



# Emergency Residence Project

## Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2016/17

The Emergency Residence Project assisted 2,196 individuals during from July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017 through one or more of our programs. Some were assisted in more than one area.

**Emergency Shelter:** The Emergency Residence Project provides short-term safe shelter, meals, referrals to community resources, and supportive services. The main goal of the program is to work with people experiencing homelessness on obtaining a better living situation than they had at entry. Shelter guests are given seven days to resolve their housing situation on their own. After that time, an assessment is completed with them to identify barriers to housing and to identify additional resources they may be able to access. From there they are encouraged to meet with the Associate Director on a regular basis to work on their housing goals. The Associate Director provides supportive services that may include, but are not limited to: accessing necessary documentation such as photo identification, social security cards, and birth certificates, connections and referrals to community resources, employment assistance, and access to mental health counseling.

We provided shelter to 671 different people over the last year; 139 of whom were under 18 years of age. We provided 8,487 nights of emergency short-term shelter. The average number of people housed per night was 23, and they stayed an average of 9 nights. Upon exit from shelter, 246 of the guests obtained some level of permanent housing. With the assistance of community volunteers, over 6,600 meals were provided to our shelter guests.

**Transitional Housing:** We can provide affordable housing options along with individualized housing support services for six families at a time in our Transitional Housing Program. The main goal of the program is to work with the families on transitioning into permanent housing and to increase their ability to maintain housing. Support services are provided as needed, but participants are encouraged to meet with the Transitional Housing Support Specialist a minimum of once per week. Support services include, but are not limited to: financial literacy, budgeting, parenting skills, landlord/tenant education, connections and referrals to community resources, employment assistance, access to mental health counseling, accessing credit reports, and assisting clients through other barriers as needed. By providing affordable housing paired with supportive services and giving families time to overcome barriers to housing, families are better able to successfully transition out of the program and into permanent housing, thereby ending their experience with homelessness.

We provided 51 people (29 under 18 years of age) in 11 families with 8,290 nights of this type of shelter. The average length of stay is approximately 9 months. In the past year, 29 individuals exited the transitional housing program; 24 of them exited into permanent housing.

**Homelessness Prevention:** In this program, we provide cash assistance to prevent evictions and pay overdue utility bills. In the past year, we assisted 1,474 people living in 559 households through our homelessness prevention program.

**Usage to Date:** Since August 1985, we have provided emergency Shelter for 165,317 nights' lodging to 16,175 people. We provided transitional housing for 180,132 nights to 870 people. We offered homelessness prevention assistance to 24,105 individuals. Meals provided totaled approximately 176,970.

**Changes over the year:** Over the last year, the Executive Director has been working on reconfiguring the operations of the shelter and transitional housing to better meet the needs of the clients served. We have increased the length of time a guest can access shelter from two weeks to 30 days. This positively affects our shelter guests as they can focus better on how to access permanent housing. We have also implemented the use of the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) to objectively identify the number of barriers a household may have to obtaining and maintaining housing, which assists in identifying housing resources that would best meet the guests' needs. By implementing Shelter Diversion techniques, we can do a better job of diverting people from shelter that may have other options.

We have also been updating and renovating the shelter. Through grants obtained from the Dennis Byrne Foundation and United Way, we purchased new bedframes, mattresses, footlockers, dressers, and tables for the emergency shelter. The Associated General Contractors student chapter from Iowa State University volunteered their time and skills to refinish our hardwood floors in the men's shelter and numerous volunteers helped with painting. We transformed one room into an office space and another room into a meeting area. Volunteers assist us on a daily basis with our operations and we are grateful for all their time.

Another change taking place around the state is the development of a Coordinated Entry system. Coordinated entry is a way to triage people experiencing homelessness to better meet their needs and ensure consistent information is being offered to people across programs. The Emergency Residence Project is taking the lead in the development of a Coordinated Entry system, and is working in collaboration with YSS, Salvation Army, Story County Community Services, and ACCESS. Our local region consists of Story, Boone, Marshall and Hardin counties and is called the Two Rivers region.

**Upcoming Changes:** In August 2017, the Associate Director will transition to all day shifts to provide more individualized housing support services to the shelter guests. This allows us to be more proactive in assisting guests to move into a better living situation at exit and minimizes barriers to housing. The Transitional Housing Support Specialist position will increase coverage from part-time to full-time. Starting in January 2018, we will be adding a rapid re-housing program to the continuum of services provided. This will be short-term rental assistance combined with individualized supportive services to ensure people are able to maintain housing after the rental assistance is completed. We are also working toward renovating our backyard and playground area so we have a nicer area for our children and families.