

Stamford Shelter Reaches Permanent Housing Milestone

By Nora Naughton

STAMFORD — As a local homeless shelter heralded two milestones at the end of 2016, one achievement was a little bittersweet.

Inspirica reported at the end of the year it had placed 1,001 clients in permanent housing in the six and a half years since the nonprofit began closely tracking these placements. That number represents both an achievement and a call to action, according to Inspirica CEO [Jason Shaplen](#).

"We are thrilled to have passed this milestone, and to have successfully transitioned so many men, women and children into permanent housing," Shaplen said. "But this also shows the level of need in our community."

Since the nonprofit started tracking placements in 2010, Shaplen said the annual number of clients housed has risen steadily.

In 2011, Inspirica reported 116 placements in permanent housing. Midway through fiscal year 2016-17, about 100 clients have been transitioned out of the shelter, putting the organization on track to match its record 201 placements in fiscal year 2015-16.

Of the 1,001 clients placed in permanent housing, Shaplen said some 90 percent of them are still off the streets after a year. This retention rate is reflective of the state's overall success in tackling chronic homelessness in 2016.

"That's also in line with our mission to break the cycle of homelessness," Shaplen said. "We stop checking in after the first year, but if you can stay housed for a full year, that is a good indicator that we've broken the cycle."

Inspirica also surpassed the 1,000-mark in job placements at the end of 2016, finding work for 1,157 clients in the last six and a half years.

Shaplen said Inspirica is following the rest of the region by increasing efforts to put an end to family homelessness.

"That will be our next milestone, but we have a tall order ahead of us," he said. "The challenge of family homelessness is much more difficult. It's just much more complex to house an entire family because so many different factors come into play."

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