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Solid Ground's *Frontline Response* to the Economic Crisis

A Community in Crisis

Steep increases in job losses, combined with an unprecedented rise in foreclosures and evictions, have thrown thousands of once-stable people into crisis even as thousands more are struggling to address homelessness, hunger and other basic needs.

- Steep increases in families facing foreclosure and eviction — In the past four months, Solid Ground's Housing Counselors have seen an 85% increase in demand for services over the same period in '08. Also, we are seeing a tremendous increase in people who are evicted because their landlord is in foreclosure.
- Increase in homeless families and newly housed families who are unable to secure and sustain stable housing — Rent subsidies and move-in funds are severely depleted, limiting our ability to help homeless families obtain and maintain housing. Also, a substantial number of our recently-housed families have lost their jobs, further threatening their newfound stability.
- Increased number of people struggling to obtain survival support — In just the first two months of 2009 we have seen an 87% increase in the number of people seeking help to obtain public benefits — most of whom have been improperly turned down for the most basic survival supports.
- Increased number of hungry people — Food banks across the City of Seattle are reporting a 30% increase in demand, while thousands of vulnerable seniors and people living with disabilities and/or chronic or serious illness are not able to access the emergency food system.

A Frontline Response

In the face of this crisis, Solid Ground has developed a strong, strategic and multi-faceted response to these and other poverty-related issues facing our most vulnerable citizens. Over the next 24 months, we are focusing and expanding our efforts to accomplish four urgent goals.

- A Frontline Response to Homelessness that provides an array of services for homeless people who are struggling to attain — *and hold on to* — housing. We are working to: ♦ Provide assistance for 200 homeless families to pay for first and last month's rent and other move-in costs. ♦ Create a Stabilization Fund for newly-housed families who have lost employment or exhausted housing subsidies and are at risk for returning to shelter. ♦ Increase case management and other services to better respond to increased demand.

- A Frontline Response to Imminent Displacement which secures resources for people who are at impending risk of homelessness as a result of eviction and foreclosure. We are specifically working to provide frontline assistance for 300 to 400 **additional** families facing foreclosure as well as a sustained increase in the number of renters who are being evicted.
- A Frontline Response to Gaining Access to Public Benefits that ensures representation and advocacy for people who are denied benefits for which they are entitled, including food stamps, GA-U and other benefits that can mean the difference between survival and deprivation.
- A Frontline Response to Creating Policies and Resources for People in Crisis which implements an aggressive advocacy agenda to achieve increased housing, food, employment and training options for people in poverty. Most importantly, we are working to restore State funding for GA-U, Adult Dental and other vital programs that address survival needs, as well as State funding for employment and training, and City resources for survival services.

Expected Results

Our goals for the next 24 months are as follows:

- Successfully move **200** homeless families into stable, community-based housing, and provide stabilization for **150** newly-housed families at risk of losing their housing.
- Help **1,000** households obtain or retain food stamps, GA-U and other benefits.
- Help **1,000** homeless families gain financial skills, address past evictions and credit problems, and obtain income and housing subsidies essential for housing-readiness.
- Prevent homelessness for over **1,000** households at imminent risk of foreclosure or eviction.
- Prevent cuts in survival benefits while working to secure additional governmental resources for shelter, rental assistance, employment and other safety net programs.

Solid Ground is reaching out to our friends in Seattle's philanthropic community and to all people who believe in a world beyond poverty in order to address the extraordinary needs of families and individuals in crisis. To find out more about Solid Ground's Frontline Response and how you can help address these urgent needs and emerging trends, please contact us at 206.694.6803 or via email at paulh@solid-ground.org.