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Court Administrator

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By Deputy

TO: Special Master, the Honorable Kathleen Blatz
FROM: Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (LSS)
RE: Addendum to Additional Youth and Housing Services Brief
DATE: Thursday, July 7, 2011

**Projects in Assistance in Transition from Homelessness- PATH
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and
distributed through the Adult Mental Health Division of DHS**

The PATH program provides critical services to vulnerable adults with mental illness not currently being served by mainstream social service systems, and who are homeless or at immediate risk of homelessness. PATH outreach services assist these homeless adults in locating and enrolling for services such as food, housing, temporary shelter, crisis beds, ongoing mental health care, transportation needs and ongoing support.

LSS delivers the PATH program to Crow Wing, Todd, Morrison, Cass, Wadena and Aitkin Counties. The program enrolls five homeless adults with mental illness per month to assist in their transition from homelessness to stability. Additionally, at least another ten adults per month are contacted in person through outreach services.

The risk for these individuals is significant. Extremely limited shelter services, mental health concerns and a lack of connection to mainstream services, isolates these individuals who do not have basic needs of food and shelter being met.

**Educational and Training Voucher Program – ETV
Funded by the federal Chafee grant and distributed through the Child Safety and
Permanency Division of DHS**

Youth who have been in foster care rely heavily on the ETV program for the financial assistance needed to pursue secondary education. Eligible youth are state wards, youth who were in foster care up to age 18 or beyond, foster youth whose relative accepted transfer of permanent custody, or youth who were adopted after their 16th birthday. Once enrolled, foster care youth are eligible to receive up to \$5,000 per year to assist with tuition, rent, books, groceries, Internet, transportation and required clothing. The average award is \$2,000 - \$3,000 per youth.

At least 150 applications are waiting to be approved for the ETV program. Youth must be accepted and enrolled in the program, attend orientation and enroll in school prior to receiving an award. This process begins in July and must be complete prior to the start of school sessions in August.

Of particular concern in the current pool of candidates are those youth who are pursuing the Fostering Connections benefits to stay in foster care through age 21 while they are

enrolled in school. For youth who stay in foster care and are eligible to do so because of enrollment in post-secondary education, their ability to stay in foster care will be in jeopardy due to the inability to enroll in the ETV program. It is expected that the number of youth who remain in foster care and receive ETV vouchers will be on the rise.

Children's Trust Fund – CTF

Funded by Community Based Child Abuse Prevention and distributed through the Child Safety and Permanency Division of DHS

CTF is received at LSS as part of the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003. The CTF coordinates and supports programs that develop good parenting skills, ensure healthy youth development and creates healthy families through prevention efforts around child abuse and neglect.

The specific activities carried out as a result of this funding are:

- Mental Health Counseling to families and play therapy to children who have experienced trauma
- Case Management services to families who have experienced long-term homelessness who are at great risk of entering or reentering the child protection system
- Educational support advocacy focused on early childhood development, school readiness, and truancy prevention

Currently the funding from CTF provides support for 48 families and 150 children. Monthly revenue is \$11,000 and we serve approximately 190 children annually.