

University Engagement and Commitment to Community Help New York's Homeless

Eugene J. Monaco, *Executive Director and Public Service Professor*
Professional Development Program

Policies and programs designed to aid our current homeless populations, reduce the number of homeless, and finally, eliminate the situation altogether need grounding in a deep understanding of the causes and complexities of homelessness. Efforts in both policy development and programs currently underway with the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) and numerous community agencies across New York State and the Capital Region are being implemented cognizant of this need.

As part of its service mission, the University's strong commitment to its partnerships with local and global communities gives us a unique opportunity to play an influential role in supporting these efforts. PDP and the School of Social Welfare (SSW) are capturing that opportunity through educational programs and other initiatives directed at finding better approaches to dealing with homelessness. This issue of the *Communiqué* describes some of these efforts.

In light of the daunting status quo regarding homelessness in the U.S., our efforts are timely. The 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reports:

- Approximately 565,000 people in the United States are homeless;
- Greater than 50% of the homeless population is over the age of 50;
- 15% of the overall homeless population is considered "chronically homeless"—by definition, an individual who has a disability and experienced homelessness for a year or longer;
- 1.4 million veterans are at risk of homelessness;
- .5 million youth under the age of 24 have experienced a homelessness episode of longer than one week; and
- 110,000 LGBTQ youth in the U.S. are homeless.

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A Newsletter from the
**Professional
Development Program,
Rockefeller College**



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New York State's homeless population is the second largest in the U.S.; second only to Hawaii. Homelessness services are at capacity, and long-term solutions are needed.

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National Homelessness Social Work Initiative of the The National Center for Excellence in Homeless Services

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Amanda Aykanian, Research and Project Lead
Katharine Briar-Lawson, Strategic Development Advisor and Dean Emeritus*

National Center for Excellence in Homeless Services

Homelessness agencies serve ethnically and racially diverse groups with accumulated adversities who are challenged to navigate categorical services. Multiple problems—including health, mental health, and substance abuse—are associated with trauma backgrounds and contribute to homelessness. Yet, agency leaders lack resources to address co-occurring problems that are obstacles to maintaining jobs and housing. Emphasizing our ethical obligation to assist disadvantaged populations, the National Center for Excellence in Homeless Services (the National Center) developed in order to learn from and disseminate effective homelessness program examples.

Developed in 2013, the National Center is a consortium of social work schools partnered with providers and policymakers to strengthen services that transform the lives of homeless children and adults. The National Center's homelessness initiative emphasizes increasing homelessness curricular content in social work education, expanding field placements, engaging and informing policymakers, and supporting leaders in the homelessness field. Partnered with the Council on Social Work Education, we have coordinated with federal agencies (e.g., U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development), expanded our national network, and advanced regional networks of social work schools. Our six regional hubs lead advocacy for evidence-supported policy, expand student internship opportunities, and train homeless service providers.

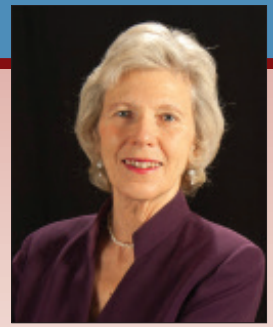
These partnerships led to the development of multiple curriculum resources, including an online learning series for professional development and curriculum integration



Heather Larkin



Amanda Aykanian



Katharine Briar-Lawson

**Homelessness
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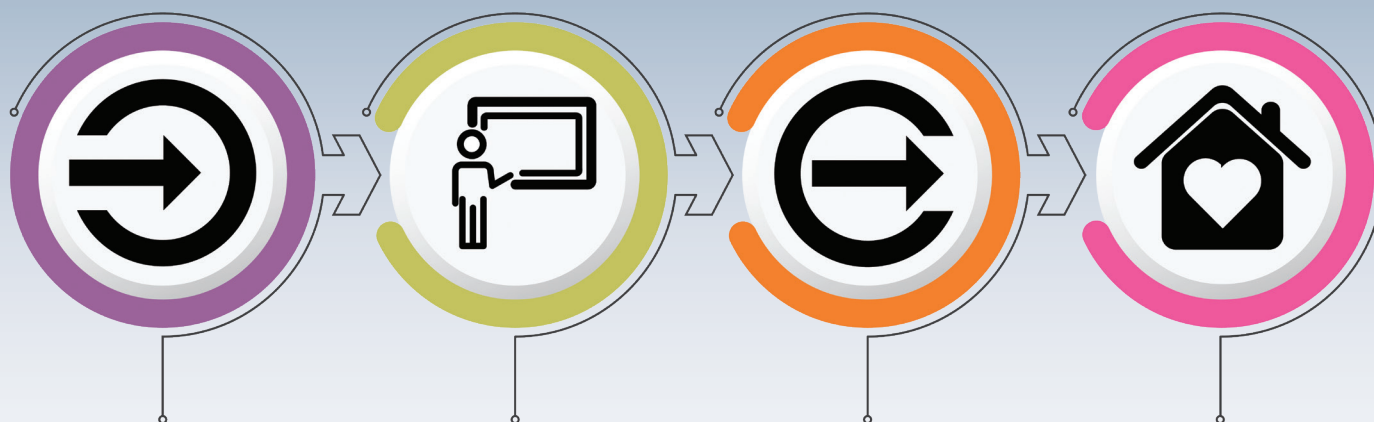
(<https://learningacademy.cswe.org/products/homelessness-in-social-work-education>). Other resources include syllabi templates for homelessness courses as well as reading lists (<https://nationalcenterforexcellenceinhomelesssservices.wordpress.com/>). Partners are leading special journal issues on homelessness and finalizing a homelessness textbook. New university-agency partnerships are increasing student internships in homeless services.

In collaboration with SAMHSA's SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance Center, three schools initiated a pilot project (<https://soarworks.prairiesocialwork.com/article/webinar-soar-social-work>), with findings featured in webinar and conference presentations. Examples include

students completing SOAR certification and using that skill in their field placement and a course covering best practices working with at risk and homeless clients that includes SOAR training and experience.

The National Center links faculty across schools around particular interests. For example, a veterans workgroup provided ways for the National Center and VA to collaborate in disseminating VA best practices and curriculum resources while increasing internships with homeless veterans. A research workgroup assessed homelessness research in progress and identified shared interests for next steps in knowledge development. In summary, homelessness is multifaceted and requires

skills in addictions, mental health, disabilities, abuse, trauma, and health. Social workers have strong skill bases in addressing these categories of concern, and we are translating research into policies and practice while learning from real-world service innovations to improve the curriculum and workforce preparation. All partner schools are informing their regional policy-making processes, ensuring that social work knowledge drives practices and programs. As a result, the social work profession is increasing leadership in homelessness reduction, knowledge development, workforce improvements, and implementation of evidence-supported policies and practices.



Inputs

UAlbany leadership and staff
University partnerships
Regional hubs
CSWE partnership
Local and federal government partnerships
Homelessness research leaders, including Grand Challenge authors

Activities

Innovation exchange
Collaboration
Policy advocacy
Translation of research to practice
Sharing best practices and examples of excellence in homeless services
Pilot projects to test innovations
Creation of materials to support curriculum integration

Outputs

Increases in:

- University-community partnerships
- Homelessness content in curriculum
- Field placements in homeless services
- Communication between schools and community agencies

Enhanced coordination among schools of social work
New funding streams for social work education

Outcomes

Strong homeless services workforce
Comprehensive and effective evidence-informed homelessness prevention and intervention services
Policy change to support homelessness prevention and intervention services
Local and national reduction in homelessness

The National Center and homelessness initiative supports our profession's Grand Challenge to End Homelessness. We are:

- Strengthening homelessness curricular content;
- Increasing homelessness internships for students;
- Creating leadership career paths for students focused on homelessness; and
- Fostering cross-sector partnerships that improve information flow, develop leaders, influence policymakers, and increase excellence in homeless services.

We are increasing social work leadership in practice, policy, and knowledge development to institutionalize effective housing and supports that will reduce and ultimately eliminate homelessness. **PDP**



Perry Jones, Executive Director
Capital City Rescue Mission

Perry Jones

Homelessness is on the rise in the Capital Region of New York, as in most parts of the country. The Capital City Rescue Mission in Albany has been serving homeless and needy men, women, and children for almost 70 years as a privately funded Christian ministry. Since installing an admissions database program in 2009, we have recorded the names and identities of 13,000 individuals who have stayed one night or more in our shelter program. This past year alone, our shelter numbers have increased 20% from 250 to 300 people per night. We are usually full to capacity. More than any other time in our history, we are helping people find permanent solutions to homelessness.

The Capital City Rescue Mission begins its response to the homeless by meeting basic emergency needs, including:

- Serving 800 meals daily (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) in addition to distributing 200 bag lunches around the clock.
- Distributing donated clothing (approximately 9,000 items a year).
- Providing volunteer physicians and nurses who help operate a free medical clinic for the uninsured, sick, and suffering (available 20 hours per week).
- Sheltering up to 300 people nightly to ensure that the tired and weary have clean and warm lodging.

Once emergency needs have been met, longer-term solutions can be offered. This begins with a “90 day +” work readiness program that helps individuals prepare for re-employment in the workforce. The program helps people gain the confidence and training they need to become employed outside the Mission. The next level of help offered is a 9-12 month residential recovery program for people suffering

from addiction and other life dominating problems. These individuals receive counseling, training, and medical help, as well as classes through our educational center. Participants can prepare for completion of their high school equivalency diploma and receive critical educational training, employment readiness skills, and job search assistance. These longer-term solutions are vital for the homeless to gain employment and become independent in our community.

The last level of assistance is long-term transitional residential programming. We have 42 studio apartments and 25 single occupancy rooms available for graduates of our recovery programs for up to three years. When clients reach this transitional stage, they are supported with further counseling and addiction recovery services to help them maintain their success and independence. They are employed and supported as they learn the necessary skills to maintain their employment and transitional living arrangements.

Charlene is one of many success stories that resulted from the services offered by the Capital City Rescue Mission. Charlene struggled with devastating loss, despair, and addiction in her life. Two years ago, at age 40, she entered our women’s recovery program with her three-year-old daughter. Today, she is sober, employed, and has been accepted into the dental hygiene program at Hudson Valley Community College. Charlene is responsible, leads groups for program women, and her daughter is thriving.

The Capital City Rescue Mission is a full-service ministry; we address the needs of the homeless and help them find permanent solutions. Businesses, churches, individuals, universities, and foundations partner with us to ensure that the homeless and needy are given help that begins with emergency assistance and continues with longer-term solutions. **PDP**

PDP Develops System Training for Social Service Districts, Providers, and Shelters

*Dawn Dexter, Training Program Coordinator
Professional Development Program*

The Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) Division of Shelter Oversight and Compliance (DSOC) maintains the Shelter Management System (SMS), which includes access for local districts, providers, and shelters to view and respond to shelter inspections and report incidents that occur in shelters.

SMS provides access to shelter inspection reports and corresponding documentation. Districts access one system to view inspections and track whether corrective action plans have been completed. Provider and shelter staff can view their own inspections and are able to better track the progress of incident reporting and corrective action plans.

PDP provided SMS training via several two-hour webinars starting two weeks before the system launch date. This approach accommodated many users while keeping each session's attendance to less than 60 participants. Limiting attendance allowed ample opportunity for attendees to ask questions. DSOC staff attended each webinar to answer any program questions that arose. PDP trainers used a combination of explanatory slides and system demonstration for the training. As a result of on-going SMS training, over 500 staff throughout New York State have been trained to date.

SMS is essential to support the shelters within New York State and, in turn, the individuals relying on the shelters. The training PDP provided was an important part of the successful rollout of this new system. **PDP**

Youth Services Training—Runaway and Homeless Youth

*Michael Cozzens, Training Program Coordinator
Professional Development Program*

Youth and young adults who are living on the streets or who do not have consistent, stable housing are highly vulnerable. They are often trying to escape neglect, abuse, conflict in their homes, forced work, sexual exploitation, and intolerance of their gender identity or sexual orientation. During the already difficult developmental stage of adolescence, many youth face these dilemmas and/or crises alone. PDP's Youth Services Training offers training and technical assistance to Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) facilities to increase staff capacity to deliver quality, welcoming, and affirming services. Young adults in these programs receive independent living skills training, social group support, and educational and recreational services focused on building self-sufficiency.

Youth Services Training recognizes the need for strength-based, developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive, and LGBTQ+-specific programs for young people. Trainings are provided in-person and online, providing informative and crucial skill development for effectively working with and meeting the needs of runaway and homeless youth. For example, "Promoting Positive Youth Development and Well Being" is a 2-day course that encourages service providers to look at youth from a holistic perspective, view youth as partners in their own development, provide youth with the skills and opportunities to foster better decision making, and prepare youth to take the lead in achieving their goals. Understanding adolescent development—and how the trauma many youth in care have experienced affects their development—is necessary for staff who work with adolescents. **PDP**





John Baldwin, Eugene Monaco, Ron Biggé

News and Views

PDP Studio

Starting in November, PDP's Media Production department will begin working in a new broadcast studio located under the Academic Podium on the UAlbany campus. The 1000 square foot studio is part of a larger state-of-the-art production facility that includes spaces for production control, audio recording, dressing and makeup, and meetings.

Media Production will use the studio to broadcast live webcasts and events, create training videos and public service announcements, and record audio for incorporation into web-based trainings. With five studio cameras, fully programmable LED studio lighting, and various backgrounds (including a green screen), the studio represents an investment in PDP's future in the fast-paced, digitally oriented world of professional education.

Annual Awards

Executive Director's Award—Aria Moshari

Since his arrival in 2015, Aria has applied his strong design and programming skills to transform aging systems into 21st century models of efficiency. The results of these efforts have significantly strengthened PDP's place as a technology leader.

Aria readily shares knowledge, techniques, and ideas with fellow developers and PDP staff. A quiet, yet highly effective leader, Aria's efforts have modernized and advanced many of PDP's most relied upon applications. These include creating the next generation Educational Incentive Program database, improving security, and modernizing several aspects of our internet presence.

Outstanding Administrative Support Staff Award—Laurie Lieman

Laurie provides program and administrative support for the field-based Child Support Training and Outreach Project (CSTOP). She ensures class materials are ordered, organized, and ready for trainers. She arranges rooms and accommodations,

processes travel vouchers, works with hotels, completes closeout tasks, and provides information for quarterly reports.

One of Laurie's strongest attributes is her willingness to help. She also assists the Finance and Project Support Team, as well as provides project support for several Department of Temporary Assistance Training deliverables.

Outstanding Professional Staff Award— LaToya Jackson

LaToya coordinates and supports the Leadership Development Program and the NYS Leadership Institute. LaToya played a vital role in the planning, approval, and delivery of the new Leadership Institute. She collected, reviewed, and organized training materials submitted by Rockefeller College and developed a competency model for the 360 assessment. LaToya facilitated communication with stakeholders from the Governor's Office of Employee Relations, Rockefeller College, PDP, program participants, and consultants. She also monitored participant completion, worked with individuals who missed sessions, and assisted with program evaluation.

Outstanding Team Award— Poverty/Trauma Course Development & Implementation Team

This team designed, developed, and implemented a classroom course, Program Development and Implementation Considerations for People Affected by Poverty and Trauma, to meet a priority training need for NYS OTDA. This initiative examines how poverty and trauma affect brain development to foster a more human-centered, trauma-informed approach when administering OTDA's programs.

This project required a team of researchers, instructional designers, curriculum writers, trainers, reviewers, evaluators, project managers, event planners, HSLC registrars, and project support. It consisted of Jessica Bashaw, Colleen Denning, Harra Epner, Susan Gieryic, Diane Hodurski-Foley, Gowoon Jung, June Mastan, Jenna Melewski, Paige Pappianne, Fazana Saleem-Ismail, Lauren Schauer, Bonnie Taylor, and Laura Vecchio.

Outstanding Trainer Award—Jeffrey Isaacson

During 2017, Jeff delivered a majority of classroom and online synchronous course offerings for CSTOP while he mentored and trained new staff. He also reacquainted fellow CSTOP staff with numerous CSTOP course offerings by delivering customized, condensed sessions targeting various topics and by conducting regular mini sessions for new project staff to help build content expertise. Jeff has invested considerable thought and energy into the redesign and development of the new accounting series of courses, a complex and long-term project that is approaching its final stages. Jeff also provides content expertise for work on the comprehensive Child Support Program Manual. **PDP**

PDP Presents

JILL HASKELL, *Finding the Money: Making EIP Scholarships Work for You* presentation at NY Network for Youth Success Conference (April 13 and 14)

COLLEEN FARAGON, *Training Opportunities* presentation at NY Network for Youth Success Conference (April 19)

COLLEEN O'GRADY, COLLEEN FARAGON, and SAGE RUCKTERSTUHL, *OCFS Training Requirements* presentation at NY Association for the Education of Young Children Annual Conference (April 20)

DEBORAH MCGUIRE and CASEY BECKER, *Pyramid Model in New York State* presentation at NY Association for the Education of Young Children Annual Conference (April 21)

PAIGE PAPPIANNE, *The Affect of Poverty and Trauma on Decision Making and Behavior* presentation at the NYS Department of Labor 2018 Employment Conference: Serving Customers With Barriers (June 5)

JESSICA BASHAW, *The Affect of Poverty and Trauma on Decision Making and Behavior* general session at the 2018 NY Welfare Fraud Investigators Association Annual Training Seminar (June 5)

MAUREEN GODWIN, *Raise the Age LDSS Claiming in the Automated Claiming System (ACS)* presentation at the NY Public Welfare Association 2018 Summer Conference (July 16)

JENNIFER TEABOUT and DAVID FORTUNE, *Supporting and Promoting Cultural Competence and Race Equity in Homefinding* presentation at Homefinders Summit (August 14)

RUDY ROBLES, *The Affect of Poverty and Trauma on Decision Making and Behavior* presentation at the 2018 Human Resources Administration Trainer Conference (September 27)

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University Engagement and Commitment to Community Help New York's Homeless

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These numbers lead to the current situation in which our emergency shelters, transitional housing, and safe havens are at capacity to meet the short-term daily needs of homeless populations while struggling to find long-term solutions for them. And nowhere is this problem more pronounced than in our own state of New York. What we find is that New York State has the second largest homeless population in the U.S., second only to Hawaii; New York City alone has the largest city homeless population in the U. S. with over 76,000 individuals living in homelessness.

Solving the homeless problem in the U.S. is a long, complex, ongoing, and uphill battle. Programs currently underway by both PDP and SSW show a joint commitment to public engagement and service to our communities. For example, SSW's comprehensive approach in addressing the issues of homelessness is highlighted by the excellent work being done through the National Center for Excellence in Homeless Services. PDP's training and work with community organizations such as the City Mission helps generate outcomes that support policy change and produce

evidence-based prevention and intervention services, which have the potential to help build a more robust homeless service workforce. PDP remains committed to improving the livelihood of the homeless through its various education and training programs.

The efforts being made by SSW and PDP serve to reinforce and broaden the University's commitment to supporting its public engagement mission. This work is highlighted in the articles of this issue. **PDP**



Eugene Monaco