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Homeless center planned for Roseville

By [Sherri Begin](#)

The **Macomb County Rotating Emergency Shelter Team** hopes to break ground this fall on a new, one-stop shop for the homeless on its Roseville property.

The group has received a \$600,000 grant from the **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development** to help fund the \$3.8 million project on Erin Street, north of 13 Mile Road and west of I-94.

MCREST, which began in 1988, houses about 60 people through a collaboration of 84 churches in the county. It is operating on a budget of \$540,000 for 2008.

All the shelters in the county continue to see " 'frequent flyers,' people who have rotated through the shelters for a number of years," said MCREST Executive Director Jimetta Lewis.

But many of the people coming in now are new, she said. "They are first-time homeless who have lost their jobs ... ," and many of them are families.

As of January 2007, Macomb County had 1,142 homeless people, up from 899 in 2004, said Carrie Fortune, coordinator of the **Macomb County Continuum of Care**, the county system used to move homeless off the streets and into permanent housing. More recent figures aren't yet available.

As of Feb. 8, 356 school-age children in the county were living in shelters, hotels, garages and vehicles, according to data collected by the **Macomb Intermediate School District**, Fortune said.

"There are issues when a child is considered homeless, and they have to go to school every day not knowing where they are going to live or where they are going to get their next meal," said Frank Taylor, director of the **Macomb County Community Services Agency**.

Plans for the 12,000-square-foot center include a daytime drop-in center, case workers to provide access to assistance and services, and 25 beds to provide transitional housing for mentally ill men, Lewis said.

The center will be called **Jack's Place**, Lewis said, in honor of her brother who committed suicide. It will include a commercial kitchen to accommodate a **MichiganWorks!** culinary arts training program.

Fourteen nonprofits have agreed to provide services from the new center, including job training; mental health, dental and health care; substance-abuse counseling; legal aid; and housing assistance.

The "one-stop shop" model is patterned after the county's response to Hurricane Katrina victims.

Government and nonprofit agencies gathered at the Comfort Inn in Mt. Clemens and the Sterling Inn in Sterling Heights, where the majority of 187 Hurricane Katrina evacuees in the county were temporarily housed.

"The evacuees were allowed to go from one table to the next to get the services they needed," Lewis said.

Within five months of the hurricane, all evacuees were in permanent homes or had been given assistance to get back home or to another relative's house, Fortune said.

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