Public Library Services to Patrons Experiencing Homelessness & Housing Insecurity

Minitex Webinar Series
12/4/2015
About Us

Amy Mars, Librarian
Hennepin County Library
St. Catherine University

Sara Zettervall, Librarian
Hennepin County Library
What kind of library do you work in (school, public, academic, special)?

Is your library located in an urban, suburban, or rural area?
Not Just an Urban Issue

<table>
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<th>Region</th>
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<tr>
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Source: 2012 PIT Count Conducted by Wilder Research
46% of those experiencing homelessness are youth under 21

1/3 of these youth are children w/parents

80% of families exp. Homelessness are headed by single women

Racial Disparities:
- African Americans = 37% of homeless pop & 5% general pop
- Native Americans = 10% of homeless pop & 1% general pop

Source: 2012 PIT Count Conducted by Wilder Research
2015 HOURS AT MINIMUM WAGE NEEDED TO AFFORD RENT

In no state can a minimum wage worker afford a **ONE-BEDROOM** rental unit at Fair Market Rent, working a standard 40-hour work week, without paying more than 30% of their income.

![Map of the United States showing the hours needed at minimum wage to afford a one-bedroom unit.](image)

**Hours needed at minimum wage to afford a one-bedroom unit**

- **60 hours per week or less**
- **Between 61-79 hours per week**
- **80 hours per week or more**

*This state's minimum wage exceeds the federal minimum wage*

Source: [National Low Income Housing Coalition](http://www.hclib.org)
Housing status ≠ identity

Photo Credit: Anthony Hira Photography
What does homelessness look like in your library?

How do you work with patrons experiencing housing insecurity?
Continuum of Care

• Prevention:
  – Energy assistance, eviction mitigation, conflict resolution, etc
  – Available at some drop-in centers, 211, Community Action Partnerships (CAPS)

• Outreach:
  – Go out to street/community to connect people w/housing
  – St. Stephen’s & StreetWorks Outreach Teams

• Shelter:
  – Different shelters for adult men/women, youth & families
  – emergency, short-term solution

• Supportive/Transitional Housing:
  – Can be temporary or permanent
  – receive services on site
  – Ex) Suburban Host Homes, halfway houses

• Independent Affordable Housing:
  – Habitat for Humanity
  – Housinglink.org
Referring Patrons to Community Resources

- Know at least 1 resource for:
  - Adults
  - Youth
  - Families

- Other relevant communities
  - Veterans
  - Ex-offenders
  - Victims of domestic violence
  - Non-native ENGL speakers

- Case managing vs. referring
- Visit & learn names
Resource Displays

Information displays:

- Less is more
- Adults, youth, & families
- Local resources
- Visible but anonymous
- Online as well as in person
Inviting Community Partners into the Library

Value=setting & one-to-one assistance

"The library is a public place where everyone spends time whether they have a place to live or not. People can ask for and receive help, and as I see it, still feel a sense of dignity in doing so."

"It was nice just to have somewhere to go where nobody judged you. It was the first time anyone had really spoken to me since I became homeless."

Community Resource & Referral Hours

Looking for help accessing shelter, jobs, healthcare & other essential needs? Get one-on-one assistance navigating community resources.

Every Wednesday
10am-12pm
In rooms: N-110 & N-11

Learn more at the 1st Floor iDesk

Provided by the:
Shelter Provider Action Association (SPAA)
What are some strategies you use when you feel overwhelmed?

How do you maintain balance in your work?
“Libraries are on the front line, whether they want to [be] or not.”

- Jeremy Rosen, director of advocacy at the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
Whole Person Librarianship

Librarians aren’t social workers.
We don’t need to be social workers.
We can work together and learn from each other.
We can celebrate our common history and shared social justice goals.
Librarians & Social Workers

Librarians Provide:

- Access to clients
- Information navigation
Librarians & Social Workers

Social Workers Provide:

• Support for patrons
• Support for staff
Libraries with Social Workers
Working with Community Partners

Who?
- Community nonprofits & shelters
- Governmental agencies
- School homeless liaison
- Local businesses

Building mutually beneficial relationships

Challenges & opportunities
Partner spotlight: St. Stephen’s

**There’s No Place Like Home**

Presented by Zanya Theater Project

After a flood takes their home Dorothy and Toto navigate the bewildering city streets joined by Scarecrow, Rusty and the Gambler. Featuring song, high drama, unexpected insight, and humor in the unlikely places!

**Now Showing!**

Tuesday, June 10
12 - 1 pm
Government Center Auditorium
300 S. 6th Street
Minneapolis, MN

Saturday, June 14
1 - 2 pm
Minneapolis Central Library
300 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN

All Performances are FREE!

*Zanya brings together homeless and housed people to create and perform a theater that mentors a community to end homelessness. Zanya Theater is a program of St. Stephen’s Human Services.*

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**Conversation at the Library**

Do you eat lunch?
Do you live, work, play or pray in downtown Minneapolis?
Are you concerned about issues of homelessness?

Join St. Stephen’s Human Services for a monthly conversation on your concerns.

Tuesdays: June 3, July 1, Aug. 5, Sept. 9, Oct. 7, Nov. 4, Dec. 2
11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Hennepin County Library - Minneapolis Central
300 Nicollet Mall, RKMC Room (2nd floor; up escalator - on right)
You are welcome to bring your lunch and come and go anytime during these gatherings.

For more information, contact Monica Nilsson at 612-481-9501 or mnilsson@ststephensmpls.org.

Co-sponsored by St. Stephen’s Human Services and Hennepin County Library.
“I Dream at the Library”
How are you partnering with organizations in your community?

Do you have examples to share?
Questions?

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Contact Us

Amy Mars, Librarian
amars@hclib.org
651-690-6202

Sara Zettersvall, Librarian
szettersvall@hclib.org
612-543-8520