, calls are made from the wait list to bring them into the shelter. *Clare House has a 30 family wait list and has been at or over capacity with families waiting for services from January through June 2009.*



DHHS Support

Clare House shelter is a partner under the DHHS Safety Links Program's Alaska Homeless Management Information System (AKHMIS). The shelter has three licenses, supported under AKHMIS, for an approximate value of \$312 per year. United Way manages the Human Services Community Matching Grant, and provided Clare House with \$96,322 for July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

**Municipal Department of Health and Human Services
Safety Links Program
July 2009**

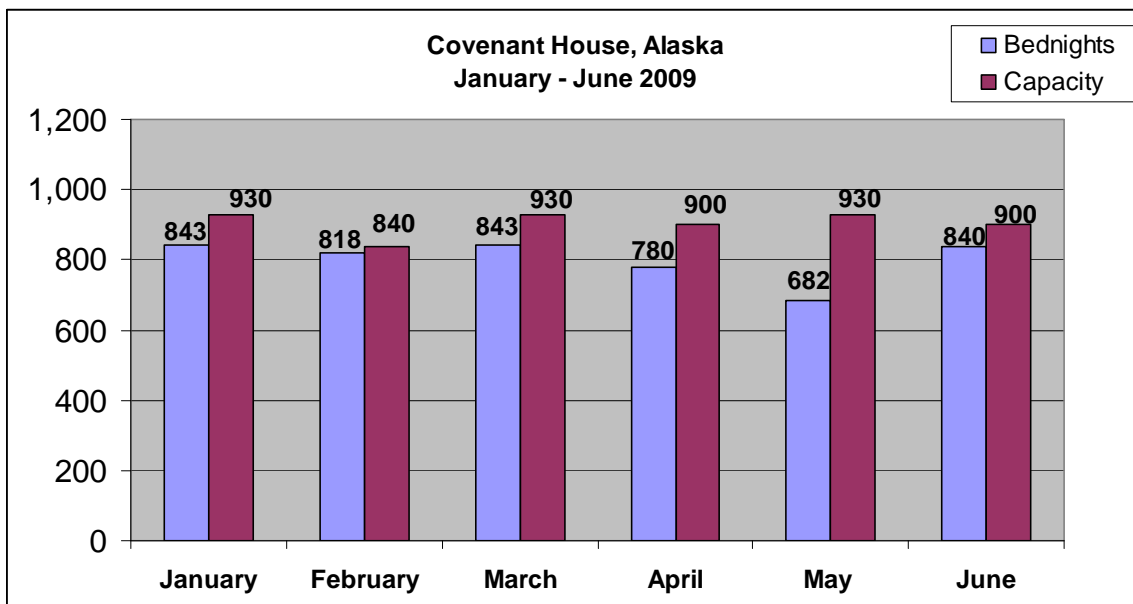
Covenant House, Alaska

Covenant House International is the largest privately-funded agency in America providing shelter and other services to homeless, runaway and throwaway youth.

In addition to food, shelter, clothing and immediate crisis care, Covenant House Alaska (CHA) provides a variety of services to homeless, runaway and throwaway youth including medical care, educational and vocational programs, drug abuse treatment and prevention programs, legal aid services, recreation programs, mother/child programs, transitional living programs, life-skills training and street outreach. Covenant House provides residential and non-residential services.

The following chart shows the last six months' activity at the Covenant House Crisis Center. The Covenant House Crisis Center has 40 beds and provides services to youth between the ages of 13-20. Covenant House will not turn away youth and will flex capacity upward if needed, which may result in sleeping youth on mats. Even though the Crisis Center has 40 beds, there are spatial limitations that make it challenging to house more than 30 youth at one time. Covenant House works diligently with community partners to find adequate resources to move youth into stable housing as quickly as possible, especially those youth between the ages of 13-17. Historically the summer months have resulted in a lower capacity rate with an increase in usage in winter.

The chart below reflects available bednight capacity at 30 multiplied by the number of days in each month. For example, for the month of January calculate 31 days x 30 beds = 930.



**Municipal Department of Health and Human Services
Safety Links Program
July 2009**

DHHS Support

The DHHS Reproductive Health Clinic (RHC) sends a Nurse Practitioner to Covenant House Alaska the first Tuesday of each month to do a Young Women's Pap Clinic. RHC offers Pap smear testing, exams and screenings for sexually transmitted diseases. During weeks between Pap clinics, the RHC reserves two appointments for Covenant House clients to provide services. Covenant was awarded HUD Emergency Shelter Grant Program, Operation and Maintenance monies by DHHS in 2007 for \$4,374 and in 2008 for \$5,330. The shelter is also a partner under the DHHS Safety Links Program's Alaska Homeless Management Information System (AKHMIS). The shelter has six licenses, supported under AKHMIS, for an approximate value of \$624 per year. United Way manages the Human Services Community Matching Grant, and provided Covenant House with \$131,111 for July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

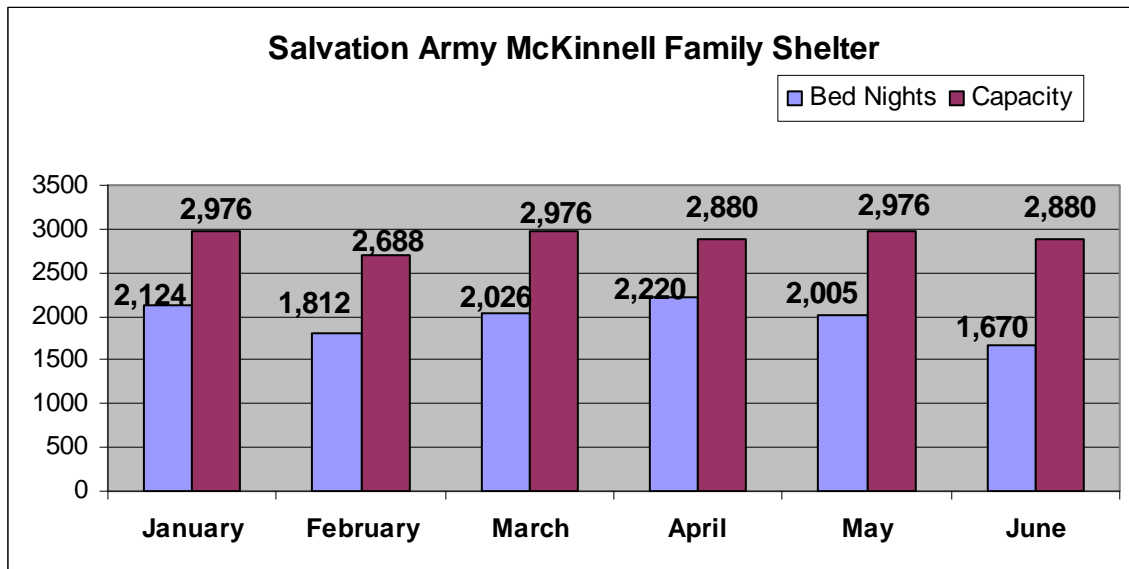
Department of Neighborhood

Additionally, the Department of Neighborhoods will provide approximately \$47,500 to Covenant House through 2010.

**Municipal Department of Health and Human Services
Safety Links Program
July 2009**

Salvation Army McKinnell Shelter

The Salvation Army McKinnell Family Shelter is the only facility in Anchorage providing services for homeless two-parent families or single parenting fathers. The Family Emergency Services program provides for the practical needs of individuals and families. Each adult works with a case manager to formulate a plan that will help the family successfully move back into independent housing. Families are required to obtain employment if not working and children are connected to educational and support resources. After leaving McKinnell House, families continue to work with case managers to develop a support system that will better equip the family for successful, independent living. Services include a food pantry, financial assistance for medical prescriptions and clothing.



Please note that McKinnell Family Shelter offers eight rooms with eight beds and eight rooms with four beds for a total of, or a possible capacity, of 96 beds per night. However, not all families require all four or eight beds in a room. Therefore the rooms may be full; however, not all beds are in use. Note also the large number of families on the “wait list” for each month January through June 2009. *The McKinnell Shelter has been at capacity and has an average of 67 families on their wait list from January through June 2009.*

McKinnell Shelter 2009	January	February	March	April	May	June
Families in Shelter	24	19	25	28	24	21
Total Individuals	106	78	107	115	96	76
Total Days of Shelter	2,124	1,812	2,026	2,220	2,005	1,670
# of Families on Wait List	76	67	69	66	61	64

**Municipal Department of Health and Human Services
Safety Links Program
July 2009**

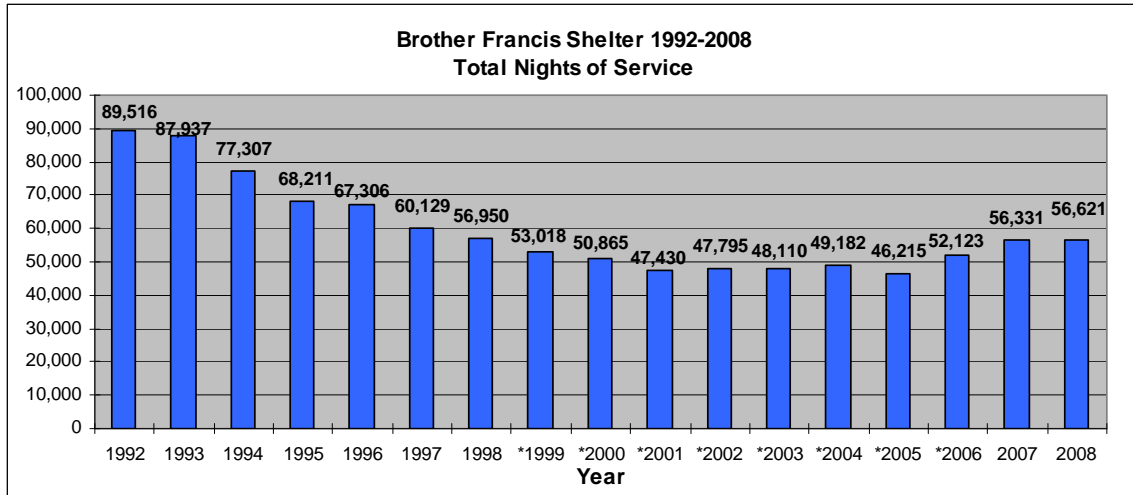
DHHS Support

McKinnell Shelter was awarded HUD Emergency Shelter Grant Program, Operation and Maintenance monies by DHHS in 2007 for \$4,850 and in 2008 for \$4,854. The shelter is also a partner under the DHHS Safety Links Program's Alaska Homeless Management Information System (AKHMIS). The shelter has four licenses, supported under AKHMIS, for an approximate value of \$416 per year. United Way manages the Human Services Community Matching Grant, and provided McKinnell with \$126,791 for July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

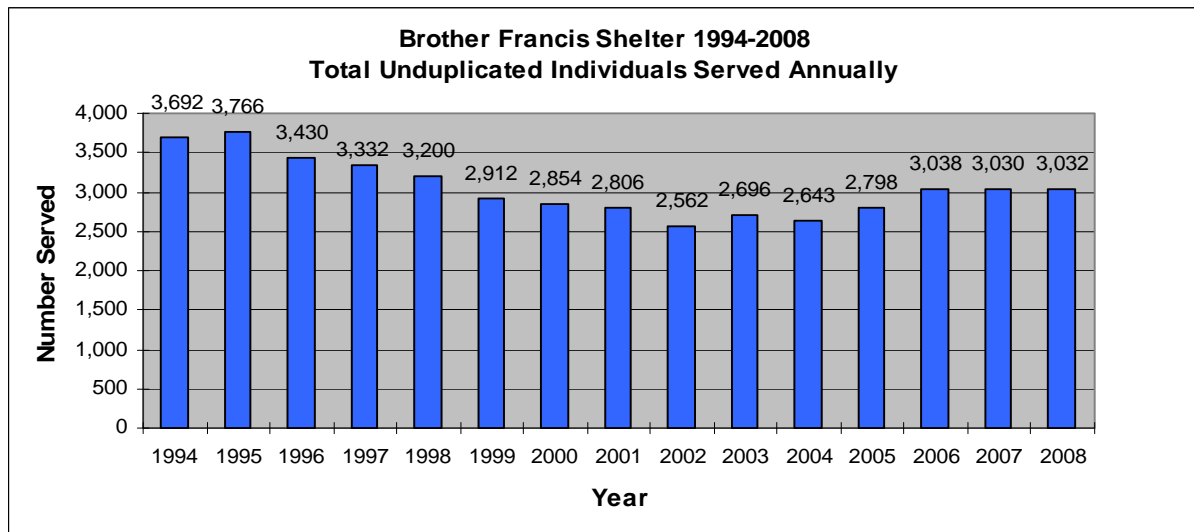
**Municipal Department of Health and Human Services
Safety Links Program
July 2009**

Brother Francis Shelter

The Brother Francis Shelter (BFS) was established by Catholic Social Services in 1982 to provide temporary, emergency shelter for men and women. Services include an evening meal and use of shower and laundry facilities; case management services, advocacy and referrals for employment, housing, mental health issues, and treatment options for alcohol and substance abuse. It also offers a job readiness program.



This chart shows Total Unduplicated Individuals served at BFS from 1994 through 2008.

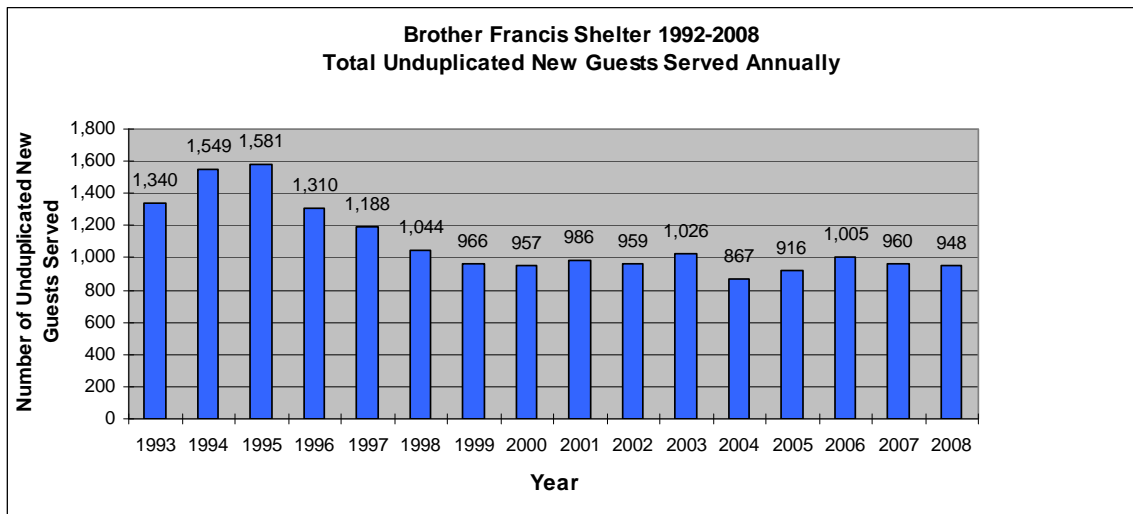


**Municipal Department of Health and Human Services
Safety Links Program
July 2009**

Demographics of BFS Clients in 2008

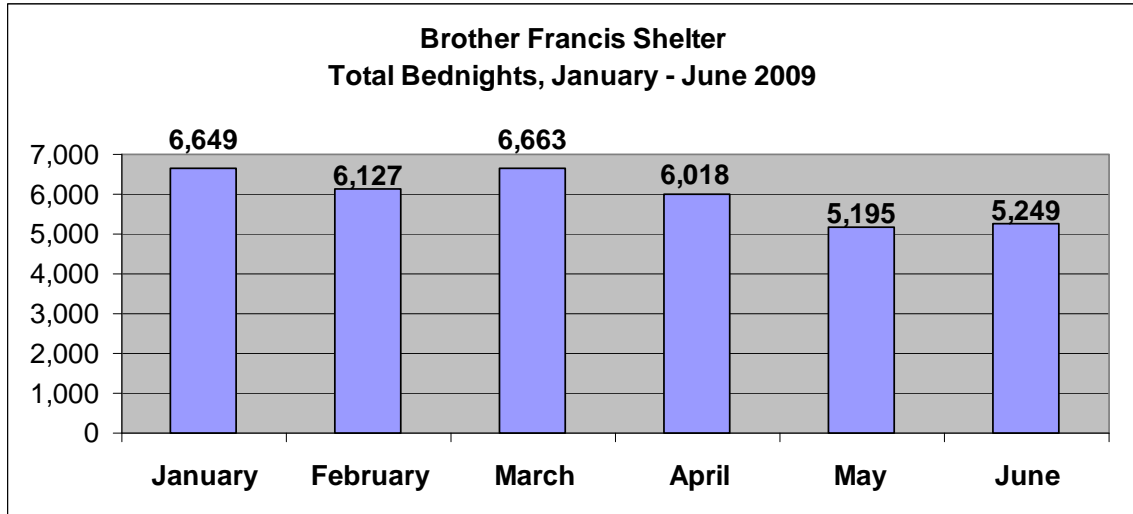
- The majority served are males. In 2008 males represented 80 percent of all clients.
- More than half (57%) of the clients were between 30 and 49 years of age; 23% were aged 50 to 64, and; 17% were 18 to 29 years old. Three percent (3%) were 65 years or older.
- Eighty-six percent (86%) earned less than \$9,999 per year.
- Most clients are from Anchorage (71%); 18 % are from Alaska (outside of Anchorage) and 9% are from outside Alaska. The remaining 2% are unknown.

The chart below shows the total number of unduplicated new guests served at BFS from 1993 through 2008 are shown below. “New” is defined as a person who is a guest at BFS for the first time ever. The dramatic drop in the number of new guests served annually after 1995 reflects the decrease in bed capacity from 300 to 240. For the past eight years (2000-2008) numbers of new clients have remained relatively constant.

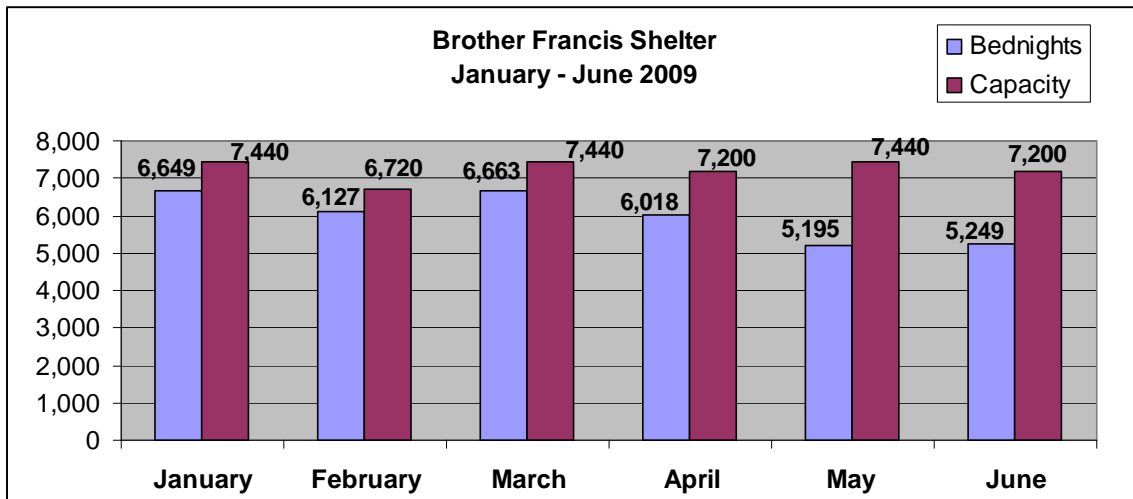


**Municipal Department of Health and Human Services
Safety Links Program
July 2009**

BFS provided information to graph the following chart. *The agency notes they were over capacity of 240 bed usage as follows: January; 8 nights; February, 14 nights; and March, 6 nights.*

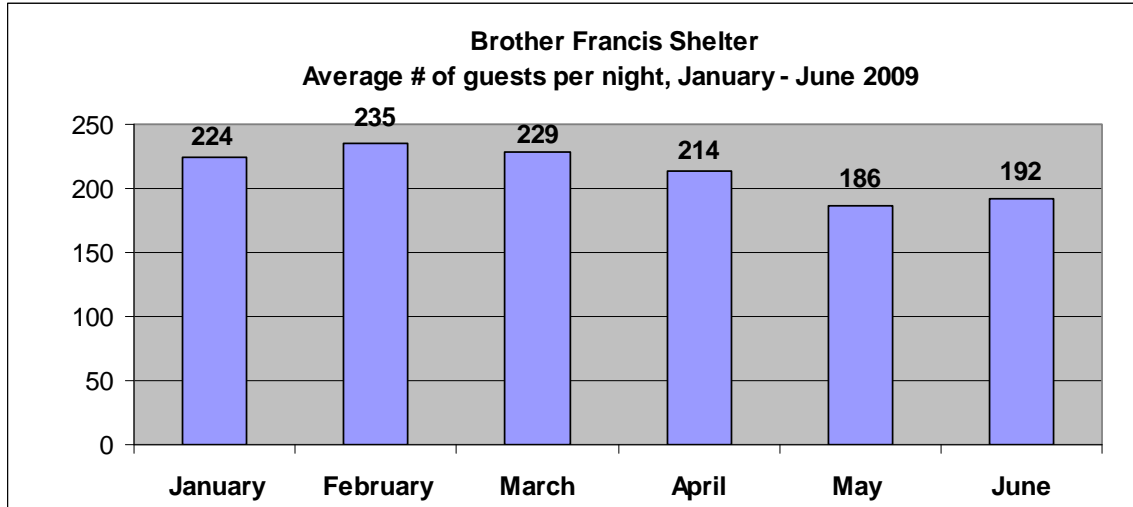


Although BFS noted they were overcapacity in January, February, and March, for the most part, the chart below shows the shelter's capacity to house more individuals thereafter. *For example, the chart below reflects the shelter's ability to support 2,245 more in May and 1,951 more bednights in June.* This is derived by taking capacity of 7,440 in May and subtracting 5,195 served.



**Municipal Department of Health and Human Services
Safety Links Program
July 2009**

The chart below reflects a steady decline in the average number of guests served at BFS per night from February through June. The shelter can house up to 240 persons a night.



DHHS Support

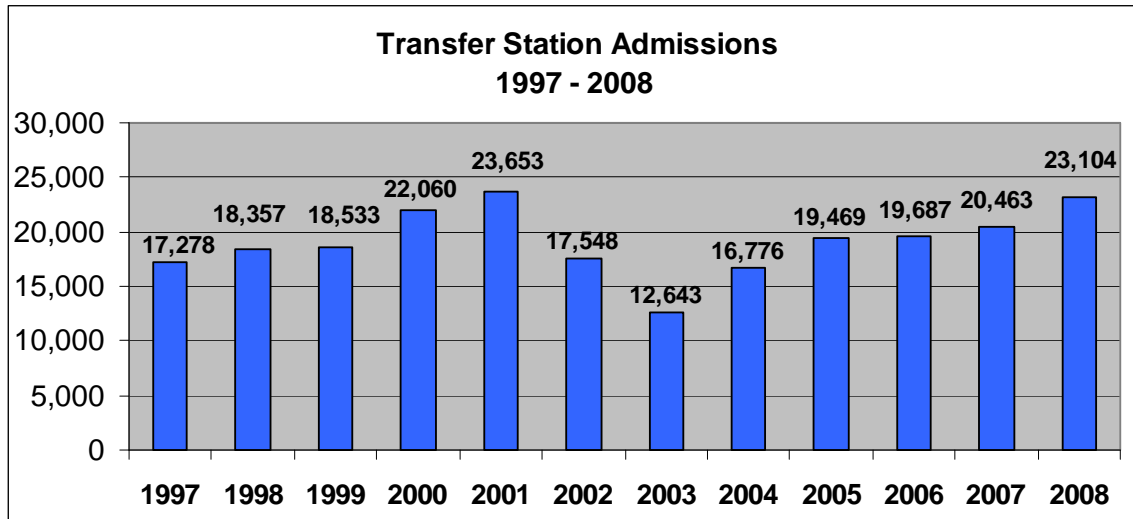
Brother Francis Shelter was awarded HUD Emergency Shelter Grant Program, Operation and Maintenance monies by DHHS in 2007 for \$7,000 and in 2008 for \$2,704. The shelter is also a partner under the DHHS Safety Links Program's Alaska Homeless Management Information System (AKHMIS). The shelter has seven licenses, supported under AKHMIS, for an approximate value of \$728 per year. United Way manages the Human Services Community Matching Grant, and provided the shelter with \$162,101 for July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

**Municipal Department of Health and Human Services
Safety Links Program
July 2009**

Community Service Patrol and Transfer Station

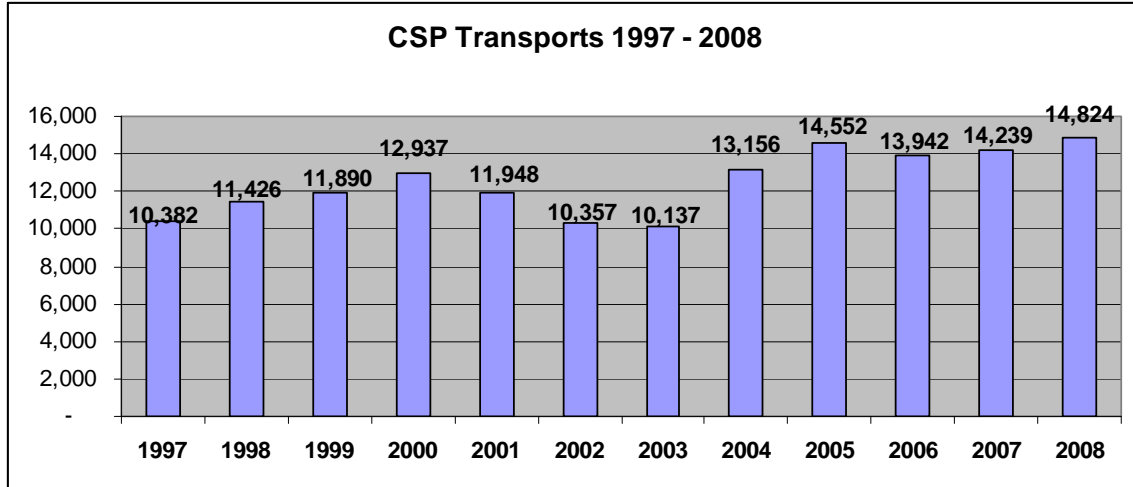
The Municipality contracts with a private agency to operate the Community Service Patrol (CSP) and the Transfer Station. The CSP provides transportation for persons who are intoxicated in a public place such as sidewalks, streets, or parks. The city’s “sleep-off center” for public inebriates is the Transfer Station, which is located alongside the Cook Inlet Pretrial jail. The Transfer Station provides shelter and a safe environment for public inebriates taken into protective custody. The Transfer Station is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The CSP operates only from 2:00 PM – 4:00 AM and is staffed by a driver and one Emergency Medical Technician. During winter months, an additional van shift is added to accommodate significant increases in admissions brought on by cold weather conditions. The vans operate in the downtown/midtown area and account for the majority of admissions to the Transfer Station.

The chart below reflects Transfer Station admissions from 1997 – 2008. The noticeable dip in the chart for 2003 is due to the relocation of the Transfer Station from 5th and A Street to the current location by Cook Inlet Pre-Trial facility off 6th and Ingra. The chart reflects a 13% increase of admissions from 2007 to 2008. The Transfer Station has the capacity to house a total of 112, with a staff and client ratio of 1:10. This would allow for 100 clients with 10 staff. Of special note, according to Anchorage Fire Department website information, the Anchorage Police Department provided 22% of transports to the Transfer Station in 2007 and 26% of the transports in 2008.

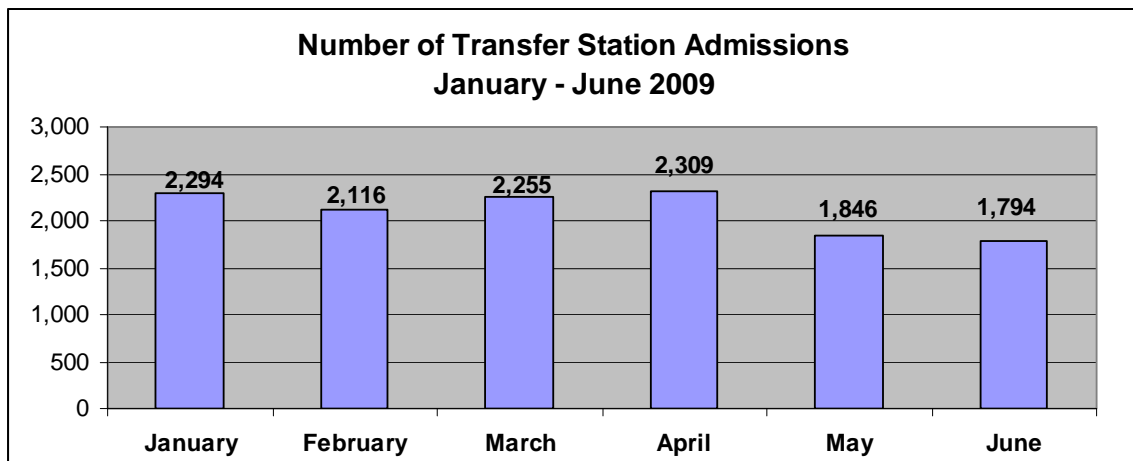


**Municipal Department of Health and Human Services
Safety Links Program
July 2009**

The chart below for CSP Transports reflect a significant upward trend since 1997 with the most significant increase from 2004 to 2005 at 11%. There was a 4% decrease from 2005 to 2006; however, there was a 2 % increase from 2006 to 2007 and a 4% from 2007 to 2008.

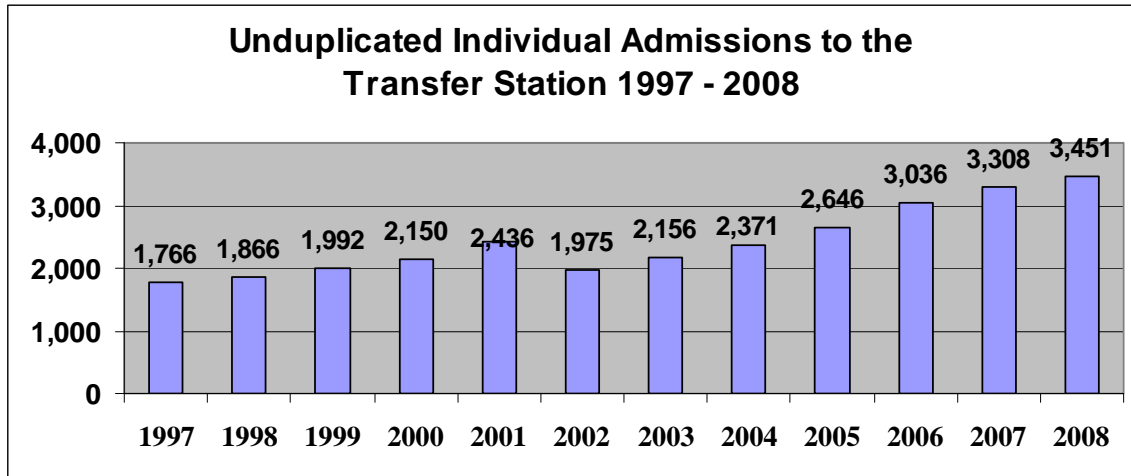


According to Anchorage Fire Department staff, the CSP van was taken off the road from January 1 through June 30, 2009 to accommodate the high number of admissions. The chart below shows April with the highest number of admissions, followed by January and March.



**Municipal Department of Health and Human Services
Safety Links Program
July 2009**

The chart for Unduplicated Individual Admissions to the Transfer Station reflect a steady rise from 2005 to 2008. From 2006 to 2007 there was a 16% increase and from 2007 to 2008 there was a 15% increase of unduplicated admissions.



The total contract award for these services totals \$1,385,900 of which a portion is funded by federal dollars (\$199,000). The municipality funds the majority of monies totaling approximately \$1,186,900.

DHHS Support

Pathways to Sobriety is the DHHS Safety Links Program response to link chronic public inebriates to services that will help them attain and maintain sobriety. Pathways has a three pronged strategy, that include: (1) voluntary engagement; (2) therapeutic court and alternative sentencing for persons who are dually diagnosed, or who are experiencing alcohol and/or drug abuse; and, (3) involuntary commitment for persons who are a danger to themselves or others. The DHHS contracts with Anchorage Community Mental Health Services (ACMHS) to achieve the first two of the strategies, specifically voluntary engagement and outreach for the dually diagnosed. ***ACMHS provides 1.5 case managers who are housed at the Transfer Station.*** On-site the ACMHS case managers engage the target group termed as the “chronic public inebriate”. This group accounts for almost 60% of visits at the Transfer Station. There is widespread belief that this group uses up 40% of all emergency alcohol services (including hospital emergency rooms).

**Municipal Department of Health and Human Services
Safety Links Program
July 2009**

The Pathways Project has been very successful:

- A total of 74 chronic public inebriates have secured permanent housing.
- Preliminary data show approximately 44 clients have secured full-time employment.
- Approximately 25% of those served are veterans.
- Pathway clients show a 72% decrease of Transfer Station admissions from 2006 through 2007.

The Pathways Project case managers bridge the target population to detoxification, referral and transportation to medical care, coordinates with therapeutic courts to ensure successful treatment of individuals, bridges clients to veteran services, treatment services, and partners with agencies that provide job training. The Pathways Project is currently funded with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) monies totaling, \$383,187. The DHHS Safety Links Program submitted a Pathways Project grant request to SAMHSA for \$1.75 million to cover five years (\$350,000 per year). Notification of award should be forthcoming October or November 2009.