



1985 Tate Blvd. SE
Suite 529
Hickory, NC 28602
Phone (828) 327-2595
Fax (828) 325-9826

Serving Burke & Catawba Counties

Press Release

Contact: Judy Dahlstrom
Phone: (828) 323-8030

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mental Health Partners Awarded \$1 Million Grant to Prevent Homelessness

Mental Health Partners, the Local Management Entity for public mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse services in Burke and Catawba Counties, has been awarded a \$1 million grant over the next three years to provide homelessness prevention assistance to households who would otherwise become homeless—many due to the economic crisis—and to provide assistance to rapidly re-house persons who recently have become homeless.

The North Carolina Office of Economic Recovery and Investment (OERI) in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (HFA) is administering the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) non-entitlement funds throughout North Carolina. All three State organizations are working together to ensure the funds achieve the desired goals and HUD's reporting requirements are met.

HPRP is a new HUD program that was created through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act). HPRP will provide temporary financial assistance and housing relocation and

stabilization services to individuals and families who are homeless or would be homeless **but for** this assistance.

Mental Health Partners (MHP) is responsible for implementing, monitoring compliance and overseeing the local HPRP effort called Destination: Home. A Program Specialist at Mental Health Partners will be hired to work with two case managers – who are employed by and located at Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministries and Burke United Christian Ministries and funded by the grant. The case managers will perform in-take assessments, determine eligibility and work with participants to establish and implement a plan to prevent the loss of their current housing or to rapidly re-house those who have become homeless recently.

To meet the eligibility requirements, the household must either be homeless or at risk of losing its housing and must meet each of the three minimum criteria: 1. No appropriate subsequent housing options have been identified AND the household lacks the financial resources and support networks needed to obtain immediate housing or remain in its existing housing. 2. The household must be at or below 50% of Area Median Income (AMI) and income eligibility must be maintained. If a household is assisted and is later re-assessed and their income exceeds the AMI, the household is no longer eligible for assistance. 3. Any individual or family receiving financial assistance through Destination Home must have at least an initial consultation with a case manager who can determine eligibility and the appropriate type of assistance to meet their needs.

Households needing PREVENTION ASSISTANCE are individuals and families who are currently in housing but are at risk of becoming homeless and need temporary housing –related financial assistance to prevent them from becoming homeless.

Those needing RAPID RE-HOUSING ASSISTANCE are individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness (residing in emergency or transitional shelters or on the streets) and need temporary

assistance in order to obtain and retain housing.

Funds may be used for rental assistance (but not mortgages), utilities and securities deposits and moving costs.

Referrals to the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program may be made by contacting an HPRP case manager. For Catawba County residents, call Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry at 828-327-0979 and for Burke County residents, call Burke United Christian Ministries at 828-433-8075.

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