The Rebuilding Lives Updated Strategy (RLUS) Steering Committee convened at its third meeting on Wednesday, December 6th, 2006. During this meeting, members and guests heard presentations from the consultants regarding emergency shelter data at the client and program levels.

Suzanne Wagner of the Center for Urban Community Services (CUCS) in New York presented the results from their analysis of emergency shelter inventory. CUCS conducted a comparative analysis of data from 1998, the year that the Rebuilding Lives project began, and 2006. The key findings presented were related to capacity, growth, and bed distribution. Capacity remained relatively stable and there was increase in total units of 7%. Growth in units serving families (14%) and single women (63%) outpaced growth in the system as a whole. Bed distribution by gender shifted over time, with beds designated for women increasing from 14% to 19% and those designated for men decreasing from 84% to 78% of the total number of single beds.

Steve Metraux of the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia reported on findings from research he conducted along with Dennis Culhane of the University of Pennsylvania. An analysis of the emergency shelter client level data from 1996 to 2006 to understand shelter utilization (families and singles), including trends over time in shelter use, relationships between shelter exits and housing placements, and demographics, the longer the shelter episode, the higher the odds for a household (single adult or family) to exit to a housing placement; income increases the odds of receiving a housing placement upon exit; wages increased odds 5-fold of receiving a housing placement upon exit; housing placement was the strongest factor in reducing the hazards of repeat shelter stay; and among families, repeat shelter stays are a relatively rare event.

Final reports of all research analyses will be presented to the committee at a later date.
“When you’re homeless, it’s like falling into a hole. People are willing to throw food, quarters, nickels and dimes to you. But it takes a special person to lower a ladder and pull you up.”

Bruce Garrard, Rebuilding Lives participant
Community Housing Network’s North High Street Apartments.

NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
Steering Committee members will meet in February. The meeting will be dedicated to developing clarity around the purpose and intent of the new RLUS system, as well as, the principles and values that guide the new strategy.

3rd Annual Point-In-Time Count
Annually, Columbus and Franklin County Continuum of Care funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) brings over $6.5 million to our community to help individuals who have experienced homeless obtain and maintain housing and receive needed services. As part of the annual Continuum of Care application, HUD requires communities to conduct a point-in-time count of all sheltered and unsheltered individuals in the community during the last week of January.

On behalf of the Columbus and Franklin County Continuum of Care Steering Committee, the Community Shelter Board planned and conducted the third local count on Wednesday, January 31, 2007 from 3:30-7:00 am. Approximately 130 volunteers assisted to count unsheltered individuals on the streets, camps, or other places not meant for human habitation. All individuals encountered who desired food and/or shelter were transported to receive such services. In addition, volunteers counted persons identified at meal programs, emergency service providers, and 24/7 storefront locations. Final results of the count will be issued in a report to the Continuum of Care Steering Committee as well as be included in the annual application. The results of this year’s count, as well as, prior year counts will be shared with the RLUS Steering Committee.