Introduction
Martha’s Vineyard is a year-round rural community characterized by high rates of unemployment, poverty, substance abuse, and housing instability. The year-round population is faced with the "island factor" — starting with higher prices of everything (housing, food, services) and limited or no access to the safety net services generally available on the mainland. These factors have lead to a perceived increase in the number of homeless individuals and families on the island. Various local organizations, including Island Clergy, the Dukes County Commissioners, local businesses and police provide support to the people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The collaboration and communication between these local agencies is incidental without any comprehensive plan or unified approach to monitor and address homelessness on the Island.

Objectives
• Define Homeless on Martha’s Vineyard
• Identify underlying causes of homelessness
• Map out available resources to address the issue
• Identify gaps in resources and make suggestions on how to fill them
• Research approaches used by other rural communities
• Develop a survey to be used as a data collection tool
• Identify main themes from interviews

Key Findings
• We found that overt homelessness is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to housing instability on the island. The island lacks affordable housing and the gap between median income and median housing price continues to grow.
• The previous point-in-time counts have failed to successfully quantify the number of homeless individuals
• Young professionals and other involved community members are leaving the island because they can’t afford to live there
• There is debate in the community over how big of an issue homelessness is and how many services the island should provide.
• While there are a lot of motivated homeless advocates on the island, there isn’t enough communication and collaboration between the organizations.
• The island is disconnected from the resources and funding available on the mainland that are supposed to be serving the Cape and the Islands.
• The Brazilian population and other marginalized groups are not currently being included in the discussion of housing instability.

Recommendations for Moving Forward
Central suggestions
• Homelessness coalition
• Point person for emergency situations
• Scattered site transitional housing
• Respite homes
• Mixed income rental housing
• Work with the Cape
• Housing Counts
• Landlord roundtable

Peripheral suggestions
• Tiny houses
• Rebuildable homes
• Covenants Program
• Youth Lots

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