

Partners for Prosperous Athens
Housing / Transportation Subcommittee, Special Needs Subgroup
Small Houses Recommendation

Recommendation Summary

Create a Small Houses program to support transitioning the Homeless into permanent housing. An organization, akin to Habitat for Humanity and Hands on Athens, will identify projects, perform new construction and rehabs, and coordinate volunteers and sponsorship to provide shelter for the immediate needs of homeless families and individuals in Athens and to provide services for their transition into a safe and stable place to live. The families and individuals will be connected to the web of existing service providers. This program will include the creation of a matching list web site to provide a connection point between people who have things to give, i.e. volunteer hours, donations, mentoring / training, and household items, with those who have specific needs.

The current situation of people living without shelter is unacceptable, and there are direct steps that can be taken, right now, to take communitywide ownership of the problem and change the situation for the better.

Support the newly formed Hands on Athens organization which is creating a volunteer center through Community Connection.

Recommendation Part A:

- There are individuals and families that have no shelter or ability to pay for a decent, safe place to live.
- There are those in the community who want to directly help.
- We recommend matching people in need with those who want to help.
 - Sponsors
Concerned Individuals, Families, Churches, Civic Organizations, University Departments, Businesses, Developers, Neighborhood Associations, ACC Government and Agencies, Service Providers
 - Sponsored
Those who need a place to live but cannot afford it, starting with the 50 homeless families.
Can be extended to homeless individuals as well.

Research to craft this recommendation

- Talking with those in need, internet research for suitable dwellings and ideas for structures.
- Talking with service providers and homeless advocacy groups.

Research needed- Talk with and receive input from:

- Churches, Service Providers, ACC and Surrounding County Governments Officials and Agencies, Legislators, Land Grant organizations, Habitat for Humanity, potential for reaching donors or sources of private funding.

- Heather with Land Trust / issues of extended leases on land with homes
Spenser from Habitat for Humanity / Construction of low cost habitations
Agencies and people that work with homeless everyday.

What is needed to implement recommendation

- For individuals, groups and the community at large to acknowledge there is a problem, and to take ownership, by working towards a solution.
- Coordinating Agency - People and an office to provide matching services coordination and management. Phone / fax / a desk / internet access.
- A Craig's List-type website for matching services, design, hosting, and maintenance
- From ACC we would need:
 1. Formal Acceptance and Recognition of Recommendation
 2. Commitment to making the Recommendation work by facilitating the process and providing resources toward assistance.
 3. Be a visible model of the program by being a sponsor
 4. Exemption to ordinances that prove to be barriers towards providing this housing solution.
- The List - Identification of those who need to be on the list and those able to provide assistance.

What forces and influences that support implementation

- Concerned individuals who want to help, who know the timing is right, now, to begin this work.
- A rising tide of concern for those in need, believing poverty as an issue that needs to be addressed.

Forces that oppose

- Entrenched notions, beliefs that poverty is not an issue to be addressed.
- Individuals who are unable or unwilling to help, or those who would be threatened by the notion.

Recommendation Part B:

- Shelter Dwellings
 - Katrina Cottages- Cusato Cottages (www.CusatoCottages.com) ,
Outbuildings, Small Houses, Garage Apartments, Manufactured Small Structures, Garden Sheds, Cabins, salvaged structures, Rehabbed structures, NO TRAILERS.
- Location of Dwellings
 - On the property of sponsors house, on land parcels owned / managed by sponsors.
- Other Thoughts
 - Tenants could work towards volunteer hours of building dwellings for others on the list, becoming mentors for those in need.
 - Community aspect of extended families all providing support and sense of community in working and living together, much like the Amish or the strong familial and cultural bonds of the immigrant community.
 - Sponsors charging tenants from \$0 to what a tenant might be able to afford, given their situation.

- Ideally the program would be free from government funding, and therefore oversight and restriction.
- Other Applications of Recommendation
 - This recommendation could be expanded / adapted for other special needs populations, including the handicapped, mentally ill, immigrant populations, and those in need of special services.
- Questions / Comments about this recommendation contact: Paul Lazzari, paul.lazzari@georgiacenter.uga.edu, (706) 542-6303 (w), (706) 769-8813 (h)