



## Central Union Mission Case for Support

Homelessness and poverty are among the most painful and challenging issues facing our community today. The destructive hardship, hunger and hopelessness faced by the broken and vulnerable men, women and children in our city is profound. Regrettably, Washington, DC, has one of the highest rates of homelessness in the nation.

For more than 135 years, Central Union Mission has been a leader in serving people experiencing homelessness and poverty in Washington, DC. Compelled by our Christian faith, the Mission was initially founded with the goal of serving homeless veterans of the Civil War. Over time, our work has grown substantially to serve men, women and children in need in our nation's capital. Today, we remain 100 percent privately-funded and operate four facilities that provide a world-class platform to achieve long-term, sustainable and systemic change in the lives of the people we serve, while daily meeting the immediate needs of the chronically homeless and those at-risk of homelessness and poverty.

- **Men's Shelter:** Feeds and shelters 170-200 men per day (**more than 60,000 bed-nights per year**) and offers comprehensive in-house services, including: medical, dental and psychiatric care; addiction recovery; veteran's support; spiritual direction; vocational training; education; employment placement; legal support and social services.
- **Family Ministry Center:** Provides **food and clothing to approximately 4000 people per month** (families, including many single mothers, grandparent care-givers and isolated senior citizens). We distribute groceries that provide over **three million meals each year**, computer training, legal aid, Alcoholics Anonymous, ESOL classes, Bible studies, life skills classes, services for senior citizens, parenting classes, baby showers, Christmas gifts, Thanksgiving supplies and more.
- **Lambert House:** Provides **transitional housing** for up to 24 people. Men who are on the road to recovery are offered an opportunity to live in a safe, clean and respectful environment where they can leave behind their former lifestyles and continue to transform their lives to become productive citizens and reconnect to their respective families and communities.
- **Camp Bennett:** Provides a full summer camp experience every year for nearly **400 youth** who live in poverty. For many, this is their first time attending sleepaway camp and is an escape from the city and the limited opportunities and negative influences prevalent in their neighborhoods. The camp's gymnasium also supports local boys and girls club activities each week.

Clearly, we are not just a homeless shelter, but we are both a provider of life-sustaining food and shelter and an agent of long-term transformation. We serve all people, regardless of race, religion, age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or any other characteristic.

## **Our Focus and Our Future**

Our vision is to provide a world-class platform to achieve long-term, sustainable and systemic change in the lives of the people we serve, while daily meeting the immediate needs of the chronically homeless and those at-risk of homelessness and poverty.

Our passion is to serve and our programs will continue to do what we have done so well for 135+ years; shelter the homeless and feed the hungry. However, we are not content to simply maintain the status quo. We are striving to parlay our years of experience and expertise to restore the men we serve to wholeness in order for them to permanently get off of the streets, and we are serving women and children to ensure their basic needs are being met and mitigate their risk of homelessness.

## **Our Strategic Plan Focuses On Three Pillars:**

### **Restoration and Transformation Program**

People end up homeless for a variety of reasons. On the streets, a person's physical, emotional and psychological health becomes compromised and an acculturated lifestyle makes it increasingly difficult to permanently escape homelessness. Once this cycle sets in, a person's ability to acquire and maintain a job is diminished, family relationships are destroyed, addictions emerge, mental and physical health declines, self-esteem drops and a downward spiral continues.

Central Union Mission created the Restoration and Transformation Program (RTP) to provide a platform for men who have the desire and mental/emotional wherewithal to rehabilitate and stabilize all aspects of their lives and return to normal life. The 18 to 24 month program begins with a robust assessment of each person's mental, emotional, physical, spiritual, educational and vocational status and an Individual Development Plan is created. A multidisciplinary team of social workers, chaplains, teachers, vocational instructors, doctors, therapists, and others walk with each man toward transformation. The goal is transformation and systemic, life-long change through comprehensive wrap-around services.

The vast majority of men who come to the Mission suffer with some history of addiction. We know that unless the addiction is addressed at the beginning, a person will not be successful in our program (or in life), so we provide both in-house programs to correct addictions, as well as intensive residential treatment through a close partnership with a third-party provider. Once a man is fully matriculated into the program, he is provided with a stable and safe environment with food and shelter so that he can focus on the hard work ahead of him.

The program and each day is highly structured, and over the course of the program every aspect of their lives are being addressed and transformed. Progressively, each man walks through his past issues, destructive thought and behavior patterns are addressed, addiction treatment continues, physical/dental/mental health issues are treated and their spiritual beliefs are explored (conversion to the Christian faith is not required for services nor participation). A strong program for workforce development and education provides opportunities to attain a high school diploma, skill certifications, life-skills, hard and soft job skills and long term employment placement. The goals are to equip each man with what he needs to be successful in the long-term and before he leaves our facility, we work to ensure he has a job, transitional or permanent housing, life skills, ongoing addiction support, and a church partnership, if desired. Restoration of family relationships are explored, as well.

### **Comprehensive Family Resource Center**

Central Union Mission currently operates a Family Ministry Center, which focuses on providing food assistance, clothing, skills training, legal aid, spiritual direction and other critical services to assist

families living at or below the poverty level. The services provided by the Center help homeless families, as well as those at-risk of homelessness. The Center supports approximately 4000 people each month.

The proposed Comprehensive Family Resource Center (CFRC) builds upon this foundation to create a co-located spectrum of services that are critical to preventing family homelessness. Based on our 135 years of experience, there are several key factors that influence a person's vulnerability to homelessness, as well as their ability to overcome it. Among these are basic needs such as food and shelter; however, comprehensive wrap-around services such as job training, healthcare, addiction treatment and child care are essential in ensuring a family's long-term success. Greatly expanding on the services the Mission already provides, the CFRC will deliver the following:

- Food
- Clothing
- Housing: Temporary placement and placement assistance (New)
- Healthcare: Direct services (medical, dental) and insurance assistance (New)
- Job training and certifications; job placement assistance (New)
- Education: High School diploma preparation and attainment (New)
- Addiction support and treatment placement
- Legal assistance
- Spiritual guidance and nurture
- Child day care referrals and guidance (New)
- Life skills training: Parenting classes, nutrition, budget management, ESOL
- Transportation assistance (New)
- Computer access (New)
- Senior citizen assistance
- Veteran's assistance with accessing VA benefits (New)
- Assistance acquiring government-issued ID cards (New)
- Special events: Christmas gifts, Thanksgiving meal supplies, school backpacks, baby showers

Providing these services in one location creates 'one-stop' accessibility and a continuum of services that offers comprehensive family care and transformation. In addition, the CFRC will provide the foundation for possibly establishing a Central Union Mission Women's & Family Shelter in the District of Columbia in the future.

### **Community Collaboration and Peer Leadership**

Combatting homelessness and poverty requires a vast array of agencies, services and partnerships. Public-private partnerships are critical, as well. While these populations are served by a number of wonderful charities, churches and DC government agencies, there is a critical need for increased partnership, collaboration and advocacy to avoid duplication, mitigate gaps in service delivery and promote shared investments in the community.

As a long-standing leading voice against homelessness and poverty in DC, we are working to provide additional leadership, direction and connectedness among stakeholders. As such, we are engaging both DC government and our peers to "move-the-needle" on accessibility and coordination of services, and to better leverage resources and reduce duplication of efforts where they may be wasteful. Among churches and other faith-based institutions, we are catalyzing a movement for these groups to prioritize homelessness and local poverty among their ministry objectives.

The goal is to increase accessibility of services for helping people in need while creating more efficiency and impact.

### **Why This and Why Us?**

Washington, DC, has one of the highest rates of homelessness in the nation. Despite the common misperception that all homeless people are either drug users, mentally ill or just not trying hard enough, the reality is that people from all walks of life fall victim to it — young, old, male, female, singles and families, educated, uneducated, black, white, brown and all ethnicities and nationalities. Homelessness and poverty painfully dehumanizes individuals and puts stress on our socio-economic systems. It is a problem that civil society must own.

The work of Central Union Mission and its strategic plan helps restore hope and dignity to these men, women and children, and helps us fulfill the Biblical calling to “love thy neighbor.” Moreover, the Mission’s work helps to create safer streets, reduce unemployment, and reduce expense on local government. The Mission stands as an indispensable partner for individuals, churches, corporations, government and foundations in our collective efforts to help those in need in our nation’s capital. Our strengths are found in the following:

### **Our Differentiators:**

- Focus on men, women, children, families, and senior citizens
- Extensive experience and expertise; the oldest private social service agency in Washington, DC
- Proven impact: 3 million meals and 62,000 bed nights of shelter each year
- Proven success: over 65 percent of our transformation program graduates are thriving
- Not simply a shelter: we provide shelter bolstered with a full-spectrum of wraparound services for sustainable impact and change
- Evidence-based programming and innovation geared toward long-term success of individuals
- Adaptive to changing community and individual needs
- Compelled by our faith, but we do not compel our faith on others
- Efficiency: Low administrative rate, leverage of \$7 million in gifts-in-kind, extensive volunteer support and service-provider partnerships allow more funds to flow through to programming
- Strong and experienced executive leadership
- Focus on outcomes, not just outputs
- 100% privately funded
- Highly rated: GuideStar, Charity Navigator, ECFA, Great Nonprofits

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