

The Criminally Involved Homeless: Jail is not always the Answer

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Abstract

Pinellas Safe Harbor, a homeless shelter in Pinellas County, Florida, opened in January 2011. Its goal was to divert homeless individuals away from the criminal justice system when possible to reduce overall costs. An additional goal was to provide services through community partnerships to assist homeless individuals. Research was done to examine the various theories associated with the issue of homelessness. Surveys were distributed to a sample population from Pinellas Safe Harbor to not only identify if the research done corresponded to the population at the shelter but to also identify if the shelter was meeting its intended goals. Findings illustrated that Pinellas Safe Harbor is indeed meeting its goals and is addressing the issues the homeless face.

Introduction

Homelessness is a persistent and an ongoing issue in our society. It is one we have been unable to solve since it came to the forefront in the 1980's. On any given night, about 636,000 Americans are homeless (Sethi, 2012). We need only to look around our communities to see people sleeping in parks and even on the steps of city hall. They loiter at bus stops and beg on the street corners. By virtue of their very public living, they are increasingly under the law enforcement microscope. Whether by choice, or borne from the need to survive, the homeless engage in minor ordinance and misdemeanor offenses. Jail is often time the repository for our homeless population and with no permanent address they become chronically involved in the criminal justice system.

Mental health and substance abuse issues contribute to the issue of homelessness. Many homeless individuals struggle not only with attempting to subsist without those things that we take for granted in our daily lives but also with the compounding influences of either psychiatric issues, substance abuse issues or both. We see the homeless individual who is drunk sleeping on a bench, the raggedly dressed person pushing a shopping cart talking to no one, and the drug induced individual committing crimes to support their habit. All of these people may end up at our local jails and now part of the criminal justice system.

In Pinellas County, Florida, the Sheriff's Office and various Community Partners combined their efforts to open Pinellas Safe Harbor in January 2011. The immediate goal was to divert these individuals away from the criminal justice system. A secondary goal was to attempt to address those homeless individual with issues, mental health and/or substance abuse, with placement into programs that better suited their needs. With Pinellas Safe Harbor open just over a year, we are at a juncture to initially evaluate the effect this program has had. Evaluating its difficulties and successes will help determine where the program needs to go in the future.

Literature Review

Homelessness - The Rabble Management Theory

One theory regarding the increased presence of the homeless population in the criminal justice system was presented by Irwin (1985). Irwin contended that jail is not just being used to house dangerous criminals but it is also being used to control the “rabble”; the rabble being those viewed by the mainstream as bothersome and unseemly because of their unconventional behavior, appearance and custom. (Fitzpatrick & Myrstol, 2008). Police respond to calls from citizens to deal with petty misdemeanor offenses and public ordinance violations. The resolution is removing the individual from the area either to a tolerant location, dumping them in another jurisdiction or taking them to jail. In a 2008 study, results showed that homeless arrestees were less likely to be arrested for felonies and are more likely to be arrested for order maintenance and property offences (Fitzpatrick & Myrstol, 2008). This was also seen in a separate study which showed that there was a higher likelihood of homeless individuals committing non-violent crimes which were related to subsistence strategies as a means of survival suggesting that homelessness encourages non-violent crime (Fischer, et al, 2008). Greenberg and Rosenheck in a 2008 study found only partial evidence that incarceration of the homeless resulted from their efforts to survive with limit resources and that prior incarceration may have preceded entry into the homeless population (Greenberg & Rosenheck, 2008). This was also indicated in other studies.

Sheltered vs. Street Homelessness

Although both the street homeless and the sheltered homeless have a higher likelihood of committing non-violent crimes, research shows that this would be lesser for sheltered individuals since they have less of a need to commit subsistence-driven crimes (Fischer, et al 2008). But the longer the period of homelessness, even in sheltered housing, increased the likelihood of committing non-violent crimes since they may use a broader range of survival strategies both legal and illegal and may adopt new strategies as others are blocked (Fischer, et al 2008). Interestingly, the same study found that violent crime did increase in the sheltered homeless who use the housing intermittently with researchers indicating the interaction between homeless individuals may cause increased stress and confrontation suggesting that more permanent housing is needed quickly (Fischer, et al 2008).

Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Mental health and substance abuse issues are common among the homeless. Numerous articles discuss the correlation between the two as they relate to both homelessness and involvement in the criminal justice system. Both mental hospitalization and inpatient detoxification experiences are nearly twice as likely to be reported by homeless arrestees as those who are not homeless (Fitzpatrick & Myrstol,

2008). It is this population that tends to be homeless at release and without the needed social services support, they face an increased potential for re-arrest (Hartwell, 2004).

Substance abuse is likely to be associated with involvement in the criminal justice system through arrests for drug possession or sales or for public intoxication (Greenberg & Rosenheck, 2008). In Fischer's research, substance and alcohol abuse was looked at as the first link in a chain that leads to homelessness which in turn leads to criminal activity. The use of drugs and alcohol might also enhance the severity of the mental health issue (Fischer, et al, 2008).

With the closing of the psychiatric hospitals and the shift in policy to a more residential approach to treatment, there are fewer beds available for those who cannot manage community treatment. There has been a five-fold increase in the arrest rate of offenders with mental illnesses since the 1960's and the nation's prison population contains twice as much mental illness in the period from the mid 1990's (Hartwell, 2004). Mentally ill homeless persons are vulnerable to criminal involvement due to a lack of structure and a resistance to engage in aftercare service which in turn exacerbates their illness (Solomon & Draine, 1999). Solomon's research supports an earlier study in that homelessness may increase the risk of mentally ill individuals engaging in criminal behavior due to poor adaptive coping strategies and that they cycle between being homeless and being criminally involved (Solomon & Draine, 1999).

Homeless persons commonly find it hard to access health services and it may be that re-arrest is a learned rout for getting the necessary medical attention (Barrett, et al, 2009). In a separate study, police benevolence was cited as a possible explanation for the number of homeless persons in jail that is police taking the homeless to jail to provide them with medical, mental health and substance abuse assistance (Fitzpatrick & Myrstol, 2008). But with the current economy, many services have been greatly reduced.

Demographics

Another factor which is associated with homelessness and involvement in the criminal justice system may be certain demographical characteristics. Several articles mention common factors such as being male, older, poorly educated, unmarried, past history of arrests, problems with drugs and alcohol and unemployment. The articles also indicate that this is more of an issue in urban areas than in rural locales. This correlates to the rabble management theory where the homeless individual is disengaged or socially detached and is less likely to embrace conventional social norms such as education, marriage and participation in the labor market (Fitzpatrick & Myrstol, 2008).

Efforts throughout the Country

In researching the homeless problem, I found that numerous attempts have been made to address issues. In New York 2002, Mayor Bloomberg decided to use a vacated Bronx jail to shelter homeless families. Unfortunately the facility was not suitable for habitation. (American Prospect, 2002). In Sauk County Wisconsin 2012, officials there are looking at using an empty jail wing as a temporary housing shelter

specifically for homeless men (Damos, 2012). In San Antonio Texas, Dr. Robert Marbutt spearheaded the creation of Haven for Hope. The Haven is co-located and adjacent to the local jail facility and provides a multi-tiered approach to addressing the homeless issue. The program has effectively moved the homeless population in San Antonio out of the city parks and from under the overpasses into sheltered housing. The initial step is a courtyard setting where individuals can sleep in a secured area and have access to food, clothing and other subsistence items. Through a reward process, they can perform work assignments that can transition them to indoor sleeping situations. There is access to social services, medical, dental and eventually permanent housing (“Haven for Hope, 2011).

In addition to providing housing, Haven for Hope facilitated access to the numerous social services that the homeless need. Numerous research studies also noted that services especially services for those with psychiatric and substance abuse issues was important. Models that linked the criminal justice system, social services and the homeless were consistently discussed as being the optimal solution (“Haven for Hope, 2011).

Pinellas Safe Harbor was modeled on San Antonio’s Haven for Hope. The shelter was constructed from a bus garage that in 2006 was converted into minimum security housing. Renovations were done to “soften” the building to make it feel less like a jail. Pinellas Safe Harbor averages about 400 residents per day. It is the only shelter in Pinellas County that accepts homeless individuals that are under the influence and allows them to sleep in an outside courtyard. The Harbor is a cooperative effort between the cities and municipalities, the county, social services and numerous volunteer organizations. Many of the homeless in Pinellas County were in fact being arrested for ordinance violations and minor misdemeanor crimes. The costs to house this population was becoming burdensome. One individual in particular was arrested seventy-four (74) times over a five (5) year period spending over five-hundred forty-four (544) days in jail. The cost for this person alone amounted to approximately \$68,000. His typical arrests were for open container and urinating in public. (LaSala, 2010)

So, does homelessness create involvement in the criminal justice system or did any of these individuals become homeless as a result of a prior incarceration? Regardless, is jail really the answer to dealing with this population or should other options be explored?

Method

The purpose of this research is to examine the impact that Pinellas Safe Harbor has had on addressing the homeless issue in Pinellas County. The research focused on identifying the target population currently using the shelter. Pinellas Safe Harbor is a general homeless shelter, jail diversion alternative and re-entry portal for those returning from prison. Currently Safe Harbor provided housing for approximately 400 males and females; no children or families. The survey explored whether the sample population in Safe Harbor also had the same factors as identified in the research. It looked at the intent of the participants to either remain at Pinellas Safe Harbor or explore other options and gathered some cursory feedback as to the perceptions of the facility.

A convenient sampling of 100 residents, some new intakes and some established residents, was taken from the approximately 400 residents. Surveys were distributed to a random sampling by the facility administrator who oversees the daily operation of the shelter. Participation was voluntary and the survey responses were anonymous. Survey question 1 was focused on the age demographic. Question 2 served to identify the length of time the participant was homeless and question 3 on whether there was any military service.

Questions 4 through 7 all dealt with the participants' mental and physical health and whether there was any drug or alcohol use indicated. As indicated in the prior research, there is a strong interconnection between mental health and substance abuse issues when evaluating homelessness. These questions focused on determining if this is also the case at Pinellas Safe Harbor.

Questions 8 and 9 focused on the homeless participants' involvement with the legal system. The focus was on number of arrests and the type of arrests to determine if there is a correlation between homelessness and involvement in the legal system. If there is involvement, are the arrests mostly for ordinance and misdemeanor violations.

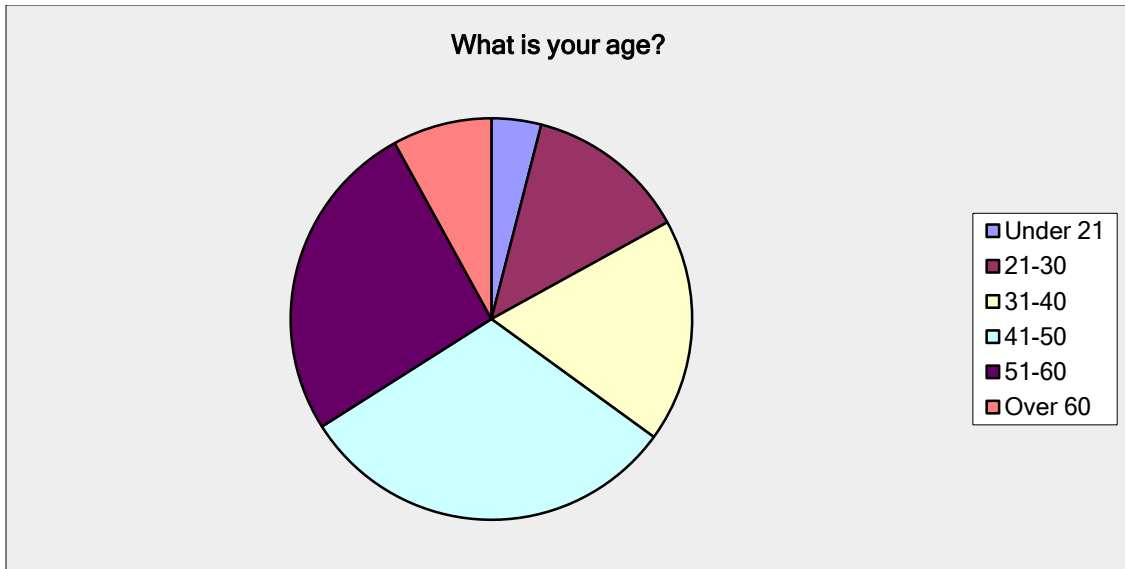
Survey questions 10 through 12 addressed the time that the participant was at Pinellas Safe Harbor, if they intended to ever leave the shelter and if they have a plan to accomplish leaving the shelter. Questions 13 and 14 were free response and intended to get some feedback from the residents of the shelter regarding how they perceive their experience there.

A positive aspect to the survey was that there was a large population of respondents from which to draw the needed information. The expectation to have 100 surveys returned was high. Participants were well advised that the surveys were anonymous and respondents were encouraged to participate in the process, but not required. The fact that the surveys were anonymous may have increased the return rate. Since the facility administrator distributed the survey, there is a higher likelihood that there was no duplication since the administrator is familiar with the residents. The survey was not completed in a single day as anticipated but rather over a week period. Pinellas Safe Harbor does not house families therefore the surveys were completed by single respondents.

Results

The survey distributed to one-hundred (100) residents of Pinellas Safe Harbor. One-Hundred (100) surveys were received back for a return rate of 100%. The intent of the survey was to take a sampling of the Pinellas Safe Harbor population in order to examine whether the observations made in the research were also valid for this population.

Question One (1), with a 100% response rate, dealt with the age of the sample population. A majority of those surveyed fell in the 41-50 year range followed by the 51-60 year range.



Question two (2) attempted to determine the length of homelessness among the surveyed population. This question also received a 100% response rate. A large majority of those surveyed indicated that they had been homeless (i.e. without a permanent residence) for less than three (3) months.

How long have you been homeless (i.e. not had a permanent residence)?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 3 months	47.0%	47
3 months - 5 months	10.0%	10
6 months - 1 year	16.0%	16
2 years - 5 years	20.0%	20
6 years - 10 years	4.0%	4
Over 10 years	3.0%	3
<i>answered question</i>		100
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Question three (3) attempted to identify whether the residents surveyed were veterans (i.e. served in the military). Of the 100 residents surveyed, 86% indicated that they were not veterans. All respondents did answer this question.

Question four (4) looked at physical disabilities among the surveyed population. All respondents did answer this question. 57% of those surveyed indicated that they did not have a physical disability.

Research indicated that there was a strong correlation between substance abuse and homelessness. Of the 99 respondents to question five (5), 69 indicated that they did not have any issues with either drugs or alcohol. Only 30 residents indicated that they either had issues with drug, alcohol or both. This does not support the earlier

research. It is possible that the residents surveyed do not provide an accurate representation of the Safe Harbor population as a whole.

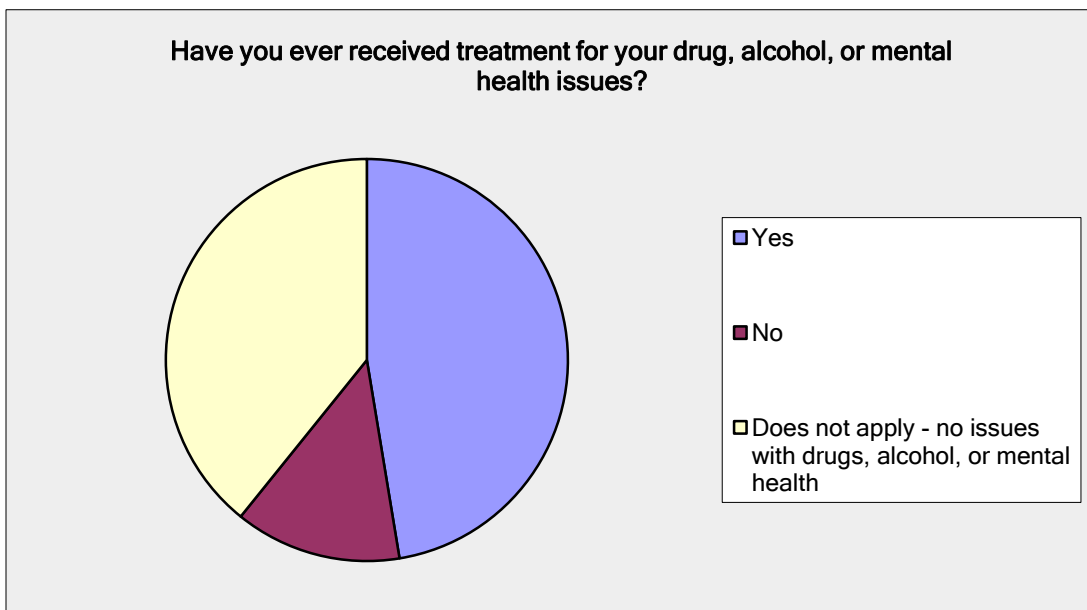
Do you have issues with:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Drugs	9.1%	9
Alcohol	10.1%	10
Both drugs and alcohol	11.1%	11
No, no issues with either drugs or alcohol	69.7%	69
<i>answered question</i>		99
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Question six (6) asked respondents to indicate if they had any mental health issues. While 52 of the 99 residents responded that they did not have mental health issues, a large number, 47 residents, indicated that they did indeed have mental health issues.

Do you have mental health issues?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	47.5%	47
No	52.5%	52
<i>answered question</i>		99
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Question seven (7) attempted to see how many of the respondents have received treatment for their drug, alcohol or mental health issues. For this question, 46 respondents answered that they had received treatment, 13 answered that they had never received treatment, 38 answered that the question did not apply and 3 skipped the questions. After reviewing the responses to questions 5 and 6, which indicated that 69 respondents from questions 5 did not have issues with drugs and/or alcohol and 52 respondents from question 6 did not have mental health issues, it appears that the number of respondents who indicated that this question does not apply is low at 38. This question could have been misinterpreted to where the respondent may have indicated that they no longer have an issue but may have received previous treatment.

Have you ever received treatment for your drug, alcohol, or mental health issues?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	47.4%	46
No	13.4%	13
Does not apply - no issues with drugs, alcohol, or	39.2%	38
<i>answered question</i>		97
<i>skipped question</i>		3



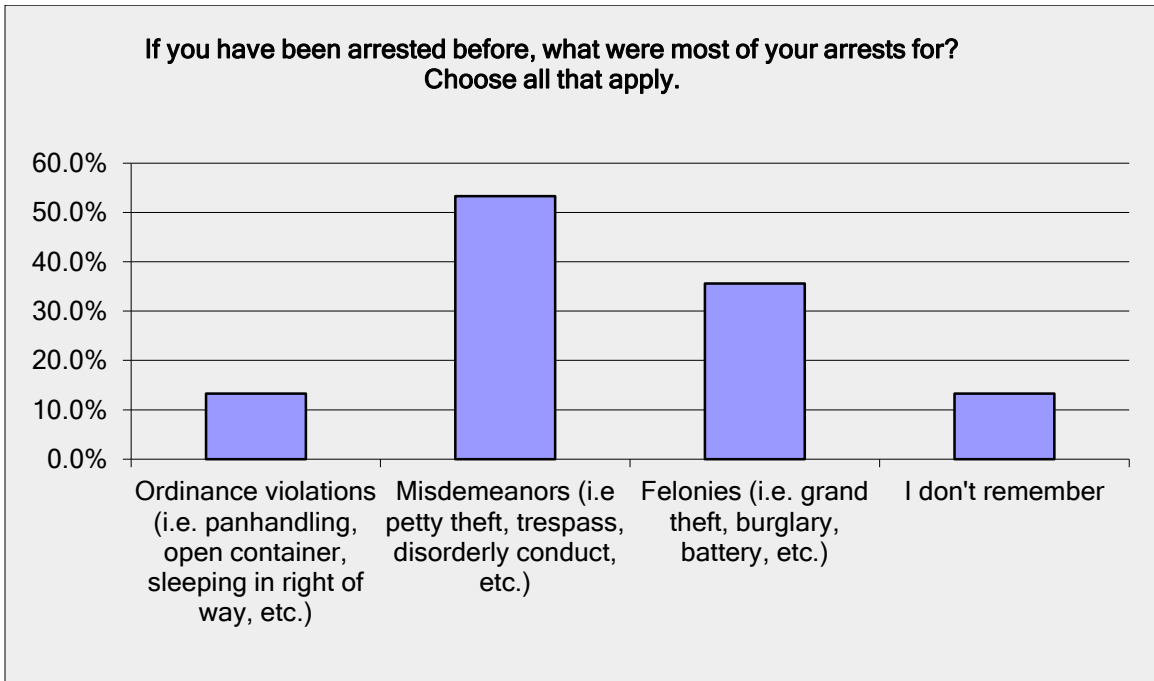
Questions eight (8) and nine (9) dealt with the arrest history of the sample population. Although a majority (52 of 90) of the respondents indicated that they had not been arrested in Pinellas County within the past two (2) years, 42% (38 of 90) did have at least one previous arrest with one individual indicating that they had been arrested over 20 times. When asked to identify what most of the arrest were for, the respondents indicated that a majority, 53% were for misdemeanors. In reviewing the data, there is a discrepancy, 45 individuals responded to the type of crime in question 9 while only 38 individuals indicated that they had been arrested in question 8.

How many times have you been arrested, in Pinellas County, in the past two (2) years?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Never arrested - SKIP TO NEXT QUESTION	57.8%	52
1 - 5 times	37.8%	34
6 - 10 times	3.3%	3
11 - 20 times	0.0%	0
Over 20 times	1.1%	1
<i>answered question</i>		90
<i>skipped question</i>		10

**If you have been arrested before, what were most of your arrests for?
Choose all that apply.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Ordinance violations (i.e. panhandling, open	13.3%	6
Misdemeanors (i.e petty theft, trespass, disorderly	53.3%	24
Felonies (i.e. grand theft, burglary, battery, etc.)	35.6%	16
I don't remember	13.3%	6
<i>answered question</i>		45
<i>skipped question</i>		55



Questions ten (10), eleven (11) and twelve (12) looked at the sample population at Pinellas Safe Harbor to determine how long they had been at the facility, how long they anticipated needing to stay there, and if they had an exit strategy. A majority of the respondents (54 of 97) indicated that they had been at the facility less than 30 days. Looking at the overall breakdown, it appears that most of the residents in the sampling had been using the facility six (6) months or less. Most responded that they expected to remain at the facility six (6) months or less with the bulk looking at 31 days to 6 months. As to how the individuals felt they would be able to leave Pinellas Safe Harbor, 62% (46 of 74) felt that they would first obtain employment and then leave the facility. In question 12, respondents were able to select more than one response therefore it appears that the data may be skewed. This is evident in the free response choice of “other” where multiple individuals indicated that employment is their exit strategy. More than likely, they also selected the “get a job and then leave Pinellas Safe Harbor” response. For the 24 free responses, the comments were grouped as follows:

Get training and then a job	2
Look for housing	5
Have work	2
Move out of state	1
Medical	1
Get SSI/SSD	6
Planning on leaving	3
Live outdoors	1
I don't know	3

How long have you been at Pinellas Safe Harbor?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 30 days	55.7%	54
31 days - 3 months	28.9%	28
4 months - 6 months	10.3%	10
7 months - 1 year	4.1%	4
Since it opened	1.0%	1
<i>answered question</i>		97
<i>skipped question</i>		3

How long do you expect to stay at Pinellas Safe Harbor		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 30 days	18.3%	17
31 days - 6 months	45.2%	42
Over 6 months	4.3%	4
I don't plan to leave	3.2%	3
Not sure of plans but I want to leave	29.0%	27
<i>answered question</i>		93
<i>skipped question</i>		7

If you plan to leave Pinellas Safe Harbor, how do you plan on doing that?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Get into a treatment program	5.4%	4
I have a place to go - house, apartment, etc.	20.3%	15
Another shelter	5.4%	4
Get a job and then leave Pinellas Safe Harbor	62.2%	46
I don't have a plan	13.5%	10
Other (please specify)		24
<i>answered question</i>		74
<i>skipped question</i>		26

Questions thirteen (13) and fourteen (14) sought feedback from the respondents to determine how their experience was at Pinellas Safe Harbor. Although those surveyed were asked to identify one item in each question, many respondents listed multiple responses therefore skewing the data. Eighty-four (84) of the hundred surveyed commented on what they liked most about their experience at Pinellas Safe Harbor. Their responses are summarized as follows:

Basic needs met:		50
Safe/secure	26	
Bed/shower	3	
Air Conditioning/Inside	17	
Food	3	
Television	1	
Treatment/People/Assistance		30
Fair Treatment	2	
Good People	15	
Volunteer Help	6	
Case Workers	2	
Programs	2	
Better self/get help	3	

Everything	6
Availability/	2
Not Structured	2
Proximity	1
Nothing	4

Eighty-seven (87) of the hundred surveyed commented on what they felt was the one thing they would change about Pinellas Safe Harbor. Their responses are summarized as follows:

Curfew	16
Everything	3
Nothing	16
Food	12
Work Programs/Job assistance	6
Counseling/Counselors	3
Staff Attitude/Treatment	9
Screening/Intake	3
Amenities	13
Television	1
Air conditioning	2
Outside housing	3
Activities	3
Linen	2
Showers	1
Announcements	1
Atmosphere	2

Discussion

A random sampling of Pinellas Safe Harbor residents was surveyed to get a glimpse into the makeup of their population and to examine if there was any correlation to the research done on the homeless population in general.

For the age demographic the survey indicated that the largest age group using Pinellas Safe Harbor was over 40 years of age. This does correlate with the research in that the homeless population tends to be older, male, unmarried. Although gender and ethnicity were not part of the survey, the population at Pinellas Safe Harbor is predominantly comprised of older white males.

A majority of those surveyed indicated that they had been homeless for less than 3 months. There were a considerable number of residents though that indicated that they had been homeless for 2-5 years which does closely coincide with the economic downturn in Pinellas County. If we look at this in combination with question 10 which addresses the length of time that the respondents had been at Pinellas Safe Harbor we get a snapshot of facility usage. Most of those surveyed indicated that they had been at the facility for less than 30 days but a substantial portion indicated that they had been at

the facility for up to 3 months. So, it would appear that individuals facing homelessness in Pinellas County are making use of shelter instead of remaining on the streets.

Factors such as veteran status and physical disability were also looked at. A large portion of those surveyed indicated that they had not served in the military. This would rule out the possibility of post-traumatic stress issues when examining mental health issues. Although a majority of those surveyed indicated that they did not have a physical disability, of the hundred respondents, 43 did have a physical disability which may contribute to their homeless status.

Much of the research dealt with the influence of drugs, alcohol and mental illness on homelessness. The survey results did not correlate with the research for drug and alcohol issues. Of the 99 respondents, 69 indicated that they had no drug or alcohol issues and 30 indicated that they had issues with either drugs, alcohol or both drugs and alcohol. This is surprising since Pinellas Safe Harbor is the only shelter in Pinellas County to accept inebriated individuals. It is possible that those surveyed were not part of the chronically inebriated group. When asked about mental health issues, 52 of the 99 respondents indicated that they did not have mental health issues however a strong 47 of 99 did state that they had mental health issues. This does support earlier research. But when asked in question 7 if they had ever received treatment for either drug, alcohol or mental health issues a relatively small number (38 people) responded that the question does not apply. Given the fact that a majority of respondents in both questions 5 and 6 indicated that they didn't have drug, alcohol, and mental health issues, I expected that the number of responses for question 7 would have been higher in the does not apply category. For this question a majority answered that they had received treatment. It could be that because treatment was received the respondents may feel they no longer have the issues therefore responding incorrectly to questions 5 and 6.

Criminal involvement is also a strong contributing factor according to the research. This is supported by the answers to questions 8 and 9 in the survey. When asked about arrest frequency in Pinellas County within the past two (2) years 52 of 90 respondents indicated that they were never arrested. But, 38 of 90 had been arrested during that period. Most had been arrested up to five times but one resident had been arrested over 20 times. If we just look at those with prior arrests, and assume the following:

34 people were arrested 5 times each and stayed one day in jail	170 days
3 people were arrested 10 times and each stayed one day in jail	30 days
1 person was arrested 20 times and stayed one day in jail	20 days

220 total days in jail:

Cost per day in Pinellas County Jail \$106 x 220 days = \$23,320
Cost per day in Safe Harbor \$13 x 220 days = \$2,860

Just assuming the narrow parameters of maximum number of arrests and minimum days incarcerated illustrates a substantial savings to utilizing a shelter in lieu of jail. Also consistent with the research, a majority of those responding were arrested

for misdemeanor offenses and ordinance violations instead of felonies. This is consistent with the rabble management theory which contended that jail is being used to remove the homeless from public view and most of the offenses are minor in nature.

Research portrayed homelessness as a cycle that was hard to break. Questions 11 and 12 looked at the how those surveyed viewed their situation in regard to how long they expected to stay at the facility and what it would take to assist them in leaving the shelter. Most of the residents surveyed felt that they would leave the facility within six months or less. This suggests that they view the shelter as a short term solution from which they can recover. As to an exit strategy, most of the residents surveyed felt that getting a job would provide them the opportunity to leave.

Questions 13 and 14 examined what shelter residents felt about their experience at Pinellas Safe Harbor. As expected, when asked to identify what they liked most about the shelter, those that responded indicated that it allowed for their basic needs to be met. The highest of the basic needs was identified as a safe and secure environment and this was followed by a place to stay inside a building. I anticipated that food i.e. regular meals would be listed more frequently since residents are provided three meals per day and food is typically high on the subsistence chain. But, many residents are seen entering the shelter with their own food purchased with government assistance (i.e. their EBT cards) so it appears the need for food is already being met. The residents surveyed also indicated that they appreciated the way they were treated and the assistance they received at the shelter. When asked what they would change, many of the respondents indicated that they felt the shelter did not need to be changed. Others felt the 10 pm curfew was too early and that the food and shelter amenities could be enhanced.

It does appear that Pinellas Safe Harbor is indeed serving its intended purpose. There are residents at the facility who have been involved in the criminal justice system but who now have secure temporary housing that is a lesser cost to the taxpayer. There is also assistance in the form of counselors and social workers who assist residents with their needs. From the survey, it would appear that the shelter is being used by individuals who are newly homeless and who do not intend on remaining that way.

Recommendations

Pinellas Safe Harbor has only been open since January 2011 so it is really still in its infancy. Based on the research and the survey I would make the following recommendations:

- Since most respondents indicated that they plan to find employment in order to leave the facility, I would recommend partnering with additional workforce agencies and technical education centers to assist residents.
- Continue to evaluate the impact the shelter has on the jail population.
- Continue to deinstitutionalize the feel of the shelter to make it feel less like jail.
- Evaluate the need for detoxification services to deal with chronic inebriates/drug addicted.
- Evaluate the need for family services.

Although homelessness is an issue that may never be resolved completely, facilities such as Pinellas Safe Harbor play an integral part in addressing the issues homeless individuals face. Pinellas Safe Harbor connects these individuals with the social services they need to get back on their feet. It provides a safe environment where basic needs such as food and shelter are available thus decreasing the need to turn to illegal means to survive. And, Pinellas Safe Harbor provides an alternative to incarceration for many minor violations thereby reducing costs and saving the county money.

Ignoring the issue of homelessness will not make the problem go away. It takes a concerted effort from local governments, social services, charitable organizations and community partners to provide funding, resources and time to make a difference.

Captain Lora McFee has been in law enforcement for 23 years with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office. She began her career in 1989 as a civilian and transitioned to Detention Deputy in 1991. She has worked at all ranks and has had many different assignments to include Field Training Coordinator, Hostage Negotiator, and Transition Team Coordinator for a major jail expansion project. She is currently a Division Commander within the Detention and Corrections Bureau supervising both medical and detention components. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Economics from SUNY Stony Brook.

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Appendix A

Pinellas Safe Harbor - Client Survey

1. What is your age?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Under 21	4.0%	4
21-30	13.0%	13
31-40	18.0%	18
41-50	31.0%	31
51-60	26.0%	26
Over 60	8.0%	8

Answered question 100

Skipped question 0

2. How long have you been homeless (i.e. not had a permanent residence)?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 3 months	47.0%	47
3 months - 5 months	10.0%	10
6 months - 1 year	16.0%	16
2 years - 5 years	20.0%	20
6 years - 10 years	4.0%	4
Over 10 years	3.0%	3

Answered question 100

Skipped question 0

3. Are you a veteran (i.e. have you served in the military)?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	14.0%	14
No	86.0%	86

Answered question 100

Skipped question 0

4. Do you have a physical disability?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	43.0%	43
No	57.0%	57
Answered question 100		
Skipped question 0		

5. Do you have issues with:

	Response Percent	Response Count
Drugs	9.1%	9
Alcohol	10.1%	10
Both drugs and alcohol	11.1%	11
No, no issues with either drugs or alcohol	69.7%	69
Answered question 99		
Skipped question 1		

6. Do you have mental health issues?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	47.5%	47
No	52.5%	52
Answered question 99		
Skipped question 1		

7. Have you ever received treatment for your drug, alcohol, or mental health issues?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	47.4%	46
No	13.4%	13
Does not apply - no issues with drugs, alcohol, or mental health	39.2%	38
Answered question 97		
Skipped question 3		

8. How many times have you been arrested, in Pinellas County, in the past two (2) years?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Never arrested - SKIP TO NEXT QUESTION	57.8%	52
1 - 5 times	37.8%	34
6 - 10 times	3.3%	3
11 - 20 times	0.0%	0
Over 20 times	1.1%	1
Answered question 90		
Skipped question 10		

9. If you have been arrested before, what were most of your arrests for? Choose all that apply.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Ordinance violations (i.e. panhandling, open container, sleeping in right of way, etc.)	13.3%	6
Misdemeanors (i.e. petty theft, trespass, disorderly conduct, etc.)	53.3%	24
Felonies (i.e. grand theft, burglary, battery, etc.)	35.6%	16
I don't remember	13.3%	6
Answered question 45		
Skipped question 55		

10. How long have you been at Pinellas Safe Harbor?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 30 days	55.7%	54
31 days - 3 months	28.9%	28
4 months - 6 months	10.3%	10
7 months - 1 year	4.1%	4
Since it opened	1.0%	1
Answered question 97		
Skipped question 3		

11. How long do you expect to stay at Pinellas Safe Harbor?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 30 days	18.3%	17
31 days - 6 months	45.2%	42
Over 6 months	4.3%	4
I don't plan to leave	3.2%	3
Not sure of plans but I want to leave	29.0%	27
Answered question 93		
Skipped question 7		

12. If you plan to leave Pinellas Safe Harbor, how do you plan on doing that?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Get into a treatment program	5.4%	4
I have a place to go - house, apartment, etc.	20.3%	15
Another shelter	5.4%	4
Get a job and then leave Pinellas Safe Harbor	62.2%	46
I don't have a plan	13.5%	10
Other (please specify)		24
Answered question 74		
Skipped question 26		

13. What is the thing you like most about Pinellas Safe Harbor?

	Response Count
	84
Answered question 84	
Skipped question 16	

14. What is the one thing you would change about Pinellas Safe Harbor?

	Response Count
	87
Answered question 87	
Skipped question 13	