



*Department of* **Human Services**  
Monroe County, New York

**Maggie Brooks**  
*County Executive*

**Kelly A. Reed**  
*Commissioner*

**HOUSING / HOMELESS  
SERVICES  
ANNUAL REPORT**

**For Calendar Year 2013**

**June 2014**

## **EMERGENCY HOUSING / HOMELESS SERVICES - 2013**

### **Emergency Housing Placements**

In 2013, the Monroe County Department of Human Services (MCDHS) made 8,857<sup>1</sup> emergency housing placements for individuals and families. This represents a 6% increase from the 8,348 emergency housing placements made in 2012.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Families</b>	<b>Individuals</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Change from previous year</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>Average cost per placement</b>
<b>2008</b>	2,386	6,592	8,978	49	1%	\$4,520,802	\$504
<b>2009</b>	2,629	6,556	9,185	207	2%	\$4,863,995	\$530
<b>2010</b>	2,494	6,410	8,904	-281	-3%	\$4,610,586	\$518
<b>2011</b>	2,559	6,113	8,672	-232	-3%	\$4,755,997	\$548
<b>2012</b>	2,720	5,628	8,348	-324	-4%	\$4,948,940	\$593
<b>2013</b>	2,678	6,179	8,857	509	6%	\$4,908,746	\$554

*The 2013 emergency housing placement numbers do not include Monroe County residents that were placed in domestic violence shelters outside of Monroe County. In 2013, an additional \$265,355 was issued for out-of-county domestic violence placements.*

### **Leading Causes for Emergency Housing Placements in 2013**

The primary cause of homelessness in 2013 continued to be eviction by the primary tenant. Individuals and families residing in the homes of relatives or friends are often asked to leave due to overcrowded conditions, substance abuse, domestic disputes, family breakups and strained relationships. This cause represented 68% of the total emergency housing placements that were made in 2013.

The second leading cause of homelessness in 2013 was a result of being released from an institution without a plan for permanent housing. Institutions include hospitals, substance abuse treatment programs and the Monroe County Jail. This cause represented 11% of the total emergency housing placements that were made in 2013.

Monroe County staff is reporting increased requests for emergency housing placements from out of County and out of State residents. We will be putting measures in place to identify and track emergency shelter requests from out of area residents.

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<sup>1</sup> The number of emergency housing placements made is not unduplicated, and does not include canceled placements or certain no show placements.

**Emergency Housing Placement - Causes - 2009-2013**

<b><u>Cause of Homelessness</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>	<b><u>2013</u></b>
Eviction by Primary Tenant	61%	63%	63%	63%	68%
Released from Institution	16%	15%	15%	14%	11%
Evicted by Landlord	7%	8%	7%	8%	6%
Arrived from Out-of-County	5%	5%	6%	6%	6%
Domestic Violence	7%	6%	6%	6%	5%
Fire	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%
All Other Causes	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%

**Emergency Housing Placements – Youth**

In 2013, 630 youths (ages 16-21, unduplicated) were placed in emergency housing. As some youths experienced multiple bouts of homelessness, the total number of youth placements into emergency housing for 2013 was 1,016. Of the total youth placements made in 2013, 47% were placed in the adult shelter system, 45% were placed in the youth shelter system and 8% were placed in hotels.<sup>2</sup>

**Emergency Housing Placements - Youth (Ages 16-21) - 2009-2013**

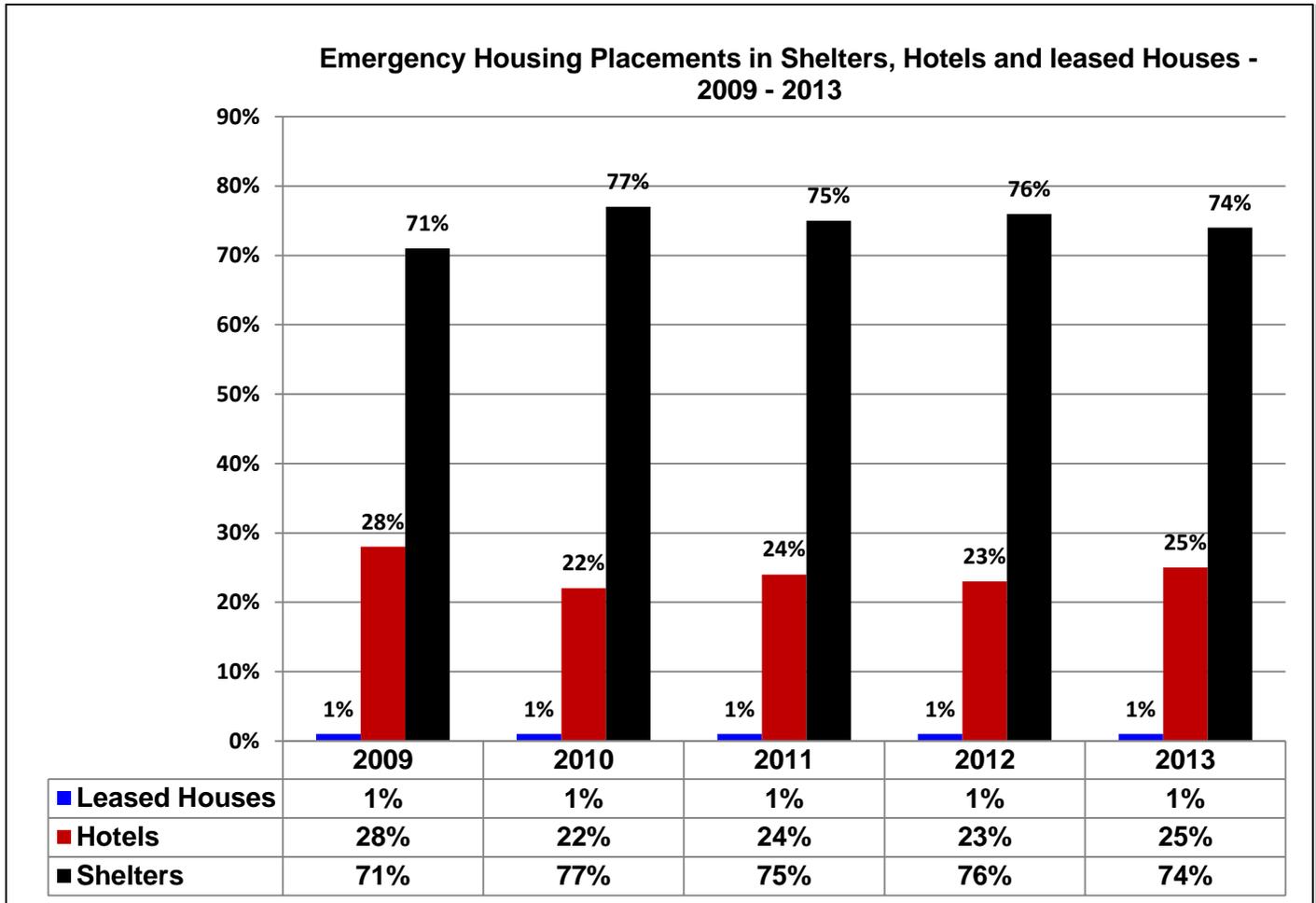
<b>Year</b>	<b>Youths Placed</b>	<b>Change from Previous Year</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>Total Placements</b>	<b>Change from Previous Year</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>2009</b>	921	121	15%	1,502	247	20%
<b>2010</b>	890	-31	-3%	1,511	9	1%
<b>2011</b>	828	-62	-7%	1,409	-102	-7%
<b>2012</b>	727	-101	-12%	1,276	-133	-9%
<b>2013</b>	630	-97	--13%	1,016	-260	-20%

<sup>2</sup> These percentages are based on the unduplicated numbers.

## Emergency Housing Placements – Shelters, Hotels and Leased Houses

Shelters and leased houses provide case management services that are not provided at a hotel. When making a placement, shelters are always utilized first, and a hotel placement is only made when a shelter bed or leased house is unavailable. MCDHS Emergency Housing Unit staff work with those families and individuals who have been placed in a hotel to move them as quickly as possible to a shelter or leased house.

In 2013, 74% of the emergency housing placements were made at homeless shelters. Hotel placements accounted for 25% of the total emergency housing placements, and leased houses 1%.



**Average Length of Stay**

The goal of MCDHS is to assist homeless residents in securing appropriate permanent housing as quickly as possible. In 2013, the average length of a placement remained unchanged for both families and individuals that were placed in either a shelter or a hotel. The average length of stay for a family in one of the leased houses decreased by four days in 2013.

<b><u>Average Length of Stay (Days)</u></b>						
	<b>FAMILIES</b>			<b>INDIVIDUALS</b>		
	<b><u>2012</u></b>	<b><u>2013</u></b>	<b><u>Change</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>	<b><u>2013</u></b>	<b><u>Change</u></b>
<b>Hotels</b>	3	3	N/C	2	2	N/C
<b>Shelters</b>	12	12	N/C	9	9	N/C
<b>Houses</b>	40	36	-4	-	-	N/A

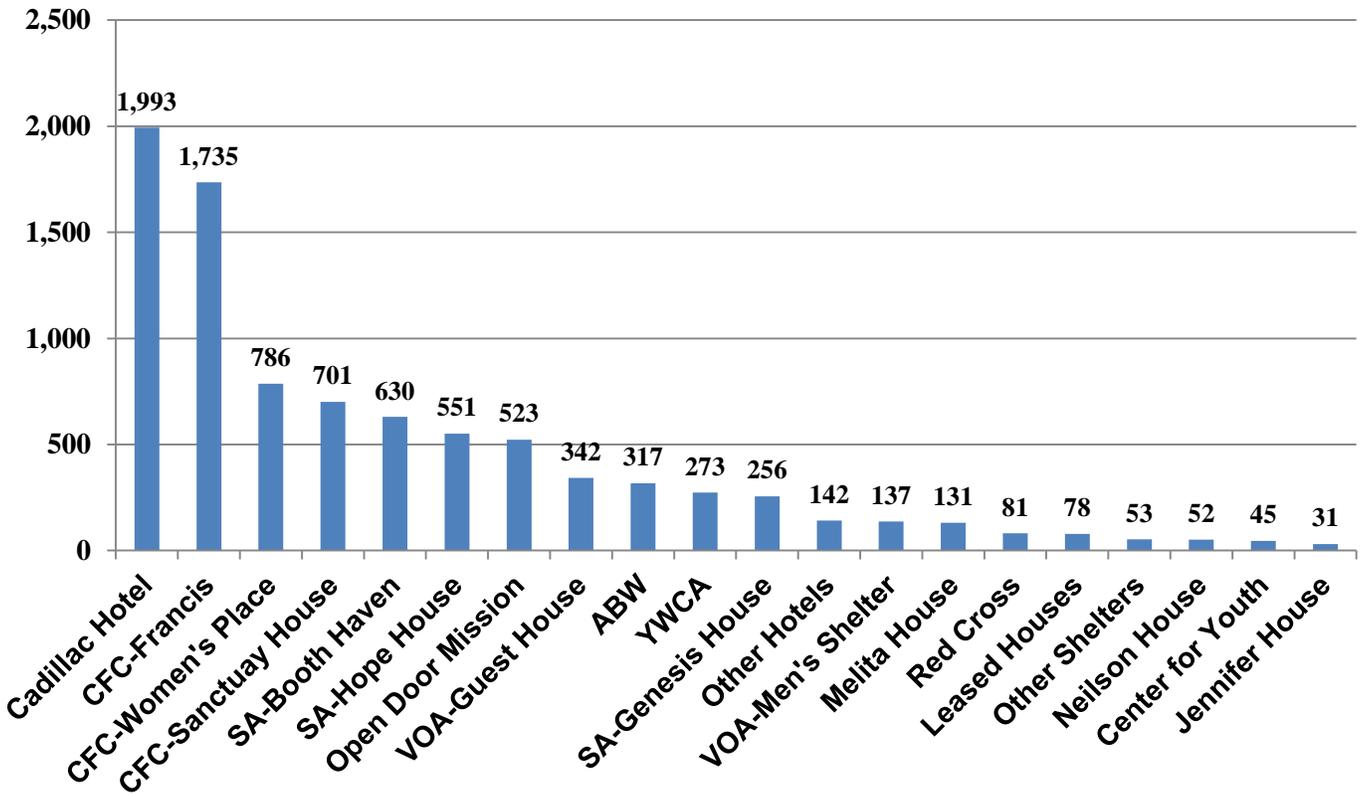
**Available Beds**

During 2013, MCDHS contracted with various community agencies for approximately 416 emergency beds for homeless individuals and families. These are approximate numbers as rooms can be reconfigured based on need, and some of the shelter beds are “moved” between various programs when necessary. When the shelters are unable to accommodate a placement, MCDHS utilizes various hotels and motels across Monroe County.

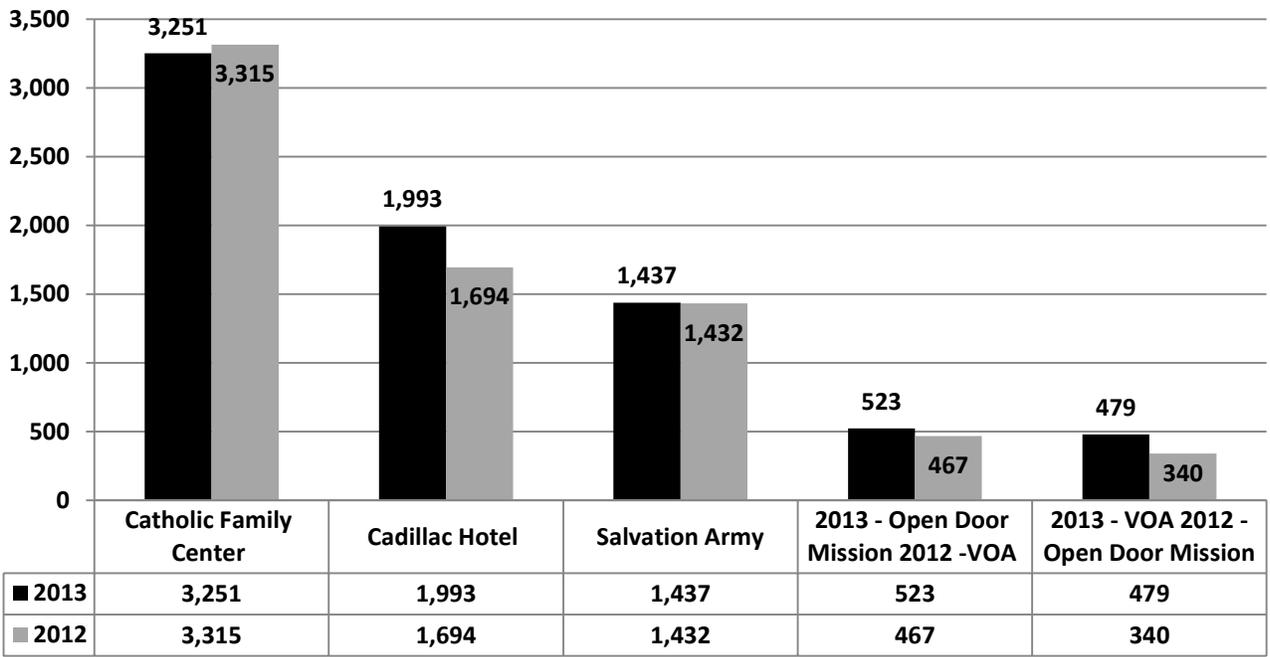
**Emergency Facilities with MCDHS Contracts**

Alternatives for Battered Women	38 beds	Women- single and with children
Catholic Family Center-Francis Shelter	36 beds	Single men only
Catholic Family Center-Sanctuary House	42 beds	Women- single and with children (17 Rooms)
Catholic Family Center-Women's Place	43 beds	Women- single and with children (18 Rooms)
Center for Youth	13 beds	Youths (16-20) - male or female
Melita House (Mercy Residential)	11 beds	16-20 year old pregnant or parenting women
Open Door Mission	10 beds	Single men only
Salvation Army Men's Shelter-Booth Haven	39 beds	Single men only
Salvation Army Youth Shelter- Genesis House	14 beds	Youths (16-21) - male or female
Salvation Army Women's Shelter-Hope House	19 beds	single women only
Spiritus Christi Prison Outreach (Jennifer House)	8 beds	single women only
Spiritus Christi Prison Outreach (Neilsen House)	12 beds	Single men only
Tempo Development (Temple B'rith Kodesh)	58 beds	Families (11 units)
VOC-Richards House	6 beds	Single men only
Volunteers of America –Guest House	44 beds	Families, couples and singles (12 Rooms)
Volunteers of America –Men's Shelter	4 beds	Single men only
YWCA	19 beds	Women- single and with children (13 Rooms)
<b>Total Shelter Beds</b>	<b>416</b>	

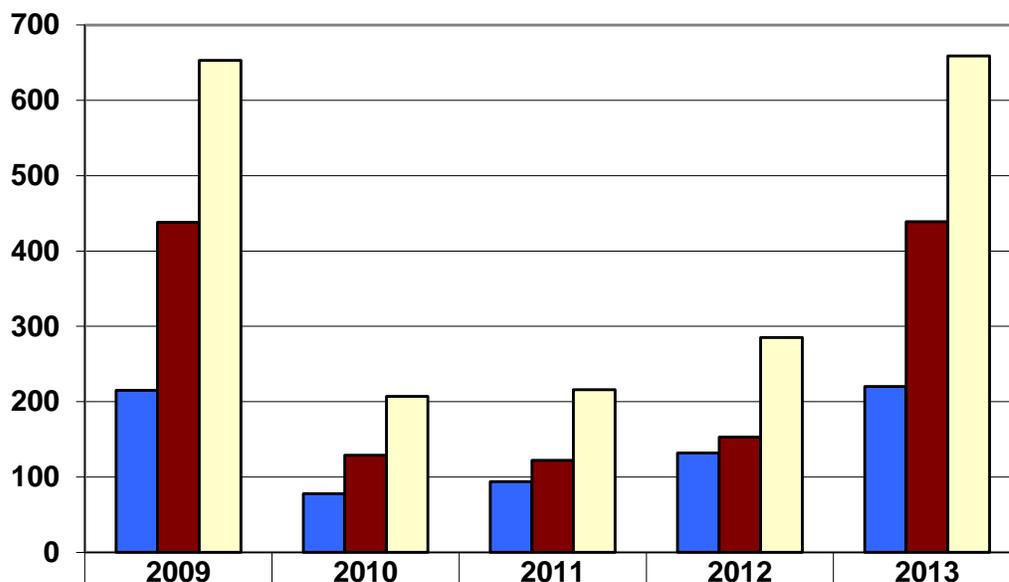
### 2013 - Emergency Housing Placements by Site



### 2013/2012 Top Placement Sites



**Emergency Housing Placement No Shows - 2009-2013**



<b>Families</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>Individuals</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>439</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>659</b>

Effective June 8, 2009, MCDHS established a policy regarding how certain “No Show” shelter placements are handled. When a family or individual is placed by the Emergency Housing Unit they are instructed to report to the shelter by 5:30 PM. If they have not arrived by 6:00 PM, their placement is canceled and their bed(s) are once again made available for other homeless individuals and families. The numbers in the “Emergency Housing Placement No Shows - 2009-2013” chart represent the No Show placements that were paid for by MCDHS. During 2013, an additional 970 No Show placements were released and MCDHS did not pay for those placements.

### **Tenant Accountability Training**

Tenant Accountability Training (TAT) was part of the original Proactive Property Management Program; training was discontinued in early 2003 due to budgeting constraints. In September 2009, MCDHS, the City of Rochester and the Housing Council collaborated to resurrect TAT. The goal of TAT is to assist recipients of Temporary Assistance (TA) in achieving their highest level of self-sufficiency. The training focuses on the value of being a good tenant and neighbor, along with the costs to the individual, their children and the community of a transient lifestyle. The client’s attendance is considered a continuing eligibility requirement for TA, and failure to attend would be cause to discontinue the client’s TA grant. Circumstances that warrant a referral to TAT include: Two moves within the last 12 months, a former landlord has filed a claim on a Landlord Tenant Security Agreement for \$500 or greater, two emergency housing placements within a 12-month period, the head of household is under the age of 21, administrative discretion, a TA household that contains a child under the age of 6 and is residing in the areas that have been identified by the City of Rochester as posing the highest risk of exposure to lead poisoning, or a request from a city, town or Housing Council inspector, the Health Department, a MCDHS case worker or investigator.

In December 2010, the curriculum for half of the training sessions was revised to include a segment on Healthy Homes, specifically geared toward to lead poisoning. The goal of this portion of the training is to increase the tenant’s knowledge and awareness of potential lead hazards. The participants are also given instructions, resource materials, and contact information to use in the event that they identify a potential lead hazard in their home. In August of 2011, this was expanded and now all TAT trainings include a segment on Healthy Homes

and specifically lead poisoning. In July of 2013, educational information was added to the training regarding the identification, prevention and treatment of bedbugs.

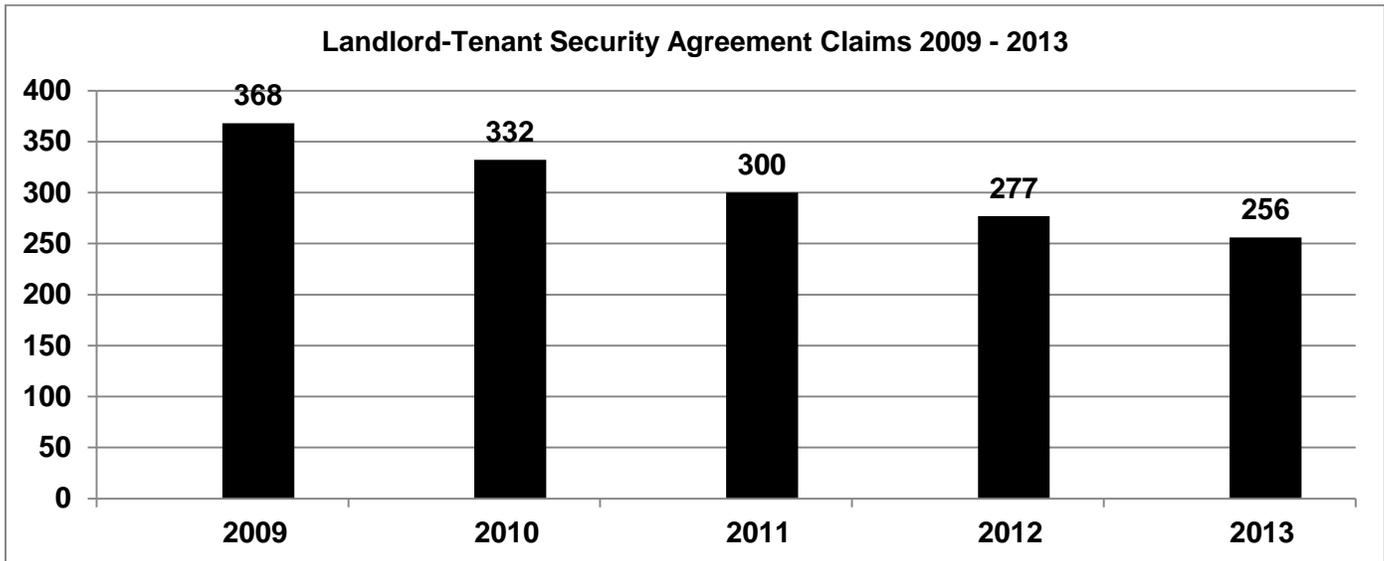
Surveys of participants consistently find that over 96% of those who respond felt that as a result of the presentation they were better able to identify lead hazards in their home. During 2013, 1,238 TA recipients attended TAT. Since its resurrection in September 2009 through December 31, 2012 there have been 5,185 participants in TAT.

### **Monroe County Department of Human Services' Emergency Housing Unit**

The Monroe County Department of Human Services' Emergency Housing Unit was established to serve the emergency needs of the homeless and the housing needs of the low-income residents in our community. The following services are provided by the Emergency Housing Unit and other units within MCDHS:

- One Emergency Housing Unit staff person is assigned to each of the local shelters to serve as a liaison with shelter staff and to work with shelter providers to assist residents in securing financial assistance, locating housing and providing relocation services such as moving, utility turn-on and acquiring essential furniture and appliances.
- The Emergency Housing Unit provides the homeless with housing assistance and linkages to other County staff, including: Adult Protective, Child Protective, Financial Assistance, Mental Health, Youth Bureau, Probation, as well as community service providers.
- The Emergency Housing Unit has two workers designated as a single point of entry for any youth between the ages of 16 to 18 that are homeless and/or applying for cash assistance as the head of household. MCDHS staff conducts investigations to locate responsible adults, or, in the event no adult is available, work with community providers to locate appropriate permanent housing and link the youths to needed services.
- MCDHS operates an after-hours placement line: 442-1742. After hours telephone coverage is available during non-business hours to provide emergency assistance to the homeless.
- The Emergency Housing Unit is the central point of entry for MCDHS placement into emergency housing. Staff coordinate the placement of the homeless into available beds. A daily census is taken at the shelters and hotels to maximize use of available beds and identify and address any client-specific barriers to relocation into permanent housing.
- Screening of all homeless individuals and families who are not receiving Temporary Assistance to determine eligibility for temporary housing assistance. When appropriate, expedited Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, personal needs allowances and assistance with first month's rent are issued.
- The Emergency Housing Unit operates a Landlord Complaint "Hotline": 753-6034. Complaints are resolved quickly, and in many instances have prevented evictions. Staff work directly with landlords to resolve agency/landlord disputes.
- The Emergency Housing Unit conducts periodic inspections of the emergency shelters and hotels to ensure that safe and sanitary housing is being provided to homeless residents.
- The Emergency Housing Unit operates the Rent Withholding Program which works to ensure that buildings with open health and safety violations occupied by Temporary Assistance recipients are brought up to code compliance. When necessary, rental payments are withheld until major violations are corrected. In 2013, the Emergency Housing Unit processed 501 referrals for rent withholding. Sixty of these properties were subsequently brought up to code

- MCDHS issues a Landlord Tenant Security Agreement (LTA) in lieu of a cash security deposit. The LTA secures the landlord against tenant-caused damages and unpaid rent up to a maximum amount equal to two months of the household's Temporary Assistance shelter allowance. The Emergency Housing Unit is responsible for processing claims made on Landlord Tenant Security Agreements. In 2013, there were 256 claims filed on Landlord Tenant Security Agreements. There has been a steady decline in the number of LTA claims that are being filed annually. MCDHS does not maintain statistics on the number of Landlord-Tenant Security Agreements that are being issued each year, but there has been a decline in the number of inspections that are being done related to the LTA process. While there may be several factors that are causing this it is felt that more landlords are requiring cash security deposits. Clients have been able to obtain security deposits through various community programs and sources.



- Provide emergency payments to financially eligible home-owners which include payments to prevent tax or mortgage foreclosures or help with necessary repairs to maintain current occupied housing.
- MCDHS, in partnership with the Rochester Housing Authority (RHA), operates a Shelter Plus Care grant. The Shelter Plus Care program is funded through HUD and provides rent subsidies to low-income households. This program helps house homeless individuals and families in which the head-of-household suffers from mental illness, chronic substance abuse and/or other disabilities. Rochester Housing Authority manages the rental subsidies and MCDHS Emergency Housing Unit staff assists in locating housing. Ongoing case management services are provided by various agencies in the community. Currently, 318 households in Monroe County are receiving rent subsidies through this grant.
- Emergency Housing staff are a component of the Homeless MICA Program. This program, funded by MCDHS's Office of Mental Health, uses a team approach to serving homeless MICA individuals. Staff from MCDHS, Strong Memorial Hospital, and Rochester Mental Health Center work together and are able to draw upon the resources of their respective agencies. The program is able to assist these individuals in securing financial assistance, emergency, supportive and permanent housing. Case managers at Strong Memorial Hospital and Rochester Mental Health Center provide linkages to mental health services and ongoing case management. During 2013, 287 homeless individuals with mental health issues were assisted through this program.

Monroe County Department of Human Services staff are also active participants in the following organizations:

- **Homeless Services Network:** This organization facilitates networking, coordinating, consulting and fundraising among individuals who work for, or with agencies who provide high-quality, accessible and effective health, social, housing and other services to individuals who are homeless. Members represent approximately 60 community agencies, including County and City departments.
- **Homeless Continuum of Care Team:** This team, comprised of staff from Monroe County, the City of Rochester, the United Way of Greater Rochester and the Homeless Service Providers' Network, facilitates and evaluates the implementation of the local Homeless Continuum of Care Plan. Each year, this group is responsible to coordinate the community's submission for the HUD Super NOFA. This includes collecting community data, ranking proposals to meet community needs and writing the Rochester/Monroe County application for HUD funds.
- **"Rapid Re-Housing Services" Program:** This team functions as a collaboration of community partners. Some of the key elements of this collaboration include:
  - A staff person that will work in conjunction with DHS staff in developing a pool of potential landlords that will have housing readily available for our homeless clients. As part of this process, they will identify and address any issues that landlords may have to renting to our clients. (I.E. Landlords who are reluctant to accept a Landlord Tenant Security Agreement.)
  - A staff person who will work with DHS and shelter staff in locating appropriate housing for families that have traditionally presented challenges throughout the housing process. (I.E. Large families, disabled, Etc.)
- **Coordinated Access Task Force:** Established in April 2013, this task force defines homelessness as a community issue and brought together community stakeholders to devise and implement strategies for a community-wide response to homelessness.

The Task Force's vision statement is, "To create a coordinated access system to better assist the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless in the greater Rochester and Monroe County."

The vision for Coordinated Access locally is to:

1. Reduce episodes of homelessness and the number of bed placements through coordinated diversion strategies and tactics;
  2. Ensure that everyone who needs emergency shelter is able to access and receive services;
  3. Decrease the length of homeless episodes by moving households to permanent housing as quickly as possible.
- **Civic Center Response Team:** This group was formed to address the planned changes to the Civic Center Garage that will result in barred access to the homeless who have been staying there. The MCDHS' Community Homeless Coordinator has taken over the leadership of this group and it will become a committee of the Continuum of Care with the charge of addressing the needs of all of the chronically homeless in our community.