



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 29, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable David Y. Ige, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 2594, S.D.1 – RELATING TO THE HOMELESS**

Hearing: Wednesday, February 29, 2012; 9:15 p.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to require the Homeless Programs Office of the Department of Human Services to establish designated safe areas in various locations throughout the state for homeless persons to live until permanent housing becomes available. The proposed legislation also would require the Homeless Programs Office to establish rules and a code of conduct for the designated safe areas, require partnership with non-profit and community service organizations, and coordination with state and county law enforcement officials for the safety of individuals residing in the designated safe areas, and includes an appropriation of \$100,000.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the efforts of the Legislature to seek solutions to the challenges of homelessness. We, however, respectfully oppose S.B. 2594, S.D.1 which would have

the Homeless Programs Office establish designated safe areas for homeless persons to live until permanent housing was available.

Designating areas for homeless persons, especially those with mental health and addiction issues, sidesteps the issue that these individuals need services oriented to recovery and healing. The establishment of safe areas also assumes that individuals currently living in unsheltered circumstances would be amenable to abiding by rules of conduct and paying fees, two of the major reasons that unsheltered homeless choose not to utilize available emergency shelter resources.

Historically in Hawaii and in other locations across the country, set-asides of public spaces incur significant neighborhood resentment and become major challenges to undo when funding or public support is no longer available. Once this type of “programming” has been established and utilized by the severely disadvantaged, it will be very difficult to undo. The establishment of safe zones also creates additional emergency/temporary housing at a time when more permanent housing solutions are needed.

An additional concern is the cost element for all of the amenities noted in this proposed legislation. For example, the Department has learned that Family Life Center, a homeless provider on Maui, conducted an informal feasibility study of costs associated with establishing a safe zone in Central Maui in 2007. The agency’s study found that a safe zone operating only at night, with minimal administrative oversight, would cost approximately \$10,000 per month to operate. The appropriation proposed in this bill is inadequate for the intended purposes.

The Homeless Programs Office is woefully understaffed to assume responsibility for a new initiative, especially one with such broad policy and fiscal implications.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.



PARTNERS IN CARE

Oahu's Coalition of Homeless Providers

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF SB 2594: RELATING TO THE HOMELESS

TO: Senator David Y. Ige, Chair; Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair, and Ways And Means Committee Members

FROM: Gladys Peraro, Partners In Care (PIC), Advocacy Committee Chair

Hearing: **Wednesday, February 29, 2012, 9:15 a.m.; CR211**

Committee Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition of SB 2594, relating to the homeless, specifically “safe areas.” I am Gladys Peraro, Advocacy Chair for Partners In Care (PIC). Our coalition focuses on the needs of homeless persons and strategies to end homelessness. PIC strongly opposes this bill as outlined, as it would appropriate already limited state funds to establish safe areas for use on vacant state-owned lands and/or other designated areas.

Partners In Care recognizes the difficulties homeless individuals and families with children face in securing safe and affordable shelter. It is our belief that appropriating state funding toward rehabilitating current vacant transitional and permanent housing opportunities for use as supportive housing, is a more viable and critical solution to providing shelter to the unsheltered, than providing temporary shelter at great expense to the citizens of the State of Hawaii. Funding for mental health services and Shelter Plus Care are other crucial supports that prevent people from becoming homeless as well as to stabilize them and keep them in affordable housing, rather than providing safe areas in which they will continue to remain *vulnerable and homeless*. Services outlined in SB 2594 will necessitate clean eating areas, showers and toilets, availability of potable water, the ability to launder clothes, increased security personnel, maintenance services, and other unseen needs that will surely arise. The intent of this bill appears to be to provide safe haven to individuals and families in need of shelter, however, adequate emergency shelter space is already in existence in the two highest impact areas on Oahu, urban Honolulu and the Leeward Coast.

PIC has reviewed current data, which outlines some eleven “safe areas” around the United States, which provide “key points” worthy of review. Most notably for this discussion are issues such as, “most encampments are in areas without any shelter bed availability, the legal status and government response to most encampments is ambiguous, most encampments are ad hoc. Additionally, there are security issues, logistics issues, liability insurance issues, and the more successful a ‘temporary’ village seems, the more it may eventually come to be accepted as permanent, thus distracting from the issue of creating affordable permanent housing.”

Partners In Care is in opposition to SB 2594, and we respectfully urge you to defer this bill.

Partners In Care, c/o Aloha United Way, 200 N. Vineyard Blvd. Suite 700
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

Partners in Care is a membership organization of homeless service providers, other service professionals, units of local and state government, homeless consumers, and other community representatives located in Hawai'i on O'ahu. It is a planning, coordinating, and advocacy body that develops recommendations for programs and services to fill gaps in the Continuum of Care on O'ahu.

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Victor Geminiani, Esq.

Date: February 27, 2012

To: Senator David Y. Ige, Senate Chair, Committee on Ways and Means

From: Victor Geminiani, Executive Director

Hawai`i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

Re: Testimony in support of SB2594

Scheduled for a hearing on February 29, 2012 at 9:15 am

Dear Chair Ige and committee members;

Thank you for an opportunity to testify in strong support of SB2594 which would establish designated safe areas for homeless persons to live until permanent housing becomes available. My name is Victor Geminiani and I am the Executive Director of the Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice (formerly Lawyers for Equal Justice). Hawai`i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice (LEJ) is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) law firm created to advocate on behalf of low income individuals and families in Hawai`i on civil legal issues of statewide importance and to complement the assistance provided by existing legal services providers in the state. Our core mission is to help our clients gain access to the resources, services, and fair treatment that they need to realize their opportunities for self-achievement and economic security.

Over the past several years, we have seen the crisis of homelessness expand at an alarming rate throughout all of the islands. Today, Hawai`i has the third highest homelessness rate among the states and the numbers of those living on our streets and beaches continues to grow. There is little disagreement on one of the root causes of this crisis: truly affordable transitional and permanent housing is in very short supply. Even in the best of economic times, thousands of our low income individuals and families struggled to find affordable shelter. The recession has made their struggle even more difficult.

A careful look at the economics of shelter in Hawai`i underlines the barriers we confront in solving our homelessness crisis. Traditionally, families have been advised not to spend more than 30% of their income on shelter. The fair market rent for a two-bedroom home in our state is \$1,616, while the mean average wage for a renter in Hawai`i is \$13.65 an hour. At this rate of pay, a single wage earner would have to work 91 hours weekly, or 2.3 wage earners would have to work 40 hours per week to afford the home. Hawai`i rents exceed the national average by 200%, and 75.4% of poor households in Hawai`i spend more than 50% of their income on shelter.

There will always be a segment of the homeless population who do not reside in our current homeless shelter system because of lack of space, eligibility, or personal choice. For many of those living on our streets, beaches, or parks, permissible temporary encampment would be highly preferable to continuing the costly periodic sweeps which accomplish little but temporarily hiding the problem from view. Successful models do exist in cities on the mainland. Most have developed sensible restrictions, including the enforcement of strict rules against the use of drugs or alcohol and a prohibition against all forms violence. Another common component is the emphasis placed on cultivating the campers involvement in the selection

of new campers and the development and enforcement of camp rules. A substantial benefit of all successful models is building a sense of community among the residents that often provides a strong foundation for residents to become empowered and deal more effectively with the challenges they face.

I have attached a portion of "Addressing Homelessness: New Approaches to Affordable Housing in Hawai'i," a report LEJ released earlier this month. This section further elaborates on successful models of safe zones and tent cities.

Again, thank you for providing us with an opportunity to testify in strong support of SB2594.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Victor Geminiani,
Executive Director

TEMPORARY ENCAMPMENTS

A board made up of Dignity Village residents manages the Portland, Ore. encampment.



TO END HOMELESSNESS, LONG-TERM PLANS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING are essential. However, until permanent or effective transitional housing is available, homeless people will continue to live on Hawai'i's streets and beaches. The cycle will continue: Residents will complain, government will take action and the homeless population will resettle in its original location or a new one. The state needs a pragmatic plan that respects the rights and autonomy of homeless individuals and the rest of the community.

Any temporary solutions, such as tent cities, must be exactly that – temporary. Encampments or “safe zones” must be created with the requirement that they exist only until supportive and permanent affordable housing becomes available. Even then, some individuals may not choose to live in permanent housing or may not be ready to do so.

Hawai'i already has informal homeless encampments that lack the safety and stability of shelters or residences. A better alternative is a tent city where homeless individuals are permitted to camp on public or private property and supplied with basic amenities, such as toilets and garbage pickup. However, finding property for even a temporary encampment has proved challenging.

A sanctioned, temporary tent city is an improvement on the scattered, unplanned encampments that are periodically cleared, forcing homeless people to relocate to yet another public space. At the very least, the concentration of homeless individuals would give social service organizations more direct access to the local homeless population.

We offer three examples of well-established encampments. The first, Dignity Village, pictured above, is run entirely by its residents through a nonprofit that has a contract with the city of Portland to manage the encampment. The second, Seattle's tent cities, are largely managed by social service organizations and hosted by communities of faith, with the permission of municipal government. The third is administered entirely by a faith community, with financial support from local government. Another

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possibility is establishing a campground on public land with more active support from the government, providing utilities, infrastructure and security.

Dignity Village, Portland, Ore.

One model tent city, Dignity Village, has achieved significant success, providing shelter in a safe and habitable encampment. The village began as “Camp Dignity” ten years ago as a tent campground on public property near downtown Portland that later incorporated as a nonprofit.⁴⁵

- **Physical structure:** Dignity Village has transitioned into an encampment with wooden, semi-permanent residential structures. The village also has “a common building that provides a central gathering and meeting space with electricity and heat from a woodstove,” although the camp continues to rely on temporary showers and portable toilets.⁴⁶ A small office and computer room provide residents with access to telephones, computer and the Internet.⁴⁷ Residents are allowed to work in container gardens, which provide fresh produce and the potential for future microenterprise.⁴⁸
- **Operations:** Dignity Village is particularly unique in that it is run completely by its residents, which creates a sense of community and autonomy. The village’s management is overseen by the nonprofit’s board of directors, which is currently elected for one-year terms.⁴⁹ All residents must volunteer ten hours per week to work for the village, including taking regular volunteer shifts on security detail.⁵⁰ Residents are also required to contribute \$20 per month towards the village’s operating expenses.⁵¹
- **Resident Response:** Most of the village’s residents and supporters agree that for many homeless individuals and couples it is a better than living in emergency shelters or on the streets. The village provides:⁵²
 - A supportive community
 - A place where couples can stay together
 - A place for people with pets

⁴⁵ An Evaluation of Dignity Village. Prepared by Kristina Smock Consulting for the Portland Housing Bureau, February 2011 at 5. Available at http://media.oregonlive.com/portland_impact/other/Dignity%20Village%20Evaluation%20Report%20Final%202003-22-10.pdf.

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ *Id.* at 6.

⁴⁸ Interview by Jamie Young with John Marc, executive director, JOIN: Connecting the Street to a Home, Honolulu, Hawai‘i . (July 25, 2011).

⁴⁹ *Id.* at 7.

⁵⁰ *Id.* at 6.

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² *Id.*

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- Privacy and personal space
- A place to keep belongings
- Relief from constantly having to wait in lines
- The reassurance of having a bed each night and not being moved along
- Independence from caseworkers and the demands of formal programs

As one resident explained, “Here you don’t feel homeless. You feel part of a community and feel safe. People know they can come home every night to their home, and they don’t have to leave in the morning.”⁵³ Village residents value their autonomy, particularly their self-management structure, which empowers and enables them to develop leadership skills. They also value their self-sufficiency, in particular their ability to provide 24-hour on-site security with minimal police intervention.

- **Cost:** The average cost per bed per night at Dignity Village is \$4.82, the lowest of any program in Portland. By comparison, a bed in an emergency shelter costs \$12.59 per night, while transitional housing runs \$66.52 per night.⁵⁴ Peer support and some social services are offered in partnership with other organizations.⁵⁵
- **Role in Portland’s Homelessness Plan:** Despite its formal designation, Dignity Village is not a traditional transitional housing program and has no on-site housing placement or benefits screening services.⁵⁶ Of those leaving the village in 2008 and 2009, 70 percent returned to homelessness. Expulsions of residents who violated rules may have contributed to this rate.⁵⁷ In addition, some individuals realize that they are ill-suited for Dignity Village’s structure and leave quickly.⁵⁸

The village’s lack of social services arises from several factors. Social service organizations are strapped for funds and already have heavy caseloads. Furthermore, Dignity Village’s distance from social service organizations and frequent village leadership turnover means relationships with service providers may not be maintained or pursued.⁵⁹

While some residents actually value the dearth of caseworkers and programs, the village as a whole lacks sufficient access to social services. Even a recent evaluation of Dignity Village presented to the City Council does not list on-site social services as a high priority.⁶⁰ A compromise

⁵³ An Evaluation of Dignity Village, *supra* at 7.

⁵⁴ *Id.* at 24.

⁵⁵ *Id.* at 19.

⁵⁶ *Id.* at 14.

⁵⁷ *Id.* at 13-14, 22-10.

⁵⁸ Interview with Lisa Larson, Dignity Village Treasurer. Dec. 1, 2011.

⁵⁹ Interview with Scott Larson, Dignity Village Outreach Coordinator, Dec. 1, 2011.

⁶⁰ *Id.* at 14.

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solution could be to increase access for those who desire services, but making participation optional.⁶¹

There is a danger that a successful “temporary” encampment, such as Dignity Village, may eventually come to be accepted as permanent, thus diverting attention from creating affordable permanent housing.

While Dignity Village should increase access to social services, some residents wish to live neither in permanent nor transitional housing and likely will return to homelessness. Therefore, having a Dignity Village may be necessary always, since it allows individuals to decide where they would like to live and is better than living on the street.

- **Community Response:** Dignity Village no longer faces the community opposition it once did and there has been little friction between the village and its neighbors. The number of calls resulting in dispatching police is lower than the city-wide average and there have been no major complaints against the village.⁶²

However, the strictly internal management of the community, with no outside paid staff, has resulted in challenges related to financial stability, infrastructure development, adherence to fire and safety codes and reports to the city.⁶³ A recent evaluation recommended that nonprofits and the city of Portland become more involved in supporting the village’s self-governance. The village also has had difficulty meeting its financial obligations. For it to remain solvent, the city will likely need to assist in covering infrastructure costs.⁶⁴

Should Hawai’i adopt a permanent encampment, careful consideration must be given to how it fits into the larger plan of housing for the homeless, especially since Dignity Village itself has not functioned as transitional housing. The village, for all of its strengths, has lacked sufficient social service support to move individuals into formal transitional or permanent housing. While its residents may consider this independence to be an asset, it is not an effective solution to homelessness.

Dignity Village represents a confluence of strong advocacy for the homeless with the right conditions. By contrast, in Eugene, two hours away from Portland, there was insufficient community support or security and all parties deemed the encampment as an experiment not worth replicating.⁶⁵ Municipalities and their homeless populations need more trust and cooperation. Dignity Village ultimately had the support of the Portland City Council and developed positive relationships with the Portland police;

⁶¹ For an example of a successful model of formal transitional housing, *see* Bishop Francis Quinn Cottages, Cottage Housing, Incorporated, <http://www.cottagehousing.org/quinn-cottages/>.

⁶² *Id.* at 26-27.

⁶³ *Id.* at 12-22.

⁶⁴ *Id.* at 18.

⁶⁵ Interview by Jamie Young with John Van Landingham, Lane County Legal Aid & Advocacy Center, Honolulu, Hawai’i . (June 24, 2011).

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Hawai'i's cities will need similar backing. These challenges are not insurmountable and Dignity Village remains an example of an organic encampment created by ingenious and dedicated homeless residents.

King County Tent City: Seattle, Wash.

Tent cities in the Seattle area follow a more traditional model of external management by a nonprofit and a community-based coalition with significant involvement from communities of faith. A key to their success was that organizers worked with municipalities to receive permits for their encampments.

Without adequate housing, many people will need to camp. Some will choose to camp even if they do have access to services or shelters. It appears inevitable that some form of encampment will exist in areas with high homeless populations and municipalities should manage them, rather than attempt to enforce or create restrictions.

- **Management:** While residents are involved in running the communities, these encampments are managed and sponsored by an external nonprofit, the Seattle Housing and Resource Efforts/Women's Housing, Equality and Enhancement League. Religious organizations host the encampments, which move every 90 days.
- **Municipal involvement:** The King County municipal governments issue conditional use permits for tent cities but otherwise take a hands-off role.⁶⁶ Seattle-King County Public Health provides support services to camp managers.⁶⁷ In addition, the local police departments conduct background checks for outstanding warrants and sex-offender status.⁶⁸ Recently, the Seattle City Council unanimously voted for an ordinance that makes homeless encampments a legal accessory to a religious facility, permitting religious organizations to provide temporary shelter on their property. The encampments must follow basic health and safety codes and may not exceed 100 residents. However, religious organizations can permanently host the encampments and do not need to notify their neighbors of them.⁶⁹ Advocates call for this policy to include secular landowners as well.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington. Available at <http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/housing/tentcity/tentcity.aspx>.

⁶⁷ *Id.*

⁶⁸ "Tent City 4 Frequently Asked Questions." St. Jude Parish. Available at <http://www.stjude-redmond.org/TentCity4/FAQ.htm>.

⁶⁹ City eases tent-city rule for churches. Lynn Thompson, The Seattle Times. Oct. 3, 2011.

Available at http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2016396646_homeless04m.html.

⁷⁰ *Id.*

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- **Structure:** Tent City 3, the first encampment SHARE/WHEEL established, is located mainly in Seattle.⁷¹ The group launched another encampment, Tent City 4, in the spring of 2004 after reaching an agreement with King County.⁷² The tent city in King County is a “temporary encampment of up to 100 homeless persons who live in a group of tents on the property of a host for approximately 90 days.”⁷³

Although Tent City 3 is still planning 90-day stays, a new ordinance gives it the option to remain at the same site. Moving a tent city requires significant effort but, should SHARE/WHEEL continue to move the camp, it would spread out the burden of hosting a homeless encampment. It may also reduce NIMBY-ism, since no single community would feel targeted or have to host the encampment long-term. Changing zoning laws so that a license is not required lowered the administrative costs for opening a campground, which may encourage more landowners to permit camping.

Pinellas Hope: Clearwater, Fla.

Founded by Catholic Charities in 2007, Pinellas Hope is a tent city occupying 20 acres in an isolated, industrial area of Clearwater, Fla.⁷⁴ operated by a faith-based organization and receiving significant public funding. Most of the 200 to 300 clients live in 10-by-10-foot Coleman tents, with about 20 wooden sheds providing additional housing.⁷⁵ Pinellas serves as emergency shelter for 250 homeless men and women and annually serves about 800 people.

- **Management:** Pinellas Hope is managed by Catholic Charities with significant volunteer support. Originally, the camp was expected to remain open for only five months, but it is now a permanent shelter.⁷⁶ To be admitted, residents are required to take urine and Breathalyzer tests for drugs and alcohol. To exclude sex offenders and those convicted of violent crimes, Pinellas Hope runs criminal background checks. No families are allowed, although couples are.⁷⁷

⁷¹ *Id.*

⁷² *Id.*

⁷³ See Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington. Available at <http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/housing/tentcity/tentcity.aspx> (last visited July 26, 2011).

⁷⁴ “Pinellas Hope.” David DeCamp and Stephen Nohlgren. Available at <http://www.tampabay.com/specials/2010/reports/pinellas-hope-tent-city/>. “Our History.” <http://www.pinellashope.org/>.

⁷⁵ Pinellas Hope stopped building these sheds because they became too hot inside.

⁷⁶ “Our History.” <http://www.pinellashope.org/>.

⁷⁷ “Pinellas Hope.” David DeCamp and Stephen Nohlgren. Available at <http://www.tampabay.com/specials/2010/reports/pinellas-hope-tent-city/>. “Our History.” <http://www.pinellashope.org/>.

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The Pinellas Hope tent city is run by Catholic Charities.



- **Municipal involvement:** The program receives more than \$1 million annually from state and local government, with Pinellas County providing more than \$500,000 from its homeless services fund.⁷⁸
- **Structure:** In 2010, the camp grew to include “Pinellas Hope II,” 80 studio apartments that function as permanent affordable housing. Half of these units will be funded by the local housing authority; the others will require residents to pay some rent. It also has added a community center with a dining room, office and bathrooms at a cost of \$4.2 million. The apartments will be eligible for federal housing vouchers.
- **Social services and facilities:** Pinellas Hope’s social services include assistance to create an independent living plan, GED classes and Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings. There are also laundry facilities, computers, bathrooms, showers and meals. Case managers meet regularly with residents to develop their self-sufficiency and help with job and housing placements. Case managers continue to follow up with clients for six months after residents leave the shelter.

Other Encampment Possibilities

- **Government-funded encampments:** In addition to privately organized camps, government also can contract directly with service providers to create encampments on public land or government-leased private land. Even if government is not primarily responsible for the camps, assistance in the form of insurance, security, waste disposal, water, toilets and other infrastructure would remove barriers to creating campgrounds, allowing landowners to permit camping with less liability risk.

⁷⁸ “What’s next for Pinellas Hope?” David DeCamp and Stephen Nohlgren. July 25, 2010. St. Petersburg Times. Available at <http://www.tampabay.com/news/humaninterest/article1110670.ece>.

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- **Car Camping:** Large parking lots, such as those at Aloha Stadium, could be used for temporary car camping sites, as could smaller lots, such as those at churches. To facilitate private participation, zoning could be amended to permit private landowners to allow camping on their properties in cars, tents or other temporary structures. Government could provide some amenities, such as portable toilets or security, or the sites could be managed by a nonprofit. Since vehicles can be moved, there is more flexibility in which sites to use for car camping – when the parking lot is needed for events, the cars can relocate temporarily.

Rules like those at tent encampments can be instituted, too. For example, camps could require individuals to register with the owner or manager. This can screen out those with criminal backgrounds and enable managers and case workers to identify who is residing in the camp. Permits could also be issued for camping in parking lots that allow camping in a few spaces. Rules on substance use and behavior, similar to those in other encampments, would also be important for safety.

- **RV Camping:** Recreational vehicle camping is similar to car camping but is potentially more permanent and comfortable. Unlike tents, RV double as vehicles. One nonprofit working to empower the homeless provided a donated RV to a single mother and her disabled son as a secure temporary home.⁷⁹ An RV can park on a small landowner’s property, allowing homeless people to live close to supportive family members or friends. Renovating used RVs and donating them to people in need promotes sustainability: As people move into permanent housing, their RVs can be returned and donated to others in need.

Safe Ground: Sacramento, Calif.

Made up of homeless service organizations, other nonprofits, local individuals and businesses, Safe Ground is an organization seeking a permanent site for the homeless to use as a long-term campground. It envisions secure “safe grounds,” formally recognized by the city and run by residents. Some form of tent city has existed in Sacramento since 1989, but the homeless and their advocates have yet to achieve their vision.⁸⁰ This is what they plan:

- **Structure:** Members sign a contract that they will not bring drugs or alcohol into the camp and agree that there will be no violence.⁸¹ Safe Ground told the news media that homelessness is an expected outcome

⁷⁹ Nonprofit takes wheel of RV donations to homeless. Paul Sisolak, VC Reporter. Jan. 28, 2010. Available at http://www.vcreporter.com/cms/story/detail/nonprofit_takes_wheel_of_rv_donations_to_homeless/7603/.

⁸⁰ Tales of Tent City, Ben Ehrenreich. The Nation, June 22, 2009. Available at <http://www.thenation.com/article/tales-tent-city>

⁸¹ Interview by Jamie Young with William Kennedy, Legal Services of Northern California, in Honolulu, Hawai‘i . (June 28, 2011).

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of the recession and that our friends and neighbors are using the camp as a springboard to better times.⁸² The camp allows its residents to self-regulate and leave their belongings behind, including personal papers and cooking gear, as they search for jobs, services or benefits.⁸³

- **Goals:** Unlike Dignity Village, Safe Ground includes access to services as part of its mission⁸⁴ and does not claim camping should be permanent. Rather, it is a stepping stone to housing and jobs. This approach won broad community support.⁸⁵
- **Challenges:** Despite being a well-organized coalition of homeless individuals and advocates, Safe Ground has failed to secure a site for legal camping.⁸⁶ The city continues to enforce its ordinance against sleeping in undesignated locations for more than 24 hours and maintains that no appropriate sites have been found. While the homeless continue to camp in the city, they are often swept from one site to another and lack the amenities needed for a clean and comfortable camp. Sacramento's refusal to designate a site is disturbing, as the city has no funding for a seasonal shelter program either.⁸⁷

The Safe Ground effort illustrates the importance of collaboration among the various stakeholders. While it has not yet succeeded due to municipal barriers and delays, the effort has been coalition-based, combining the autonomy of a resident-run encampment with the guidance and support of nonprofits and creating a space that helps residents transition to permanent housing or, at least, access essential services.

⁸² *Id.*

⁸³ *Id.*

⁸⁴ "More About the Issue." Safe Ground Sacramento. <http://www.safegroundsac.org/more-about-the-issue.php>.

⁸⁵ *Id.*

⁸⁶ "Sacramento homeless still await campground," Cynthia Hubert, Sacramento Bee, Sept. 15, 2011. Available at <http://www.sacbee.com/2011/09/15/3911664/sacramento-homeless-still-await.html>.

⁸⁷ "Sacramento homeless still await campground." Cynthia Hubert. The Sacramento Bee, Sept. 15, 2011. Available at <http://www.sacbee.com/2011/09/15/3911664/sacramento-homeless-still-await.html>.

INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

Occupy Portland's kitchen produced as many as 1,000 meals a day.



BASIC FACILITIES ARE NECESSARY FOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF any encampment or affordable housing development. Tents, yurts and many other basic shelters cannot accommodate sinks, bathrooms or showers. Instead, cottage and tent housing may include shared bathrooms and showers. In Hawai'i tent camps, portable toilets and camp showers in a private area would suffice, thanks to the mild climate. More permanent facilities can be installed in cottage developments or long-term encampments, as they have been at Pinellas Hope.⁸⁸

Communal kitchens give residents a place to prepare food and store perishables. On-site food preparation spares volunteers the effort of transporting prepared meals. Access to kitchens can teach residents self-sufficiency or give them the opportunity to contribute to the community and even develop job skills – for example, residents could help prepare a communal meal.

Cottage housing developments or long-term encampments can include a traditional permanent kitchen, while temporary tent encampments could include propane stoves, portable sinks and generators to power microwaves or hot plates. The recent Occupy political movements have quickly established facilities and amenities for their camps, including kitchens, offices, libraries, meeting areas, Internet access and clinics, all out of tents.⁸⁹ Occupy Portland prepared about 1,000 meals per day, largely from scratch, using a creative kitchen tent.

⁸⁸ "Pinellas Hope." David DeCamp and Stephen Nohlgren. Available at <http://www.tampabay.com/specials/2010/reports/pinellas-hope-tent-city/>. "Our History." <http://www.pinellashope.org/>.

⁸⁹ "Marla's Food Tent at Occupy Portland." John O. Anderson, *Portland Occupier: News from the Occupation*. Nov. 20, 2011. Available at <http://www.portlandoccupier.org/2011/11/20/marlas-food-tent-at-occupy-portland/>.

Housing First and Continuum of Care

Homeless individuals can immediately be placed into permanent housing, using a model known as “Housing First,” or they can participate in a continuum of care model, which places homeless individuals in shelters and then moves them through transitional housing and then into permanent housing, all the while provided with support services that enable them to function in each successive stage.

While every state is unique, Hawai‘i can learn from Utah’s model, which recognizes the need for permanent housing combined with comprehensive social services. Utah is committed to rapid rehousing, moving individuals from the streets or shelters into permanent housing. Significantly, this innovative approach has cost the state no new money.⁹⁰ The state has managed to economize by improving program efficiency and re-investing in proven approaches, including nonprofit and government partnerships.

The results have been so impressive that the media has labeled the initiative to end chronic homelessness as flat-out “successful.”⁹¹ Chronically homeless individuals are just 10 percent of the homeless population, but they consume half the state’s resources for homeless programs. From 2010 to 2011, Utah’s chronically homeless population declined by 26 percent, which freed up emergency resources for other homeless individuals.⁹² The state is now considering closing an emergency shelter that has had empty beds every night – as many as 100 on some nights.⁹³

Affordable housing is the key to ending homelessness. The long waitlist for public housing means that many families who are struggling to pay rent to private landlords can slip through the cracks. When a household’s economic circumstances change the result can be the loss of private housing with no quick access to public housing. Utah has worked to ensure that such households do not go homeless by providing benefits such as utility and rent assistance.

Another major homeless population is individuals discharged from prison, hospitals or substance abuse treatment programs. A crucial component of responsible discharge planning is to housing is available when a person leaves an institution.

⁹⁰ HousingWorks, Innovative Programs. Available at http://housingworks.utah.gov/innovative_programs/index.html.

⁹¹ Initiative to end chronic homelessness in Utah successful. Marjorie Cortez, Deseret News, Sept. 29, 2011. Available at <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700183384/Initiative-to-end-chronic-homelessness-in-Utah-successful.html>.

⁹² “Utah homeless rate down 8 percent, housing options up,” Chi Chi Zhang, Daily Herald, May 12, 2011. Available at http://www.heraldextra.com/news/state-and-regional/article_89e014c6-0ff7-544a-8032-a2e53400adf9.html.

⁹³ Initiative to end chronic homelessness in Utah successful, Marjorie Cortez, Deseret News, Sept. 29, 2011. Available at <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700183384/Initiative-to-end-chronic-homelessness-in-Utah-successful.html>.