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## Family Promise Final Evaluation

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Family Promise Final Evaluation

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University of Nevada Las Vegas

Capstone

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While all of the 17 congregations that work with Family Promise were helpful in forwarding email surveys or completing them themselves, one congregation, St. Viator's Catholic Church, allowed the team of 3Masters to observe and witness first-hand the process and work that goes into hosting the guests of Family Promise. This observation time allowed the team to not only visually evaluate the process, but it gave the team the opportunity to speak directly with the congregation administrator as well as some of the volunteers.

In order to complete the benchmark study, additional organizations were contacted and asked to provide information, without this information; the study would not have been able to be completed. Our appreciation goes out to: Family Promise of the Mid-Willamette Valley, Family Promise of Greater Phoenix, Family Promise of Yellowstone, Family Promise of Orange County, and Family Promise of Verdugos.

Many thanks go to the volunteers, and graduated guests that took the time to complete the surveys that helped us research and evaluate Family Promise of Las Vegas; their feedback was invaluable and helped us provide recommendations going forward.

The employees of Family Promise of Las Vegas were so helpful and eager to sit down for face-to-face interviews and took the time to answer all of our questions. The dedication these

employees have is inspiring and we appreciate not only their time, but everything they do each and every day to help the homeless families of Las Vegas.

Finally, to our professor Dr. Jaewon Lim, who guided us through this process and taught us how to evaluate and research in order to provide useful information and recommendations to Family Promise of Las Vegas. His patience and knowledge during this process gave us the tools and support we needed in order to complete this project.

## **Executive Summary**

This paper will evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization, Family Promise of Las Vegas. This organization focuses on providing stable housing for homeless families in Southern Nevada.

The team of 3Masters used historical information on homelessness and the changes that have occurred in order to understand the current homeless situation. In addition, surveys were used to collect data from previous guests of Family Promise, congregation administrators, and volunteers for the organization. A benchmark study was conducted using similar Family Promise agencies to evaluate additional options for services. Finally, face-to-face interviews with employees were conducted and an on-site observation was done to get a first-hand look at the processes.

The 3Masters compiled and analyzed all of this information in order to come up with several recommendations for Family Promise of Las Vegas that will help make the organization more efficient and the services more effective.

The first recommendation is to training the congregation administrators to be volunteer recruiters. This short-term recommendation can be implemented easily by providing training and education on Family Promise.

There were several mid-term recommendations that all revolved around education of the guests of Family Promise. Three educational sessions are recommended including: financial literacy, being a good tenant, and job training. By offering these additional educational opportunities, Family Promise can help create a more stable living situation for their graduated guests.

Finally, there are two long-term recommendations that are made. The first is to provide some sort of pet care for families that have pets. Pets are generally a member of the family and provide love and support that can help guests through a difficult time. The second recommendation is to extend the amount of time for transitional housing or assistance. By providing this assistance for a longer period of time, families can create a more stable living situation that is more sustainable.

Implementing these recommendations will help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Family Promise.

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate Family Promise of Las Vegas and gather data in order to determine areas that are operating well, in addition to the areas of opportunity for improvement. The basic research question was developed as, “How to Improve the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Family Promise?” While this is a very broad and general question to answer, it does allow the focus to be on areas that can be improved.

For this question, efficiency is defined as; “performing or functioning in the best possible manner with the limited resources by minimizing the waste of time and effort.” Effectiveness is defined as; “To accomplish a purpose; producing the intended or expected result.”

Using both qualitative and quantitative methods in the form of an online survey, a benchmark study, an in-person observation, and face-to-face interviews, the team has compiled information that will answer the research question. This process allowed the team to also develop a series of recommendations that provide options for short, mid, and long-term implementation.

The key findings of this research include a mix of information that was already assumed as well as new options that may not have been considered. This paper has been able to confirm that in general, Family Promise of Las Vegas is moving in the right direction and has plans in place to be able to resolve some of the existing issues. However, there are additional recommendations that can help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization’s operations.

This paper will provide information on the history of homelessness including the changes over the years in both the perception of the homeless population as well as the demographic makeup of the homeless in Section 2.1. In Section 2.2, there is a summary of the Family

Promise organization, covering changes over the years and the purpose of the agency. There is a literature review in Section 2.3 that explores information regarding causes of homelessness, affordable housing, income disparity, and potential solutions.

In the Purpose of Evaluation, Section 3, there is an explanation of the research question and sub-questions including how the team developed the basis to create the research question. Methodology, Section 4, will cover the qualitative and quantitative process of gathering the information to answer the research question. There are three areas that were focused on including: data analysis, benchmark study, and observation/interviews. This process helped to compile the Findings and Results, Section 5 that lays out the information that was collected.

Using the Findings and Results the team developed a list of recommendations to present to Family Promise of Las Vegas, Section 6. These recommendations cover short, mid, and long-term options in order to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency's operations.

## **2. Background of Study**

This section will provide a summary on the background of homelessness including changes over time. There is also history on the national Family Promise organization as well as the local agency in Las Vegas. Finally, there is a literature review that will explore research on homelessness, affordable housing, income disparity, and potential solutions to reduce homelessness.

### **2.1 Trends in Homelessness**

Over time, the way society viewed homelessness has changed but in general, prior to the 1970s, homelessness was viewed as more of a moral issue and was generally made up of unemployed males, or at least men without families. During the 1600's, the assumption was that anyone that is homeless had a moral deficiency that led to them being homeless. There was a belief that God would provide for you if you were a good Christian so being homeless made a statement about the morals of the individual (Fischer, November 16, 2011).

During the Industrial Revolution (1820-1830), populations moved from farms to the cities to work in factories. With a lack of safety regulations, many workers were killed or maimed and were unable to provide for their families. Due to the lack of safety regulations, many workers died leaving their widows with no way to support themselves or their children, resulting in many of the youth being kicked out of their homes and homeless (Fischer, November 16, 2011).

The Civil War from 1861-1865 resulted in many veterans losing their limbs and being unable to work. Also, after Jay Cooke & Company, a main source of employment for soldiers, shut their doors, many veterans became homeless ("HelpHopeHome," 2018, p. 1). There were

especially high levels of mental illness and substance abuse. Many of the veterans decided to leave their troubles behind and travel by means of hitchhiking using the railroad system. The terms hobo, bum, and tramp oriented during this era (Fischer, November 16, 2011).

During the post-WWII time period, the economy was growing, and inflation was minimal. Veterans arrived home and many were getting married and starting a family. Privately owned construction of single family homes was replacing federal subsidized public housing. Automobile ownership was increasing and traveling across the U.S. by car or airplane was on the increase. In the 1950s and 1960s, homelessness declined to the point that researchers were predicting its virtual disappearance in the 1970s (Rossi, 1990).

Instead, in the 1980s, homelessness increased rapidly and drastically changed in composition. The "old homeless" of the 1950s were mainly old men living in cheap hotels on skid rows. The new homeless were much younger, more likely to be minority group members, suffering from greater poverty, and with access to poorer sleeping quarters. In addition, homeless women and families appeared in significant numbers. However, there were also points of similarity, especially high levels of mental illness and substance abuse (Rossi, 1990).

National disasters have resulted in large numbers of individuals and families becoming homeless in a matter of a few hours or days. On October 8, 1871, the Great Chicago Fire left more than 100,000 residents homeless and 300 lost their lives ("History Channel," 2010). Other examples are April 18, 1906, the San Francisco earthquake and fire when the city was devastated. The earthquake and fires killed an estimated 3,000 people and left 225,000 residents homeless. (Condon & Hansen, 1989). On August 23, 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck resulting in

more than 800,000 housing units destroyed or damaged and cost over \$160 billion. ("The University of Rhode Island," 2010-2015).

Between December 2007 and June 2009, the Great Recession took place causing one out of every six U.S. workers to be out of work or underemployed. Documents show that 8 million people lost their jobs and 7 million homes were lost to foreclosure (Whitmore Schanzenbach, McCall, Melzer, Figlio, & Percheski, 2014). National disasters continue today, destroying homes and businesses resulting in the loss of jobs and homes.

Homelessness is a complex social issue and there is no one solution. It has nothing to do with moral deficiencies or worth, bad things can happen to good people. The Great Recession of 2007-2008 changed how many individuals view homelessness because of its short and long-term effects in which more than eight million Americans lost their jobs, nearly four million homes were foreclosed on each year, and 2.5 million businesses were shuttered. However, it officially ended more than four years ago, yet continues to affect Americans' lives today (Whitmore Schanzenbach et al., 2014).

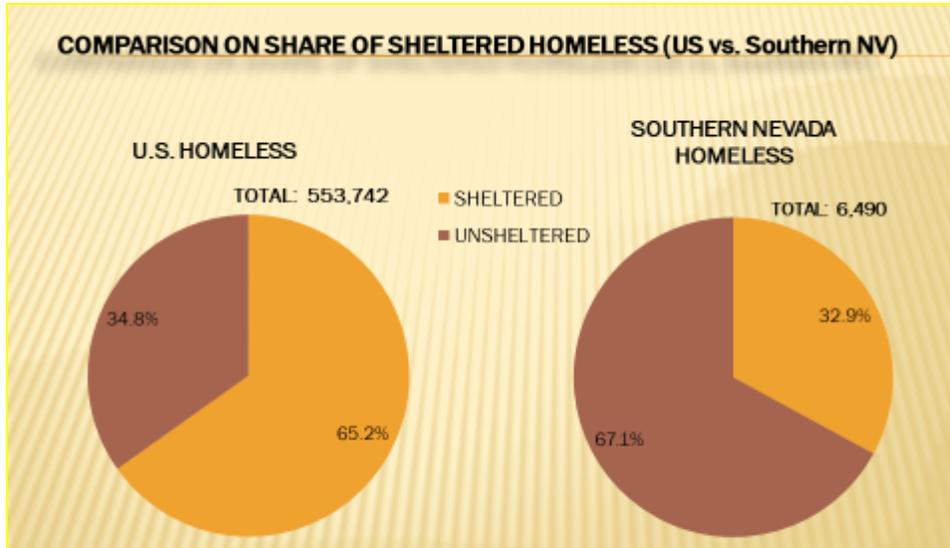
Since 2007, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has mandated an annual count of people experiencing homelessness for communities across the country to receive funds. During the last 10 days of January volunteers canvas the community, counting and surveying homeless individuals and families. The community's service provider picks the day to count people on the street, emergency shelters, transitional housing, or domestic violent shelters. Additional surveys and questionnaires take place on the following day at local schools and facilities. HUD's mission is to create strong sustainable inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. In addition, HUD uses the Continuum of Care program to help

coordinate funding and services for individuals and families in a particular geographic area ("HelpHopeHome," 2018).

Each year, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) releases The Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (AHAR). The report includes a Point-In-Time (PIT) estimates of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness in the United States-on a single night, questionnaires, and additional reports. The 2017 report includes PIT counts from 399 Continuum of Care (CoC) which covered the entire United States ("HelpHopeHome," 2018).

The United States PIT estimates show that nationally, on one night in January 2017 that 553,742 people were experiencing homelessness. Most of the people 65.2% (360,867) were sheltered (staying in emergency or transitional housing) programs, while 34.8% (192,875) people were unsheltered (staying in a place not designated for sleeping) such as a vehicle, streets, or parks. (Shown in graph below). It also shows that 34.2% of the homeless population were in households with at least one child (65.7% without a child) ("HUD CoC," 2017).

In southern Nevada, most of the homeless people 67.1% (4,353) were unsheltered while 32.9% (2,137) were sheltered. (Shown in graph below) ("HUD CoC Local," 2017). 50.6% of homeless are homeless for the first time and only 37.6% are homeless for a year or more ("HelpHopeHome," 2018).



Southern Nevada ranks as the 28<sup>th</sup> CoC (regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals) but 8<sup>th</sup> for the largest homeless population. Many of the homeless in Southern Nevada (67.1%) are unsheltered and living on the streets, vacant buildings, and in vehicles, creating problems for local businesses and authorities. Many came here with the hopes of finding a job, affordable housing, and a low cost of living but their dreams never materialized. Some found jobs but when the recession hit, they lost their job and became homeless ("HelpHopeHome," 2018).

Organizations such as Family Promise provide homeless families the opportunity to achieve economic stability and sustainable housing by providing short-term shelter, meals, case-management, resources, and training as they work towards their own independence and self-sufficiency. Helping one family at a time end the cycle of homelessness.

**2.2 Family Promise of Las Vegas**

Family Promise is a national organization with offices in most states within the United States. While each office is independently operated, there are national standards that must be

adhered to in the overall mission of providing stability to homeless families ("Family Promise," n/d).

The national organization was originally called the Interfaith Hospitality Network and it was founded in 1986. This organization operated until 2004 when the name was changed to more accurately align with the mission of the organization, which is a focus on the family and less on the faith of the congregations that provide the shelter. No matter what the name, the mission of the organization has remained the same: provide homeless families the opportunity to achieve economic stability and sustainable housing by providing short term shelter, meals, case management, resources and training as they work towards their own independence and self-sufficiency ("Family Promise," n/d)

The organizational structure of Family Promise of Las Vegas is relatively flat with few levels involved. This can be a double-edged sword with both positive and negative aspects. The overall guiding hand of Family Promise is the Board of Directors and they govern the direction of the organization and the strategic vision ("Family Promise," n/d).

The Executive Director is Terry Lindemann and she is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organization which includes the administration as well as growth and expansion of Family Promise of Las Vegas. Under Terry there are five positions currently including: Program Services Manager, Case Manager Shelter Program, a receptionist, and two drivers ("Family Promise," n/d).

While this flat organizational structure allows for decisions to be made quickly, the Executive Director can make most decisions or only needs board approval, there are also downsides to having such a flat structure. Decision and approval is only part of the process of running an organization. Once those decisions are made, they must be implemented and with

this flat organizational structure, the available employees to execute the decision can make it difficult to actually implement what can easily be decided upon.

In addition to the direct employees of Family Promise of Las Vegas, there are many other partners that make it possible for homeless families (referred to as guests) to find economic stability. Family Promise relies on many in-kind donations including the shelter that is provided by their 17 congregations. These congregations not only provide the shelter for at least one week at a time, but they provide meals during their stay. It takes many volunteers at each congregation in order to provide these kinds of services. Currently, there are just over 1,500 volunteers among the 17 congregations in partnership with Family Promise ("Family Promise," n/d).

Most congregations rely on their members to provide the labor and food when hosting guests of Family Promise and these volunteers provide various types of assistance during the stay. While each congregation can establish their own roles and responsibilities for their volunteers, many provide the same basic options for volunteers: staying with families in shifts, meal preparation, overnight stays, and assistance settling in.

Other donors provide more traditional assistance in the form of financial contributions. Currently, financial contributions are received from local corporations, individuals, and congregations. In addition, financial assistance can also be obtained through grants either by federal, state, and local as well as charitable grants. All of these sources come together to allow Family Promise of Las Vegas to offer assistance to the homeless families in the area.

Family Promise of Las Vegas is currently operating at full capacity and many times, is unable to provide assistance to every family that requests help. In order to be able to provide more assistance to families, Family Promise of Las Vegas has a plan in place to expand which

will allow them to offer additional services to even more homeless families. There are three ways in which Family Promise of Las Vegas intends to expand:

1. Construct a new facility that will allow for more services to be offered and more families to be housed.
2. Hire additional Case Workers.
3. Work to increase resources from congregations, volunteers, and donors.

### **2.3 Literature Review**

This literature review, brings attention to the contributions of existing research, policy initiatives, and data report findings within family homelessness throughout the United States and more specifically, throughout Southern Nevada. Within this broad study, our findings suggest that additional research towards ending family homelessness is needed to remedy the cause of it, and the issues surrounding family homelessness. This literature review focuses specifically on what has been learned about the background, characteristics, causes, patterns, and statistics, of homeless families to support our findings for our research question. Based on this knowledge, gaps in the current system need to be filled to construct better programs for homeless families based on existing research. Research and studies within this review include professional scholarly articles and government reports. The literature review will discuss causes of homelessness, patterns associated with family homelessness, along with the access they require to prevent family homelessness as well as aspects that can help improve or reduce homelessness.

According to the *City of Las Vegas 2015-2020 Consolidated Plan & Action Plan*, research suggest that family homelessness is caused by the combined effects of prolonged

unemployment, lack of affordable housing, parental abandonment of the absent parent, lack of child support, medical circumstances, and/or other unanticipated emergency expenditures.

In recent observations, homeless families of today, generally are headed by single mothers with children who are less than pre-school age. According to 2017 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress report, more than half of sheltered people in families with children were African American, which made up 53 percent. This number is huge, given the fact that African Americans represent just 21 percent of the unsheltered population. About a third (35%) of sheltered people in families with children were white, while people identifying as white accounted for 59 percent of the unsheltered population. More than 25 percent of people experiencing homelessness in families with children were Hispanic or Latino (27%), and this was higher than the Hispanic share of people experiencing homelessness as individuals (18%). Hispanics comprised a slightly larger share of sheltered people in families (28%) and a smaller share of those in unsheltered locations (22%). (Henry, Watt, Rosenthal, Shivji, & Abt Associates, 2017, p. 32)

Housing and its affordability is a critical problem within the United States. According to Shaulis, Fairchild, & Borchard (as cited in the National Low-Income Coalition, 2010), 45% of all Nevadans are renters ranking Nevada 47th of 50 states in its home ownership rate (National Low-Income Housing Coalition, 2018). According to Cook-Craig, Guthrie, Sousa, Craig, Bruner, Tudor, ..., Jacobowitz (2017) (as cited in Bassuk, DeCandia, Beach, & Berman, 2014), in 2014, The National Center on Family Homelessness ranked Nevada as the second worst in the United States for rate of home foreclosures, indicating serious housing instability for many families in the region.

According to Appendix I in *The State of Homeless in America*, p.48, Nevada is not the only culprit responsible for its share contributing to family homelessness. The two most populated metro areas, New York and Los Angeles, have the highest homeless populations across the United States. However, they are not in the top five metro areas in terms of the rate of homelessness. California and Florida, account for 13 of the 24 total metro areas where the rates of homelessness are higher than the national rate. The four metro areas with the highest rates of homelessness (at 50 or more per 10,000 in the general population) are (from first to fourth): Tampa FL, New Orleans LA, Fresno CA, and Las Vegas NV.

According to the *FY 2018 Fair Market Rent Documentation System for Nevada* (2018) summary report, Nevada ranks 40th of 52 areas in fair market rents. Based on the 2018 Out of Reach Nevada Survey:

- Nevada Minimum wage \$8.25
- Average renter wage \$16.84
- 2-bedroom housing wage \$18.59
- Number of renter households 465,914
- Percent renters 45%

\*National Low Income Housing Coalition. (2018). Out of Reach 2018 Nevada Survey.

**The Affordable Rent for 2018 Low Income Households Comparison between Nevada and Las Vegas-Henderson- Paradise MSA**

<u>Number of Households</u>	<u>Nevada</u>	<u>Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise MSA</u>
Total	1,030,701	<b>735,475</b>
Renter	465,914	<b>351,146</b>
Percent of renters	45%	<b>48%</b>

\*Las Vegas Metro is composed of multiple cities and the official name for the metro is “Las Vegas-Henderson- Paradise MSA” based on the US Census definition

<u>Housing Wage</u>	<u>Nevada</u>	<u>Las Vegas Metro</u>
One-bedroom	<b>\$14.84</b>	<b>\$15.08</b>
Two-bedroom	<b>\$18.59</b>	<b>\$18.71</b>

<u>Fair Market Rent</u>	<u>Nevada</u>	<u>Las Vegas Metro</u>
One-bedroom	<b>\$772</b>	<b>\$784</b>
Two-bedroom	<b>\$966</b>	<b>\$973</b>

<u>Annual Income Needed to Afford</u>	<u>Nevada</u>	<u>Las Vegas Metro</u>
One-bedroom	<b>\$30,862</b>	<b>\$31,360</b>
Two-bedroom	<b>\$38,660</b>	<b>\$38,920</b>

<u>Minimum Wage</u>	<u>Nevada</u>	<u>Las Vegas Metro</u>
Minimum wage	<b>\$8.25</b>	<b>\$8.25</b>
Rent affordable at minimum wage	<b>\$429</b>	<b>\$429</b>

<u>Work Hours/Week at Minimum Wage</u>	<u>Nevada</u>	<u>Las Vegas Metro</u>
One-bedroom	<b>72</b>	<b>73</b>
Two-bedroom	<b>90</b>	<b>91</b>

<u>Renter Wage</u>	<u>Nevada</u>	<u>Las Vegas Metro</u>
Estimated mean renter wage	<b>\$16.84</b>	<b>\$17.12</b>
Rent affordable at mean renter wage	<b>\$876</b>	<b>\$890</b>

<u>Work Hours/Week at Mean Renter Wage</u>	<u>Nevada</u>	<u>Las Vegas Metro</u>
One-bedroom	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>
Two-bedroom	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>

<u>Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Payment</u>	<u>Nevada</u>	<u>Las Vegas Metro</u>
SSI monthly payment	<b>\$786</b>	<b>\$786</b>
Rent affordable to SSI recipient	<b>\$236</b>	<b>\$236</b>

<u>Income Levels</u>	<u>Nevada</u>	<u>Las Vegas Metro</u>
30% of area median income (AMI)	<b>\$19,871</b>	<b>\$19,440</b>
Estimated renter median household income	<b>\$40,588</b>	<b>\$41,232</b>

<u>Rent Affordable at Different Income Levels</u>	<u>Nevada</u>	<u>Las Vegas Metro</u>
30% of area median income (AMI)	<b>\$497</b>	<b>\$486</b>
Estimated renter median household income	<b>\$1,015</b>	<b>\$1,031</b>

\*National Low Income Housing Coalition. (2018). Out of Reach 2018 Nevada Survey. Retrieved from <http://nlihc.org/oor/nevada>

According to the economic well-being indicator for Nevada, within the Kid Count Data Book, Annie E. Casey Foundation (2016, p.42), 37% of all Nevadan children are living in households with high housing cost burdens. According to Cook-Craig, Guthrie, Sousa, Craig, Bruner, Tudor, ..., Jacobowitz (2017) (as cited in Center for Business and Economic Research, 2017), this puts low-income families in unstable and vulnerable housing situations. As of 2017, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Area ranks lowest in the nation for affordable and available rental units for extremely low-income renters (ELI) with only 12 units available for every 100 ELI

renter households (Cook-Craig, Guthrie, Sousa, Craig, Bruner, Tudor, ..., Jacobowitz (2017) (as cited by Aurand, Emmanuel, Yentel, & Errico, 2017).

According to the *GAP, A Shortage of Affordable Homes 2017*, American Community Survey (ACS) data report, which provides information on the affordable housing supply and housing cost burdens at the national, state, and metropolitan levels, the analysis showed that extremely low income (ELI) households face the largest shortage of affordable and available rental housing, and have more severe housing cost burdens than any other group. The U.S. has a shortage of 7.4 million affordable and available rental homes for ELI renter households, resulting in 35 affordable and available units for every 100 ELI renter households. Seventy-one percent of ELI renter households are severely cost-burdened, spending more than half of their income on rent and utilities. These 8.1 million severely cost-burdened households account for 72.6% of all severely cost-burdened renter households in the U.S. ELI renter households face a shortage of affordable and available rental homes in every state. The shortage ranges from just 15 affordable and available homes for every 100 ELI renter households in Nevada to 61 in Alabama, 8,700 rental homes in Wyoming to 1.1 million in California. Of the nearly 43.6 million renter households living in the U.S., 11.4 million are ELI (The GAP, A Shortage of Affordable Homes, 2017).

**Definitions**

<u>Term</u>	<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<b>Area Median Income</b>	<b>AMI</b>	The median family income in the metropolitan or nonmetropolitan area
<b>Extremely Low Income</b>	<b>ELI</b>	Households with income at or below the poverty guideline or 30% of AMI, whichever is higher
<b>Very Low Income</b>	<b>VLI</b>	Households with income between 31% and 5-% of AMI
<b>Low Income</b>	<b>LI</b>	Households with income between 51% and 80% of AMI
<b>Middle Income</b>	<b>MI</b>	Households with income between 81% and 100% of AMI
<b>Above Median Income</b>		Households with income above 100% of AMI
<b>Cost Burden</b>		Spending more than 30% of household income on housing costs
<b>Severe Cost Burden</b>		Spending more than 50% of household income on housing costs

\*GAP, A Shortage of Affordable Homes, 2017, p. 2

It can be anticipated that both the housing market and regulatory government programs will be able to provide a sustainable means out of poverty for American citizens, but the truth of the matter is, that the issue is never remedied. In 2015, 11.2 million extremely low-income renter households competed for 7.3 million rental units that met this affordability threshold (Brennan, Cunningham, & Gastner, (2017, P.14). As cited from Charette et al. 2015, p. 5). The United States Federal government has devised three primary ways to improve affordable housing, which is to build more public housing, provide vouchers and rental assistance, and offer financing tools

that lower the costs for developers to build affordable housing so that owners can afford to charge lower rent, seems to not eliminate the problem of continued family homelessness.

For very low-income households, rental assistance is provided by HUD in the form of housing vouchers, public housing units, property-based Section 8 rental assistance, and the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program. Recipients contribute 30 percent of their income toward their housing costs, with public housing authorities covering the remainder either by paying it to the property owner through vouchers or by picking up the shortfall between public housing rents and the costs of operations. Increasing demand for a decreasing supply of affordable rental units is coupled with wage stagnation for many low-income workers (Brennan, Cunningham, & Gartner, 2017, p. 14).

Affordable housing is not the only contributing factor surrounding homelessness. The lack of resources made accessible to homeless families is another main contributor to family homelessness. According to Swick, 2005, (as cited from Edin & Lein, 1997), parents may lack transportation, child care, job skills, and/or job seeking skills. In addition to the lack of resources, simple financial planning and budgeting is extremely difficult for a homeless mother, which is a needed skill in obtaining home security, stability, and sustainability. According to MacKenzie & Steen (2013), as cited from Saunders, 1998, financial stress can adversely affect an individual's physical and mental health (Saunders, 1998) and has been identified as a cause of homelessness (MacKenzie et al., 2007). In addition, participating in job training courses is also impossible for a homeless mother when she is worried about securing a stable environment for herself and her child(ren).

According to Swick (2005), as cited from Nunez & Collignon, 2000, it is recommended that community groups should create an infrastructure that supports homeless families by

developing adult education and job training programs that are sensitive to parent situations and needs thus encouraging parents to return to school and to take advantage of job training programs. They also recommend that community groups should provide child care and transportation services so that parents can fully participate in available job training courses and obtain quality education.

Job training is another area that can help provide stability to homeless families. According to Swick (2005), as cited from Nunez & Collignon, 2000, it is recommended that community groups should create an infrastructure that supports homeless families by developing adult education and job training programs that are sensitive to parent situations and needs thus encouraging parents to return to school and to take advantage of job training programs. They also recommend that community groups should provide child care and transportation services so that parents can fully participate in available job training courses and obtain quality education.

Another aspect of homelessness that can cause additional stress is that many agencies that can help the homeless population, may not be able to also help that person's pet. Pets are a common part of households in the United States, and when a person or family becomes homeless, they often have to choose between assistance to get back into a home or stay with their pet. Pets have been proven to provide companionship, love, protection, and support. They can also help people cope with depression and provide stability in living situations. This support can be helpful as individuals and families struggle to move away from homelessness (Irvine, 2012).

One of the most serious problems faced by low-income tenants is that landlords renting low-cost housing often fail to maintain it and make repairs in a timely fashion. This often results in serious landlord-tenant conflicts (Kissam & Dorsey, 1996, p. 1). According to the Guide to

Tenant Education supplied by HUD, Landlords could potentially view prospective tenant applicants who have had a history of being homeless in the past as high risk, particularly if they have had prior evictions. Tenant education is vital in any community program that provides resources to homeless families. Tenant education can provide resourceful tools for parents on how to establish good tenancy. By providing tenant education through a highly qualified program, can add value for the homeless family which can prove as a certification of completion for a given program. Tenant responsibility creates a proactive and an empowering process for the tenant. A key characteristic in achieving housing governance is aimed at the behavior of tenant responsibility that incorporates and promotes positive behavior rather than simply prohibiting it. Tenants should have a sense of responsibility not just to their homes, but also to their communities.

Volunteers operate as members of the community that help bridge the gap between the community and homeless families. Volunteers are the central contact and connection to the experience for homeless families while transitioning from temporary homelessness to stable and permanent housing.

A family experiencing homeless is at its most vulnerable stage. Ensuring that a family receives the best possible service is vital in preventing reoccurring homelessness, but also ensuring that a family received vital experiences are also vital to ensuring that families don't recycle back into homelessness. Providing training opportunities to the volunteers who serve the families within the congregation is a very important aspect to the families. Improper customer service can cause a family to give up and leave a congregation. Providing training to the volunteers can be an intricate part to the families to ensure successful completion of the program. According to the *Successful Strategies for Recruiting, Training, and Utilizing Volunteers*. A

*Guide for Faith- and Community-Based Service Providers. (n.d), Section 3-3*, research suggest that training gives volunteers the direction and skills needed to carry out their assigned tasks. Training is a form of recognition and serves to keep a volunteer motivated, committed, and performing the quality of service expected. Sending a volunteer to a special class or conference can be a reward for service.

In conclusion, family homelessness is a pattern of residential instability. Residential instability is caused by frequent moves and short stays in permanent housing. The length of time families stay homeless is based on shelter limits and availability of subsidized housing. As the gap between housing costs and income continues to widen, instability and risk of homelessness will continue to rise.

### **3. Purpose of Evaluation**

At the initial stages of this project, the 3Masters team determined the research question that needed to be answered. Before that could be done, some information was gathered to understand what Family Promise of Las Vegas was currently working to achieve. This consisted of studying the website for general information about the organization including the Mission Statement and stated goals.

This provided a good basis of understanding for the organization and what they were trying to achieve, but additional information was needed in order to fully formulate a research question that the team could work on. A meeting was called with the Director, Terry Lindemann, as well as several board members including Randy Mitchell, President, Lisa Jones, Vice President, and Cindy Jensen, Secretary. This meeting served as both an introduction for the

3Masters team as well as an opportunity to ask questions that would help to establish an appropriate research question.

The initial questions focused on current activities and statistics of Family Promise including: how many families are served, length of stay for the average family, additional partners, and perceptions of satisfaction with the services offered. From there, the questions went to the strategic plans of Family Promise including future goals and expansion of the facility and services. This discussion gave a great foundation of where Family Promise currently is as well as the direction they would like the organization to go.

Armed with this information, 3Masters were able to develop the basic research question that the team would focus on for the remainder of the project.

- **Main Research Question:**

*“How to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Family Promise?”*

- **Sub-questions:**

- ✓ *“How can Family Promise expand services in Southern Nevada?”*
- ✓ *“How can Family Promise strengthen partnerships and reliable donors?”*
- ✓ *“How can Family Promise effectively serve all segments of the homeless family population?”*

To further drill down on the main research question, three sub-questions were developed to help focus the evaluation and isolate the areas that would have the greatest impact on effectiveness and efficiency. The first sub-question is “How can Family Promise expand services in Southern Nevada?” This looks at the issue of being able to provide more services for more families than what is currently being served. Family Promise believes that by offering

additional services and being able to serve more families, they will have a greater impact on the homeless issue in Southern Nevada.

The second sub-question is “How can Family Promise strengthen partnerships and reliable donors?” This question looks at the both effectiveness and efficiency as time and money goes into finding and keeping donors. The more reliable and consistent the donors are in making donations, the less time and money is needed to raise funds. What Family Promise has experienced in the past is that during economic downturns, the demand for services increases while donations decrease. During a strong economy, the demand for services decreases while donations can increase. This question hopes to provide a path that will help to reduce the highs and lows previously experienced by Family Promise.

The third sub-question is “How can Family Promise effectively serve all segments of the homeless family population?” This question will explore how well Family Promise is providing services to the entire community. The goal is to be able to serve the entire community and not just certain segments of it. The initial data that has been gathered by Family Promise showed a disproportionate percentage of the population being served. By reviewing the existing data and gathering additional information, this may help Family Promise expand services.

#### **4. Methodology**

This section contains information on the methodology used to gather information and data for this paper. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used including online surveys, a benchmark study, and observation/interviews.

#### **4.1 Data Analysis**

The approach used for data analysis is quantitative and the method for collection of data was an online survey. Selected participants of the study included family participants in need of sheltering services (also referred to as graduated guests or homeless families), volunteers, and congregation administrators. Questions for the selected participants were related to their assessment of the services they received and their experience with Family Promise. A set of questions were asked to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of Family Promise of Las Vegas' services and programs offered. A copy of the survey questions can be found in Appendix. Qualtrics was used as the survey tool to collect from all respondents. The Director of Family Promise, of Las Vegas, Terry Lindeman, agreed to facilitate the distribution of the survey to 1500 congregation volunteers, 17 congregation administrators, and 300 graduated guests. The online surveys used a five-point Likert Scale of pre-coded responses with the neutral point being neither agree nor disagree, and some open-ended questions. The Likert scale was used to scale individual expression on how much the respondent agreed or disagreed with a statement. A Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, was used to gather participants' perceptions of the value received from Family Promise's services and their interactions with the respondents. Open-ended questions asked to obtain more detailed information from the respondents, to measure participants' perceptions of the program, their experience, and its services, which included suggestions and recommendations for how the program may be improved. A skip logic was created to direct the line of questioning dependent on the respondent's answer(s). Basic demographic information of respondents was also obtained in the online survey, such as gender and age.

To ensure a sufficient response rate, the survey was open from June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018 until July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018 with the Director sending out reminder emails on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and the second, on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018, being sent out to all selected participants. However, due to the challenges including survey transmission, communication, and willingness to participate, overall survey response rate was extremely low. On the final week of the survey, we found that no additional responses were given. As a result, the participant survey response rate given was 41% for the congregation administrators, less than 1% for both the congregation volunteers and the graduated guests.

#### **4.2 Benchmark Study**

The goal of this benchmark study was to learn more about other nationwide Family Promise agency experiences to improving the services offered by Family Promise of Las Vegas.

Due to the limited time, data, and budget constraints, the benchmark study takes the following five strategies: 1) developing easy-to-answer questions, 2) collecting and compiling information of comparable programs, 3) comparing share of sheltered homelessness in the metros with comparable programs, 4) focusing on the most comparable seven Family Promise programs, and 5) fully utilizing more readily available resources such as websites.

This was accomplished by simplifying the evaluation design by focusing on Family Promise programs and services locally and nationally, composing a short questionnaire and phone script, reducing to seven Family Promise agencies (includes Las Vegas), and using secondary data provided on regional Family Promise and HUD websites. The Seven Family Promise agencies included the following:

- Family Promise of Las Vegas, Nevada (agency evaluating)

- Family Promise of the Mid-Willamette Valley, Salem, OR (Recommended by FPLV Director)
- Family Promise of Greater Phoenix, Phoenix, AZ (Recommended by FPLV Director)
- Family Promise of Yellowstone, Valley Billings, MT(Recommended by FPLV Director)Family Promise of Orange County, Orange County, CA. (similar to LV).
- Family Promise of Sacramento, Sacramento, CA. (Similar to LV)
- Family Promise of Verdugos, Burbank, CA. (Similar to LV)

The data collection included a questionnaire composed of a short list of five open-ended questions with the goal to provide an overview of each agency's long and short-term strategies to serve the local homelessness families in their area including their programs and services. In order to increase participation in the Benchmark study a phone script was used prior to emailing the cover letter and questionnaire to the Directors at each agency. The phone script/cover letter provided a brief overview of the 3Masters Capstone project. The short script explained that graduate students at University of Nevada Las Vegas conducted a program evaluation for a local non-profit agency, Family Promise of Las Vegas in partnership with the Director Ms. Terry Lindemann to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the services and programs they provide.

In order to accomplish this, their participation was needed in answering the short questionnaire which would be part of our Benchmark study. After receiving acceptance to participate, the cover letter and questionnaire was emailed out. The five open-ended Survey questions:

1. What are the current issues of the local homeless families?
2. Have the issues changed? If so, have the recent changes affected your program services and resources required for your services.
3. What are your short and long-term strategies for your local area?
4. As a national organization, do you have enough flexibility to serve the needs of the family homelessness in your area?

5. Explain your response for question four (either yes/no). What unique programs or services do you offer that has helped the needs of the homelessness in your area?

The initial call to the Family Promise agencies took place on June 22-23, 2018 and the cover letter and questionnaire were sent out on June 24, 2018 to all seven agencies. A second follow-up July 5<sup>th</sup> to 3 agencies that had not completed the survey, and a third follow-up July 16<sup>th</sup> the final two that had not responded.

Regional Family Promise websites for the seven agencies provided additional secondary data. Some sites provided more up-to-date and transparent information, such as yearly financial reports and others were brief and served as a place to donate monies or volunteer.

The HUD 2017 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance report for each Regional Family Promise agency provided a high-level review of the homeless individuals and families in their region. The data included in the HUD report is accurate however; it may not present an accurate picture of the number of homeless families. The Point-in-Time count does not count the families that receive vouchers and are living in day-weekly motels, staying with relatives, or in foreclosure.

### **4.3 Observations/Interviews**

An additional qualitative approach was used through the observation of the intake process with one of the congregations. This observation provided information on the processes and systems that are used when families first arrive at a congregation. It also allowed an opportunity to see first-hand how families settle in and adjust to their new surroundings.

While each congregation can establish their own processes, the basics should be the same or very similar as the structure is put in place to provide shelter and meals to the homeless

families. Each congregation receives general information and training from Family Promise of Las Vegas and then they may adjust the processes as needed. This observation took place on June 17, 2018 at St. Viator's Catholic Church.

In addition to observing the families, there was also an observation of the volunteers that help while the congregation hosts the families. There are many positions needed in order to provide shelter and meals for a minimum of one week, this observation will help provide a framework around how the duties are divided up and assigned.

The final approach to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the program was done using interviews of staff at Family Promise of Las Vegas. With only five positions, a face-to-face interview is the best option. All members of 3Masters will conduct the interviews and the goal will be to interview all employees. Questions will focus on length of time employed, satisfaction with their ability to do their job, and suggestions to improve the employees experience as well as the experience for the guests. Interviews were conducted at the Family Promise of Las Vegas office on June 19, 2018.

## **5. Findings and Results**

This section will provide analytical findings and results from the online surveys, the benchmark study, the observation, and interviews, introduced in the previous sections.

### **5.1 Data Analysis**

A higher response rate was expected from all surveys that were sent out. While the response rate was low, there was still valuable information received. The surveys conducted analyzed the experience of three different types of respondents; Congregation Administration,

Congregation Volunteers, and Graduated Guests from the Family Promise program. First, the study questions for congregation administrators mainly focused on their direct experience as a host site for managing sheltering services for Family Promise's guests. Secondly, the study questions for congregation volunteers mainly focused on their volunteer experience at the host site while managing the daily operations, contact, and services provided to guests. Finally, the study question for graduated guests from the Family Promise program mainly focused on their direct experience as a patron of the Family Promise program.

Response rate:

- There was a 41% response rate for the congregation administrators. (N=17)
- There was less than 1% response rate for the congregation volunteers. (N=4)
- There was less than 1% response rate for the graduated guests. (N=4)

Acceptable survey data relies on the study question and the population in which the question is being asked. Due to the extremely low response rate and small sample size shown above, statistically meaningful assessments are not possible. The findings derived from small sample are prone to be biased by falsely generalizing the interpretation from limited information.

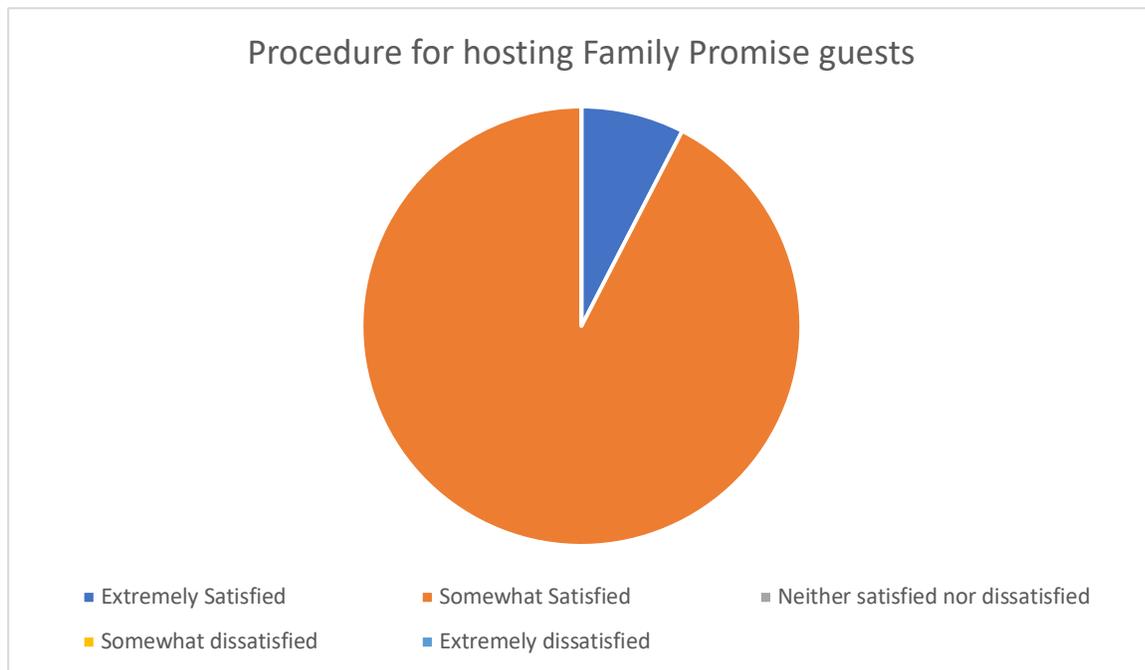
The possible reasons for the low response rates can be summarized as follows:

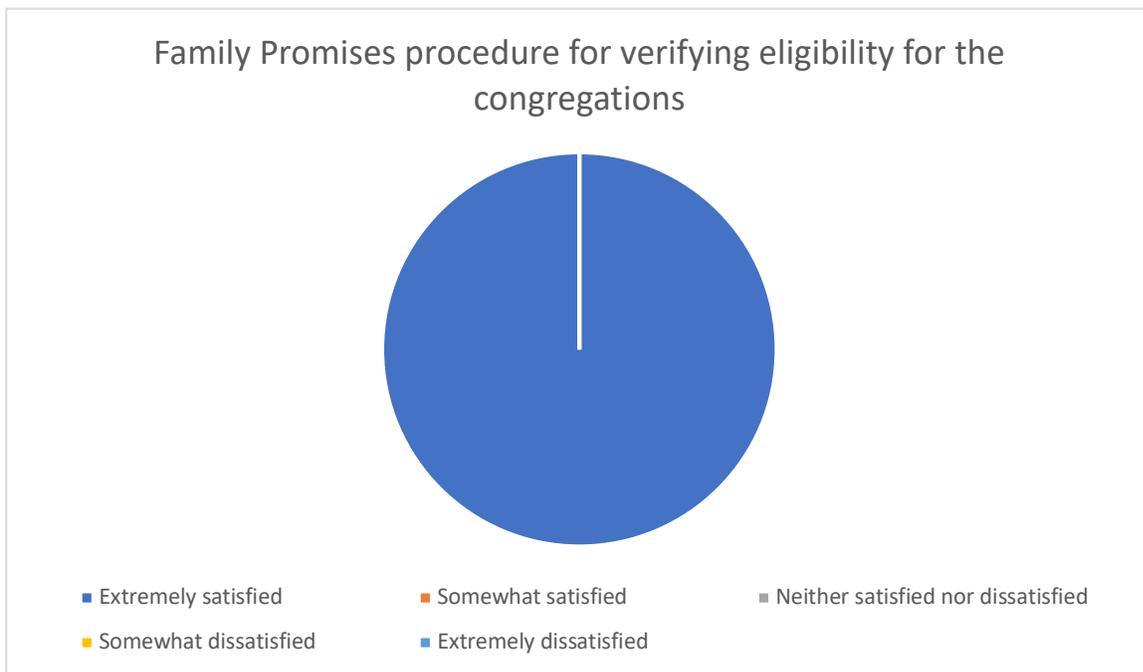
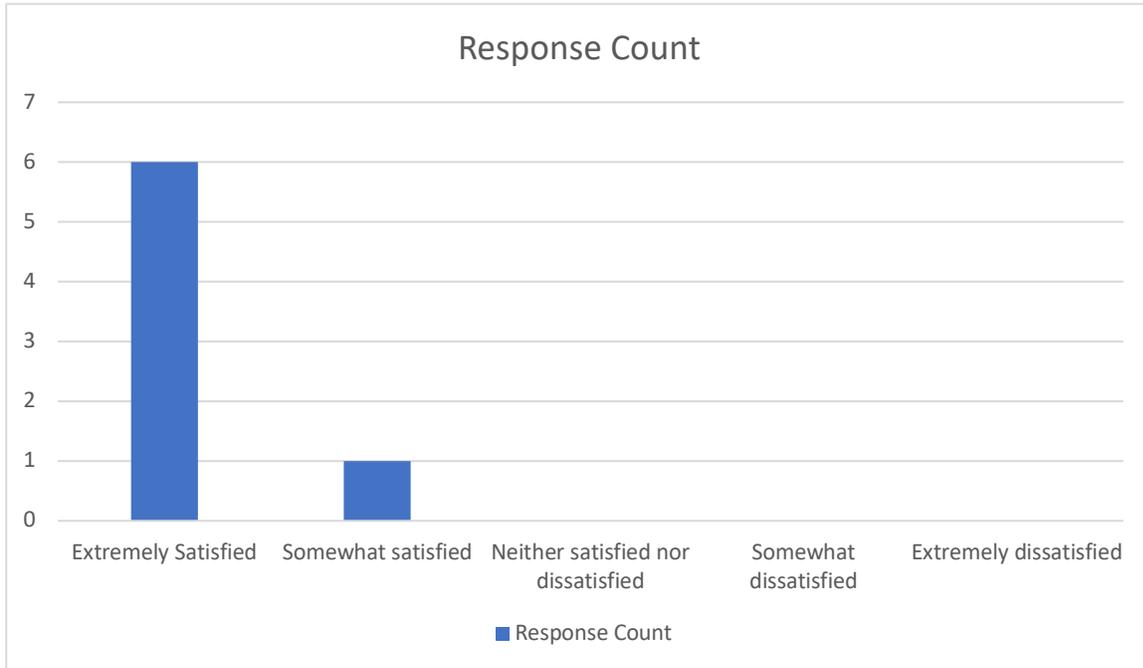
- Respondents may not feel encouraged to provide accurate, honest answers.
- Respondents may not feel comfortable providing answers that represent themselves in an unfavorable manner.
- Respondents may not be fully aware of their reasons for any given an answer because of lack of memory on the subject, or even boredom.

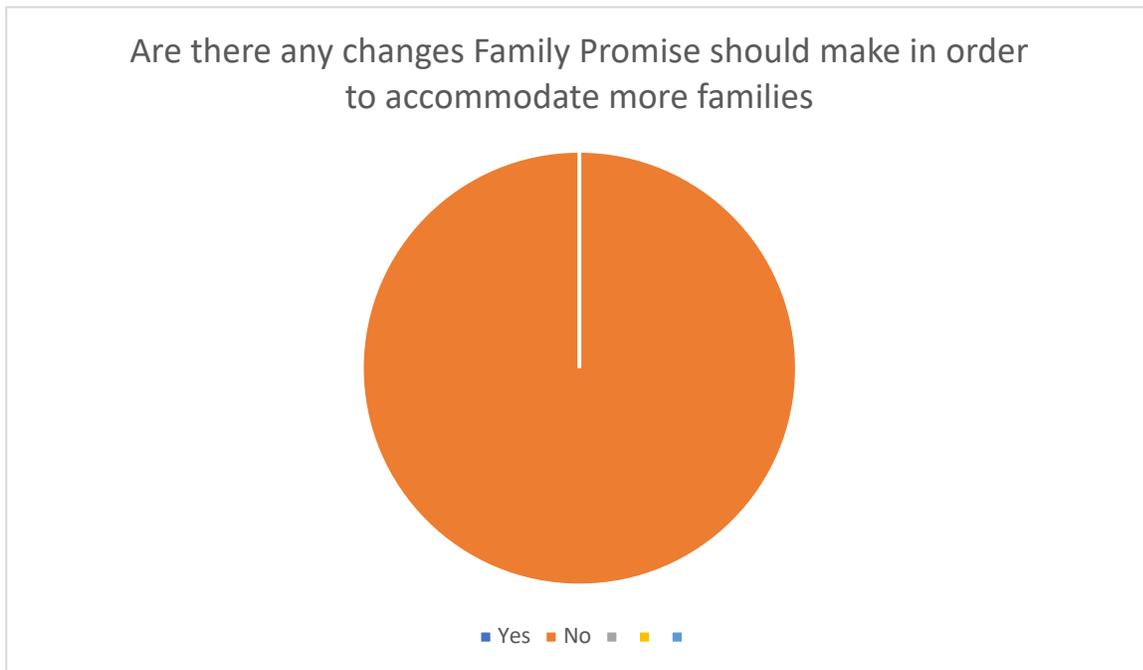
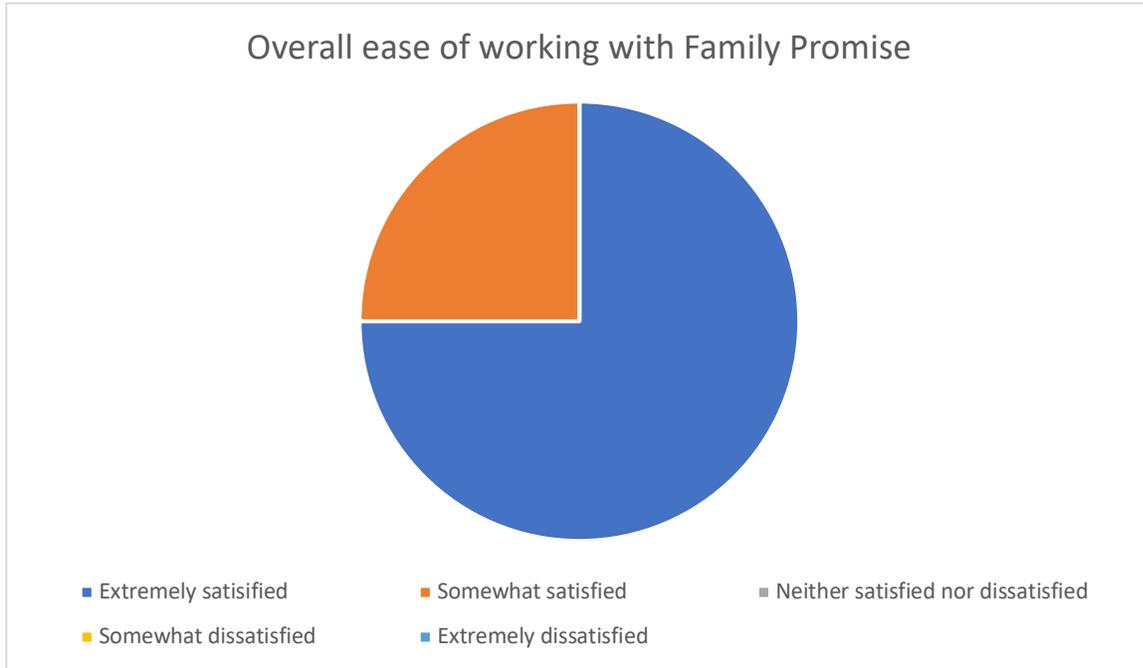
The aim of the research was to gather data on the experience of all three respondent types; congregation administrators who host and service Family Promises’ guest during their sheltering stay, congregation volunteers who manage and provide services to Family Promise guests while being sheltered, and graduated guests, who were the participants who completed the program with Family Promise.

When analyzing the research question, “How to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Family Promise,” to obtain accuracy, we surveyed perspective respondents to collect the representative data.

To analyze the data, different approaches were used for the different types of questions. For multiple choice questions it is a matter of counting up the answers to each question and using statistics to ‘crunch the numbers’ and test relevance. Rating type questions require a little more work, but they follow broadly the same principle. For opinion questions required some way of judging the responses numerically.







3 Masters Capstone Project-Congregation Survey Cross Tabulation(1)

		Are there any changes that you feel Family Promise needs in order to accommodate more families?		Total
		Yes	No	
Family Promise's procedures for verifying eligibility for your congregation?	Extremely satisfied	0	7	7
	Somewhat satisfied	0	0	0
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0	0	0
	Somewhat dissatisfied	0	0	0
	Extremely dissatisfied	0	0	0
	Total	0	7	7
Procedure for hosting Family Promise guests?	Extremely satisfied	0	6	6
	Somewhat satisfied	0	1	1
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0	0	0
	Somewhat dissatisfied	0	0	0
	Extremely dissatisfied	0	0	0
	Total	0	7	7
Overall ease of working with Family Promise?	Extremely satisfied	0	6	6
	Somewhat satisfied	0	1	1
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0	0	0
	Somewhat dissatisfied	0	0	0
	Extremely dissatisfied	0	0	0
	Total	0	7	7
Do you plan on continuing to work with Family Promise in the future?	Yes	0	7	7
	Maybe	0	0	0
	No	0	0	0
	Total	0	7	7
Would you recommend Family Promise to other congregations?	Yes	0	6	6
	Maybe	0	0	0
	No	0	0	0
	Total	0	6	6

In conclusion, positive influences were found from the survey feedback in conducting the surveys.

**5.2 Benchmark Study**

The benchmark study findings provided additional information about other nationwide Family Promise programs and services which will help improve the services offered by Family Promise of Las Vegas.

The questionnaire of a short list of five-open-ended questions was emailed to seven Family Promise Agencies Executive Directors. The following six agencies choose to participate.

Family Promise of Las Vegas  
Las Vegas, NV  
Executive Director: Terry Ruth Lindemann (evaluated)

Family Promise of the Mid-Willamette Valley  
Salem, OR  
Executive Director: TJ Putman

Family Promise of Greater Phoenix  
Phoenix, AZ  
Executive Director: Ted Taylor

Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley  
Billings, MT  
Executive Director: Lisa Donnot

Family Promise Orange County  
Orange, CA.  
Executive Director: Cyndee Albertson

Family Promise of Verdugos  
Burbank, CA  
Executive Director: Albert Hernandez

Data collection results for the Benchmark Study included the following five open-ended questions and responses received. When possible the agency or Director has been identified. Some responses and statements made by the agencies have been noted and some moved to give more clarity and flow to the final document.

**Q1. What are the current issues of the local homeless families?**

The major issue identified by all Family Promise agencies was the lack of affordable housing. Other issues mentioned were lack of transitional/emergency housing, vouchers, and generational homelessness which requires longer shelter and supportive care.

While housing (prices and rental rates) have gone up, salaries have not. As the demand for affordable housing increases so does the rental rates and requirements for good credit, making it more difficult to relocate homeless with less than perfect credit

within the 30-45-day cycle. Five agencies stated there is a lack of transition/emergency housing in their areas for families and they are looking at different shelter/housing models. Family Promise of Orange County stated that transitional/emergency housing is not a problem they face in their area because they use the Family Promise Interfaith Hospitality Network model. Their model relies on the host congregations to provide physical shelter while the support congregations provides food, clothing, and other items directly to the families. Five of the agencies noted that they face a shortage of vouchers to help the homeless with damage deposits, monthly rent, and pet deposits to secure housing. Family Promise of Las Vegas is out of vouchers and waiting for their funding while Mid-Willamette Valley has plenty of vouchers to be handed out. Family Promise of Orange County noted that even with rental assistance it is difficult to secure affordable/permanent housing in the area. Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley Billings noted that many of the homeless were generational poverty and that long-term housing and supportive care was needed (2 years) and that generational poverty deprives children of gaining foundational skills to become independent and sustainable. The children are raised with a survival mode of which limits their educational opportunities.

**Q2. Have the issues changed? If so, have the recent changes affected your program services and resources required for your services.**

Yes, all agencies stated that homelessness is increasing in their areas. Most families have a car and are moving from other states to find employment. Unable to find employment and/or affordable housing they are becoming homeless. Also, many of the individuals have bad credit history making it more difficult to locate housing.

**Q3. What are your short and long-term strategies for your local area?**

Short Term: The major goal is to provide safe and secure shelter, case management, budgeting classes and guidance to find employment and affordable housing for the homeless families. Family Promise of Mid-Willamette Valley stated that they use the housing-first model, which provides 6-month vouchers to get families into housing and then provide case management to build income and savings. Family Promise of Phoenix is

opening their first Day Center October 2018 and the second site is scheduled to open fall of 2019. They also just acquired a 10-plex property (6 two-bedroom units) that will accommodate 10 families each year. Family Promise of Orange County uses the Interfaith Hospitality Network model to provide case management while the homeless families are sheltered at the host facilities. Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley's need for housing has led to the construction of their strategic planning committee who is focusing on growth by purchasing more transitional housing to provide for the homeless families in the area.

Long Term: All Family Promise agencies agreed that family homelessness is increasing in their areas and are continuously reviewing and evaluating their programs to better serve the homeless families. Some of the suggested future programs are: look for additional housing options for families such as communal and low income housing, six month vouchers with supportive services, two year supportive transitional housing programs with case management, building more Day Centers with housing units, construct affordable housing, work with home prevention agencies and families to prevent homelessness at all stages (foreclosure and eviction), and work with housing ownership programs to provide permanent housing solutions.

**Q4. As a national organization, do you have enough flexibility to serve the needs of the family homelessness in your area? Explain your response for question four (either yes/no).**

Yes, unanimously. All Family Promise agencies felt that they had the flexibility and support to develop new programs and services to serve the homelessness families in their community. Although each agency has to follow the Interfaith Hospitality Network model they have the flexibility to develop new programs and services that provide for the needs of their community.

**Q5. What unique programs or services do you offer that has helped the needs of the homelessness in your area? Some of the programs listed are below.**

- **Pet Care program** provides onsite facilities for pets and keeps the family together at Family Promise of Mid-Willamette Valley, Salem and Family Promise of Greater Phoenix.

- **Initial Response** program provides emergency support, financial resources, and case management for families facing foreclosure and facing eviction at Family Promise of Verdugos and Family Promise of Mid-Willamette Valley.
- **Recycled Car** programs where donated used vehicles are refurbished by volunteers into new vehicles and given to a worthy family at Family Promise of Las Vegas and Family Promise of Greater Phoenix.
- **The Rapid Rehousing/Rental Assistance** program offers up to 12 months of rent and case management and is used by both Family Promise of Orange County and Family Promise of Verdugos.
- **The Permanent Supportive Housing program** (pilot program) which will serve nine highest need homeless families identified by the Continuum of Care for a least two years will be used by Family Promise of Mid-Willamette Valley.
- **Diaper Bank** program provides diapers to families so children can attend Day Care and families can work and was started by Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley to serve the community.
- **The Transitional Housing program** provides housing and services for the chronically homelessness families and others requiring longer term care housing and services for up to 24 months. This program is being implement by Family Promise of Verdugos.
- **Transformational Case Management** includes the Interfaith Hospitality Network model, State, Federal, and local funded programs to connect families with critically need services such as child care, employment counseling, financial management, educational resources to obtain higher-paying jobs, and local agencies that distribute food and clothing. This allows Family Promise of Orange County to invest 90% of their funding in their case management programs. They do not invest in housing but rely the on the host congregations to provide shelter and the support congregation to provide the food, clothing, and other items to the homeless families.
- **Promises to Keep** is a program which matches disabled heads of household with monthly rent and case management support and is taking place at Family Promise Las Vegas.

- **Graduate Programs** provide services and support to graduates from 12-24 months, depending on the agency and the family's needs. Agencies involved are Family Promise of Las Vegas, Family Promise of Mid-Willamette Valley, and Family Promise of Greater Phoenix.
- **Partners in Housing Program** is a national program to take advantage of the sagging Mobil home market and move families into their own home and is used by Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley.

In summary, family homelessness is increasing across the United States and the major issue for Family Promise agencies is the lack of affordable housing. Each agency is working with the Interfaith Hospitality Network model, local communities and non-profit organizations, state-wide programs, volunteers, corporate donors, to provide safe, secure, and support services to homeless families with the goal of helping them become sustainable and independent. The challenge is that serving 2-5 five families using the Interfaith Hospitality Network model will not solve the homeless family problem and that additional programs and housing are required nationally and locally. All of the six Family Promise agencies have presented their short and long-term programs to serve the homeless families in their communities. The challenge they all face is the lack of affordable housing in their community while Family Promise's National 2018 goal is to focus on homelessness at the National level.

A review of all six of the Family Promise websites included information regarding the Interfaith Hospitality Network model, contact information, how you could help, get help, local events, how to make a donation, and events. The websites provided information about the programs and services available, how to get help, interested in volunteering, how to donate, training material, and other.

Most of the sites used the basic website while two used an updated version. The sites included a quick overview of the local Family Promise programs and events and included videos, pictures, news events, and successful graduates, each site told the Family Promise story.

Today, with limited time and resources individuals are turning to non-profit websites to inquire about services, information and to make donations. It is important to have current and updated information.

The benchmark review of the six websites provided information and programs that are being used by other Family Promise agencies to better serve the homeless families which may be useful in updating the Family Promise of Las Vegas website to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of programs and services offered.

Below is a brief over view of the six Family promise websites.

- **Family Promise of Las Vegas**

Las Vegas, NV

<http://www.familypromiselv.com>

This website format provided an overview of the programs and services offered, volunteering, and how to become a donor or corporate sponsor. The site included pictures, training material for volunteers, and past events but it lacked important information. The current address was missing, hours of operation, how to get help and requirements, updated news, and special fund-raising events. The last update was February 2018. The website needs a few revisions and updates.

- **Family Promise of the Mid-Willamette Valley**

Salem, OR

<https://familypromisemwv.org/>

The website format was updated and current. The first page included a 3.19 minute video which explained the Interfaith Hospitality Network model. The short but informative

cartoon was well done. The website listed the services, programs, and a unique program PetSmart Promise (on site pet care) keeping families together. The site included pictures of guest and volunteers and updated 2017 financial records. The colorful website provided an overall transparent view of the agency's programs and services.

- **Family Promise of Greater Phoenix**

Phoenix, AZ

<https://familypromiseaz.org/>

This site used an updated format and provided a variety of information in a colorful revised format. A short video on “who we are and how we can help you” was included. The site made special notice to their PetSmart the onsite facility for pets, not provided by other shelters in the area. The website takes a balance approach explaining programs and services plus asking for volunteers and donations. A tab section “Do you need help?” and contained phone numbers and information on how to and requirements to receive help. The website is well done and provides valuable information for the homelessness, volunteers, and donors.

- **Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley**

Billings, MT

<http://www.billingsihn.org/>

This site used a basic format and includes the Get Help, Donate, and Current Need circles on the first page of the website. Upon opening the “The Get Help“, the Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing programs are discussed. The web site included current events and happenings and 2015 statistics. The site included a picture of their new Day Center and services offered at Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley, a place where homeless families feel welcomed.

- **Family Promise of Orange County**

Orange, CA.

[www.familypromiseorangecounty.org/](http://www.familypromiseorangecounty.org/)

Upon opening this basic format website, an invitation to an upcoming event on September 15, 2018 celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Family Promise with founder Karen Olson is displayed. This is a major fund-raising event for them. Although the county is affluent it has one of the highest rates of homeless in the US. Family Promise of Orange County depends on the community especially Corporate and business owners to become donor members. They also use the Interfaith Hospitality Network model to provide shelter, food, and items for the homeless. The Host Congregations provides shelter and the Support Congregation provides food and supplies for the homeless. Donations and funding are used for supportive services for the to help the homeless gain satiability and independence

Addition programs and services were identified on the website such as: Jacob's Transitional Housing Program (6-month housing program), rental support and supplemental food program for graduates. FP of Orange County, CA program depends on the community, corporate, and business sponsors and fund raising to support their program for needed resources.

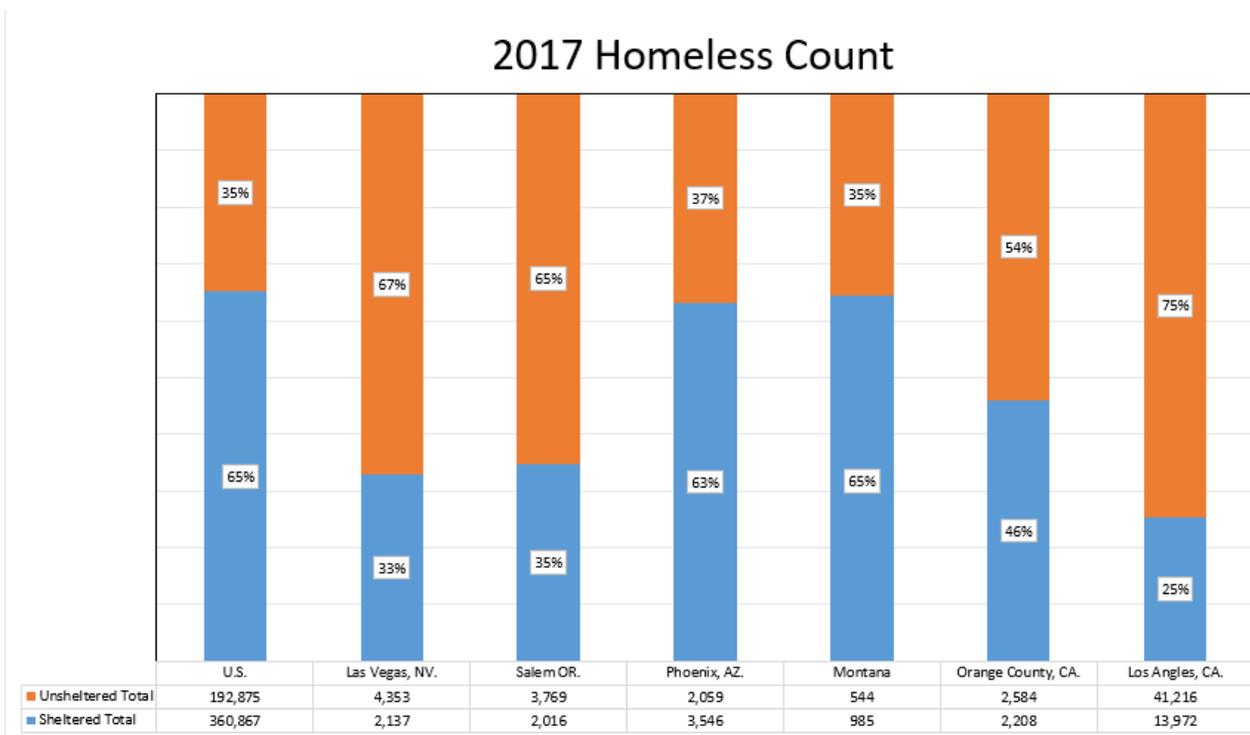
- **Family Promise of Verdugos**

Burbank, CA

<http://familypromiseverdugos.org/>

This is a basic website format and provides updated information on their programs and services. Their transitional housing program is increasing, allowing additional homeless families to stay 12 months in shelters and the Homeless Housing Prevention services will provide addition funding to avoid foreclosure. The end result is they will be able to help additional 50 families this year. In order to fund these programs, they are reaching out to the community, corporate, and local business owners for donations. Family Promise of Verdugos is located in one of the areas with the highest homeless and instead of waiting on government resources they (like Family Promise of Orange County) are reaching out to the local community for funding. The agency also provides a store for graduates with items for their homes and apartments. The website was updated with recent and current fund-raising events.

In summary, all six Family Promise websites are used as way to explain about the organization and their programs and services to help stabilize homeless families, to help those who need help, receive volunteers, and donations. It is important that all websites be updated and transparent with current information and links that works not only for those seeking help but for donors and others.



\* Retrieved from HUD 2017 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs Homeless Populations and Sub-Populations

### 5.3 Observations/Interviews

One congregation observed was St. Viator’s Catholic Church in Las Vegas and this occurred on Sunday, June 17, 2018, with all members of 3Masters present. This congregation utilized their Recreation Hall to house the guests and they committed to provide shelter and meals for three consecutive weeks. The facility had a large central hall and accommodations

were set up for four different families. There was a commercial kitchen available and breakfast and snack foods were stocked for their stay. There are no shower facilities available, showering needs to be done at another location.

Sleeping accommodations were set up with cots and sleeping mats and provisions were made to allow for each family to have privacy. Clean bedding is provided weekly from Family Promise. Breakfast and dinner are eaten at the congregation, lunch is prepared and packed to take with them. Families arrived around 5 pm. The families brought in their bedding and got settled in. Volunteers were available to assist.

The week of the observation, the congregation housed four families and all four included a two-parent household with children that were aged 5 years and under. A two-parent household is something that is not common according to Terry Lindemann, Director of Family Promise. All families were African-American and the age range of the parents were between 18-30 years of age.

The process for this congregation allowed for members of the church to sign up for any position that they would like during the guests stay. One family interviewed during the check-in process explained that they were given the option of volunteering to assist with the check-in process on the first night as well as preparing a meal or two throughout the week. The check-in process is a four-hour shift, from 5 pm to 9 pm, and consisted of helping bring items into the building, playing with the children, and providing any assistance that is needed. Doors are locked overnight and guests are not allowed to leave, which can be an issue if one of the parents is employed and has a job working at night.

The responsibilities for preparing a meal for the families required them to submit at least two meal choices they were willing to buy food and prepare for all families. The coordinator for

the congregation can then plan the meals accordingly so that the families are not eating the same types of dishes every single night.

One individual is also assigned to stay overnight with the guests in case they need anything or any issues arise. This system covers all aspects of the sheltering process and provides constant contact with at least one volunteer.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with three of the five Family Promise employees on Tuesday, June 19, 2018 by all members of 3Masters. The two employees not interviewed were the drivers who were not available at this time. These interviews were held in the children's play room of Family Promise and each employee was brought in one at a time.

The questions gathered information about how long each employee had worked there as well as if they were full or part-time employees. Two out of the three had worked there over 4 years while one had been there less than a year. Two were full time and one was part-time working 30 hours per week.

The three were very consistent on the remaining questions ranking Family Promise as Highly Effective when it came to how effective they felt Family Promise is in achieving economic stability for families and offering effective supportive services to the guests. Each was asked to rate the question on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being not effective and 10 being highly effective. They all also felt that they had sufficient tools to do their job and that they had adequate staffing to do the work.

When asked if there were any suggestions to make the program better or make the work easier, each stated there was nothing that could be done to improve in either category. At the conclusion of each of the question and answer session, a casual conversation ensued where

additional information was revealed. Despite having indicated that there were no suggestions to improve Family Promise, ideas and suggestions did come out during these conversations.

One employee suggested that a licensed Social Worker on staff would help the guests navigate some of the government programs that many guests need to work with such as Welfare, Social Security, and job searches. Another agreed that after the new building is finished, they will definitely need more staff to do the work, but they stressed that currently, they did not need additional people. Another suggestion was to include more transitional housing to help the guests move toward financial stability. It was also suggested that the transitional housing should be made available longer to the guests in order to help them achieve stability in housing.

The aspect of additional education came up as well with suggestions of providing classes to educate the tenants on how to be a good tenant as well as the consequences for actions such as: not cleaning a unit before vacating, damaging property, and late payments. Other forms of training included, providing financial education to better manage their money and job training to help them secure better paying jobs and prepare them for advancement.

Overall, the results of the interviews were less informative than anticipated. What was learned is that the employees of Family Promise are very happy with their job and very proud of the organization they work for. They do understand there is a need for a larger building, but because they know that is in progress, the lack of current space is not seen as a negative.

In addition to the staff interviews, an interview was conducted with the Director, Terry Lindemann. The responses were much different from the staff interviews. On the questions for how effective Family Promise is in achieving financial stability and how effective the support services are, she rated both at a 6 out of 10. On the questions dealing with sufficient tools and adequate staffing, she responded no to both questions. She also had several suggestions to

improve her job and the experience for the guests of Family Promise including an assistant for her position and a larger building for the guests. She also felt there needed to be additional funds to be able to provide more services.

The difference between the two interviews is very interesting as the staff rated everything highly and felt they didn't need anything else while the director felt the opposite. The staff have a narrower view of the job function while the director, who is responsible for all aspects, is well aware of the areas that need improvement. The additional discussions with the staff do show that they understand the need for more space, but it isn't viewed as a negative because it isn't causing an impact to their current duties.

## **6. Recommendations**

Using the information gathered from the online surveys, the benchmark study, literature review, the observation, and interviews, the team of 3Masters compiled several options as recommendations for short, mid, and long-term implementation. For the purposes of this paper, short-term is defined as something that could be implemented immediately or within a year that would require minimum internal resources. Mid-term is defined as something that could be implemented within 2-5 years. Finally, long-term is defined as something that would take longer than 5 years to implement.

### **6.1 Short Term Recommendation**

One short-term recommendation came from this research and would be relatively easy to implement.

- Short term recommendation 1.

From the online surveys of congregation volunteers, a suggestion was made to train the congregation administrator as recruiters for volunteers from their congregation. Once trained, this ‘champion’ for Family Promise could be to recruit new volunteers to assist with the current volunteer roles, and could also be used to find additional volunteers. These additional volunteers bring their expertise to assist with new duties such as administrative work or updating the website. The literature review also supports this as a valid recommendation that would help boost the volunteer base.

## **6.2 Mid Term Recommendation**

Three recommendations were identified for the mid-term implementation, and all are focused on training such as: tenant education, financial education, and job training.

- Mid-term term recommendation 1

Tenant education would provide those transitioning back into stable housing the information they need in order to be a good tenant, which will also help to stabilize the housing for families. This was a suggestion that came from the face-to-face employee interviews and is backed up by research in the literature review. By teaching the guests what to do and not do they not only will become better tenants and more desirable by landlords, but they will also understand the impact it can have on their rental history and credit rating.

- Mid-term recommendation 2

Financial education was also discovered to be an element of helping families to become stable. Educating the parents has been shown to be effective in providing

long term results in financial stability, as well as educating children to have better habits. This recommendation came from the face-to-face interviews with employees and is backed up with research in the literature review.

- Mid-term recommendation 3

The final education recommendation is for additional job training in order to help families achieve better paying jobs to help ensure housing stability in the future. Retraining provides additional opportunities as well as increased financial resources. This recommendation was suggested during the face-to-face interviews with employees and is backed up by the research in the literature review.

### **6.3 Long Term Recommendation**

Two recommendations are being made for the long-term implementation due to the expense involved and the funding that would be needed, these would be more than 5 years in order to develop.

- Long-term recommendation 1

The first is to provide pet care for those homeless families that have pets. This recommendation comes from the benchmark study and is supported by the research in the literature review. Being able to keep a pet in the family can lead to more stability with the family and their housing. This can be achieved through partnerships with other organizations such as PetSmart but may also need additional funding.

- Long-term recommendation 2

The other long-term recommendation is to invest in more transitional housing. Currently, Family Promise of Las Vegas is working to construct a new building which will have communal transitional housing. This recommendation comes from the benchmark study where other agencies have invested in things like a small apartment complex that can be used for this transitional housing. This recommendation is supported by the face-to-face interviews conducted with employees that stressed more transitional housing is needed and would be more effective in helping families achieve a stable housing situation.

## 7. Conclusion

Once all the information and data was collected and reviewed, the 3Masters team, found that overall, Family Promise of Las Vegas is focused and heading in the right direction. Through interviews/observations, online surveys, benchmark study, and the literature review, it is clear that Family Promise is in touch with their current limitations and is working hard to provide services to as many homeless families as possible. The completion of the new building will not only solve issues of space that is needed in order to expand services, but will provide the ability to explore new options that may not be now known.

There are opportunities for improvement and the organization has a plan in place that will help them expand services while still providing an efficient operation. While they are currently doing well, there are areas that can be enhanced or added that can fit well with their current long-term plans.

The recommendations that were created will provide a way for Family Promise of Las Vegas to easily add to their current services they provide. They are broken down into short, mid, and long-term which allows for easier implementation. Overall, education is a major area where the team felt that improvements could be made by preventing recidivism back temporary homelessness. This education will help the families not only transition easier into stable housing, but it can also put them on a path that will provide for long-term stability as well as the possibility for advancement and increased earnings later on.

The major limitations of this study revolve around the low response rate of the online surveys for both graduated guests and congregation volunteers. With a response rate of less than 1%, it was difficult to gather sufficient data to fully evaluate those areas of the program. One area that the 3Masters were unable to explore for this paper included the donor aspect. The team

suggests that time be spent to evaluate the satisfaction of current and previous donors as well as explore what would help encourage donors to increase the amount given or the frequency of the donation. This would help to understand their motivation for donating and potentially increase the donor pool and amount of money given.

The future direction of Family Promise of Las Vegas seems to hinge on the completion of the new facility that should be completed in a few years. The 3Masters team would encourage Family Promise to continue to work with the other agencies identified in the benchmark study in order to share ideas and successes with each other. This sharing of information will benefit not only the Las Vegas agency but all agencies involved.

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## Appendix

### Actual Survey Question Administered to the Congregation Administrators

*3 Masters Capstone Project-Congregation Survey July 26, 2018 11:26 AM MDT*

Q1 - Does your Congregation receive requests for shelter stay from other organizations other than Family Promise?

Yes

No

Q2 - Does your congregation offer shelter services to other organizations besides Family Promise?

Yes

No

Q3 - Family Promise's procedures for verifying eligibility for your congregation?

Extremely satisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Somewhat dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

Q3 - Please explain why you are dissatisfied with the procedures for verifying eligibility.

Q4 - Procedure for hosting Family Promise guests?

Extremely satisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Somewhat dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

Q4B - Please explain why you are dissatisfied with the procedure for hosting Family Promise guests.

**Q5 - Overall ease of working with Family Promise?**

Extremely satisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Somewhat dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

**Q5B - Please explain why you are dissatisfied with working with Family Promise.**

**Q6 - Do you plan on continuing to work with Family Promise in the future?**

Yes

Maybe

No

**Q6B - Please explain why you do not plan to work with Family Promise in the future.**

**Q7 - Would you recommend Family Promise to other congregations?**

Yes

Maybe

No

**Q7B - Please explain why you would not recommend Family Promise to other congregations.**

**Q8 - Are there any changes that you feel Family Promise needs in order to accommodate more families?**

Yes

No

**Q9 - Please state the recommendations you would give to Family Promise to accommodate more guests.**

Q10 - Does Family Promise provide you with enough supplies to support the needs of Family Promise guests?

Yes

No

Q11 - What supplies would you recommend for Family Promise to provide.

Q12 - Please provide any recommendations or comments that would like to give to Family Promise.

## Actual Survey Question Administered to the for Congregation Volunteers

*3 Masters Capstone Project- Congregation Volunteer Survey July 26, 2018 11:43 AM MDT*

### Q1 - What age group do you belong to?

- 17 and under
- 18-24
- 25-35
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75 years or older

### Q2 - Ethnicity origin or Race

- White Non-Hispanic
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino
- Other

### Q3 - Volunteering with Family Promise?

- Extremely satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied

### Q4 - Please explain why you are dissatisfied with volunteering with Family Promise.

### Q5 - Do you plan to continue to volunteer with Family Promise in the future?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Q6 - Please explain why you do not plan on volunteering with Family Promise.

Q7 - Would you recommend Family Promise to other volunteers?

Yes

Maybe

No

Q8 - Please explain why you would not recommend Family Promise to other volunteers.

Q9 - Are there any changes that you feel Family Promise needs in order to accommodate more volunteers?

Yes

No

Q10 - Please state your recommendations that you feel Family Promise needs to accommodate more volunteers.

Q11 - Does Family Promise provide you with enough supplies to support the needs of Family Promise guests while you are volunteering?

Yes

No

Q12 - What supplies would you recommend for Family Promise to provide?

Q13 - Please provide any recommendations or comments that you would like to give to Family Promise.

Multiply the number of organizations involved, even if that requires some legacy Host Congregations to lower their participation.

## Actual Survey Question Administered to the for Graduated Guests

*3 Masters Capstone Project- Exit Survey July 2, 2018 11:55 AM MDT*

Q1 - What age group do you belong to?

- 17 and under
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75 years or older

Q2 - Ethnicity origin or Race: Please specify...

- White Non-Hispanic
- American Indian or Native American
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Other

Q3 - Did you graduate from the Family Promise Program?

- Yes
- No

Q4 - What was the date you began the Family Promise program?

Q5 - How long did you say with Family Promise

Q6 - Did you have access to a car while participating in the Family Promise program?

- Yes
- No

Q7 - Transportation to and from the Congregations.

- Extremely satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied

Q8 - Please explain why you are dissatisfied with the transportation to and from the congregations.

Q9 - Meals at the Congregation.

- Extremely satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied

Q10 - Please explain why you are dissatisfied with the meals at the congregation.

Q11 - Sleeping arrangements at the Congregation.

- Extremely satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied

Q12 - Please explain why you are dissatisfied with the sleeping arrangements at the congregations.

Q13 - Quality of service offered at Job Connect or any other job search agencies.

- Extremely satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied

Q14 - Please explain why you are dissatisfied with the quality of service at the Job Connect or any other job search agencies.

Q15 - How pleased were you with your experience in searching for housing?

Extremely satisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Somewhat dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

Q16 - Please explain why you are dissatisfied with the experience of searching for housing.

Q17 - How satisfied are you with Family Promise's staff and services?

Extremely satisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Somewhat dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

Q18 - Please explain why you are dissatisfied with Family Promise's staff and services.

Q19 - Did you feel Family Promise met your needs at the time of service?

Yes

No

Q20 - Please explain why you did not feel Family Promise did not meet your needs at the time of service.

Q21 - Were you successful at finding a job while you were staying with Family Promise?

Yes

No

Q22 - Please explain why you were unsuccessful at finding a job while you were staying with Family Promise.

Q21 - Were you treated fairly and with respect?

Yes

No

Q22 - If you were treated unfairly, please explain what happened.

Q23 - Would you recommend Family Promise to other homeless families?

Yes

No

Q24 - Please explain why you would not recommend Family Promise to other homeless families.

Q25 - What additional services would you recommend that Family Promise provide?