



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Funds Received for Homeless Assistance Programs**

**Merced, Calif., Mon. July 19, 2010** – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently announced a \$364,000 homeless assistance grant award to several Merced County non-profit agencies. The grant, awarded under the Continuum of Care process, recognizes the collaboration of non-profit, faith based organization, cities and County agencies on a regional plan to reduce the growing number of homeless. Led by the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG), Merced County and the City of Merced, the grant award will be used by two applicants to provide supportive services and permanent housing for the County’s homeless population.

Turning Point, a non-profit mental health agency, received \$248,000 to provide permanent supportive housing to twelve chronically homeless, mental health clients, for a two-year period. “Turning Point is pleased and privileged to be part of helping people live in affordable housing and have a place to call home,” stated Ron Gilbert, Director of the program for Merced and Stanislaus Counties.

Community Social Model Advocates received \$116,000 to provide supportive services at their residential care facility for homeless substance abusing women and homeless women with children. “I am honored that the program will be a recipient of the award, so those who are in need will have a place to go,” stated Lori Newman, Executive Director of Community Social Model Advocates.

The grant award is only part of the story. MCAG’s member agencies, which include the cities of Atwater, Dos Palos, Gustine, Livingston, Los Banos, Merced and Merced County, along with non-profit partners, have requested the creation of a plan aimed at ending chronic homelessness in 10 years, become a top priority. Chronic homelessness, as defined by HUD, is an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or who has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

Phillip Mangano, President of the American Roundtable to Abolish Homelessness, who presented to the MCAG Governing Board in May, said when communities focus on the economics of homelessness, they realize it is financially irresponsible to ignore the problem. At their July meeting, the MCAG Governing Board authorized MCAG staff begin the first steps to create a 10 Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness by releasing a request for proposals.

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**About MCAG**

MCAG is an association of city and county governments, with members who meet to discuss and solve program of regional interest. More information can be found at [www.mcagov.org](http://www.mcagov.org) or by calling (209) 723-3153, ext. 308.