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Affordable Housing and Homelessness

Presentation to the Legislative Commission's Subcommittee to Study the Availability and Inventory of Affordable Housing 1/23/06

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EXHIBIT D – WATER RESOURCES
Meeting Date: 01-23-06
Document consists of 18 slides.
Entire Exhibit Provided

Why Discuss Homelessness?



A lack of affordable housing and the limited scale of housing assistance programs are the primary causes of homelessness.

Why Discuss Homelessness?



If people cannot afford a place to live, they are at risk of becoming homeless.

Why Discuss Homelessness?



A January 2001 report by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found that 4.9 million low-income American households had worst case housing needs, paying more than 50% of their income on rent.

A missed paycheck, a health crisis, or an unpaid bill pushes poor families over the edge into homelessness.

Why Discuss Homelessness?



To end homelessness, new policies must be implemented to address its fundamental causes:

Lack of Affordable Housing:

Today, fewer than 30% of those eligible for low-income housing receive it.

Why Discuss Homelessness?



Lagging Incomes:

Incomes for the poorest Americans have not kept pace with rising housing costs. Millions of workers are shut out of the private housing market.

Why Discuss Homelessness?



Slashed Services and Government Assistance:

At the same time earned income for the poor was decreasing, assistance programs were severely cut.

Background Information



The federal affordability standard recommends that individuals and families spend no more than 30% of income on housing costs.

Background Information



- A worker in the Las Vegas area must earn \$34,440 annually (\$16.56/hour) in order to afford prevailing rent costs without spending more than 30% of their income on housing. The average wage for a renter in the Las Vegas area is \$12.31 per hour.

National Low Income Housing Coalition,
Out of Reach 2005

Background Information



- A worker in the Reno/Sparks area must earn \$35,200 annually (\$16.92/hour) in order to afford prevailing rent costs without spending more than 30% of their income on housing. The average wage for a renter in the Reno/Sparks area is \$11.66 per hour.

National Low Income Housing Coalition,
Out of Reach 2005

Background Information



- Monthly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments for an individual are \$615 throughout Nevada, which translates to \$3.54 per hour for a 40-hour week.
- This leaves a deficit of \$13.02 per hour in Las Vegas and \$13.38 per hour in Reno/Sparks for an individual on SSI to afford the prevailing rent.

Homelessness in Nevada



In the January, 2005 Point in Time count:

- Las Vegas estimated 8,000 to 10,000 persons homeless each night
- Reno/Sparks estimates 4,000 to 5,000 persons homeless each night
- Rural Nevada has no reliable statewide estimate, although numbers of homeless were much larger than expected.

The Challenge



We have emergency shelter and transitional housing in our communities.

There are not enough affordable housing units to house people coming out of the emergency system.

The Challenge



We need additional affordable rental housing and permanent housing units with supportive services.

Research shows that providing housing and supportive services reduces street homelessness.

The Challenge



We also need affordable home ownership opportunities for working families.

This will help promote stability and reduce family homelessness.

Solutions

Regional planning agencies could:

- 1) Bring together government, builders, nonprofit developers, advocates and Public Housing Authorities;
- 2) Provide incentives for development of needed housing.

Solutions

Affordable housing is not a handout.

Research shows that stable housing helps people to:

- find and retain employment;
- become more self-sufficient;
- contribute to the community.



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Thank you