

**PA8081 CAPSTONE PROJECT:
EVALUATION OF HEADING HOME HENNEPIN PROGRAM
TO END LONG-TERM HOMELESSNESS
2:30-5:00 T HHH 60**

Instructor:

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Office Hours: T 1:00-2:00 or by appointment

Course Description:

This capstone will partner with the Hennepin County Housing to examine the connection between evictions in Minneapolis and the incidence of shelter use among families and individuals in Hennepin County. In addition, Hennepin County would like your recommendations for policy, programmatic, or legislative changes that could reduce evictions and therefore homelessness in our community.

Hennepin County sees 6000 eviction filings in District Court each year. Most evictions are for non-payment of rent, with an average of \$2000 in rent arrears. Evictions result in a forced move, which destabilizes the family and adds to the cost of doing business for landlords. In addition, the filing of an eviction results in a court record, with the unlawful detainer following the tenant, even if all back rent is repaid and the tenant remains in the unit. There is an assumption that eviction may lead to literal homelessness and that many people in our homeless shelters are there after an eviction. Data from the Wilder triennial survey of homelessness finds that 47 percent of women in shelter report an eviction on their record while only 21 percent of men in shelter report an eviction.

Quantitative Analysis:

Hennepin County would like a Humphrey capstone class to examine the connection between eviction and shelter use. The County has a data file of people who have had an eviction filing in District Court between 2009 and 2016, matched with demographic information, government financial assistance and social service use, and shelter use in County-paid emergency shelters. They also have information on a comparison group that received County services but did not face an eviction.

They would like you to answer these questions:

- What percent of evictions result in shelter entry and who is most likely, among those evicted, to move to shelter.
- What is the time gap between eviction and shelter entry?
- Is the length of stay in shelter shorter or longer for those with an eviction on their record?
- Is there a difference in rate of shelter entry between those entering single adult shelter and those entering family shelter?
- What does the data suggest about prevention or intervention strategies at the time

of eviction, or even pre-eviction, that can help reduce the rate that people are evicted and then enter shelter?

Qualitative Analysis:

Hennepin County would like you to interview participants in the homeless prevention business to establish the current process and identify points where process could change to better assist households at risk of eviction. Key questions might include the following:

- Where does your organization fit into the homeless prevention process?
 - How do people find your organization?
 - Is your program the first step for people behind on rent, do you require a denial from another agency first, do you have organizations you refer clients to if you can't help them or is your agency the last resort?
 - What do you offer people who are asking for help? Cash assistance, case management, other resources?
 - How do you decide who to help and how much? What do they have to document to get help?
 - Do people asking for help already have an eviction filing? Already have a writ for eviction? Where in the eviction process are they, when they ask for help?
 - For FHPAP providers, if you have been doing this work since before 2015, do you think policies have changed and has that impacted your work?
- If you are requiring a landlord to document a threat of eviction, does that then prod the landlord to actually file an eviction to provide the documentation?
- What situations typically predate the tenant's request for assistance from your organization? (loss of job, permanent reduction in hours, temporary reduction in hours due to illness in family, change in household composition, unforeseen expenses, etc)
- If you can't help a family, do you expect that they will enter shelter or do you think they will figure out other alternatives (double up, work out a loan, etc)
- Do you feel that people asking for assistance are well served with just financial support or do they also need some "case management" to resolve their current crisis or ensure it doesn't happen again?

Class Assignments & Evaluation:

Evaluation of Class Performance will be based on the following activities:

1. Group Project Written and Oral Report (85% Total):
2. Team Member's Assessment of Individual Participation (15%):

3. It is the expectation that all class members will participate constructively in the class until the project is completed. The instructor reserves the authority to adjust grades for students who do not adequately contribute to the class project. The instructor will discuss this situation with the student and try to make alternate arrangements prior to doing so.

Policy on Incompletes:

Incompletes are strongly discouraged, rarely given, and only granted after a student and I have mutually agreed upon a timetable (that is, a contract!) for completion of all coursework.

Schedule of Class Activities:

We will use class time for students to provide updates on their progress, and for me to provide you with any additional information or resources you need. You may also use class time to work on your project. We will develop a timeline of deliverables for the class project in the first few weeks of class.

Key Resources:

Key references will be placed on the class Moodle Site.

Deliverables to Client:

- Written report on findings
- Power point presentation for management within Hennepin County
- Recommendations for policy, programmatic or legislative changes that could reduce evictions, and therefore homelessness in our community.