

**Cloudburst Staff present at Fourth Annual Public Performance and Reporting Network Conference, Rutgers School of Public Affairs and Administration and the National Center for Public Performance, on September 23, 2011**



Cloudburst staff members Jamie Taylor and Kat Freeman recently presented results of a study conducted on models of data sharing that support community change in preventing and ending homelessness. Based on the Strong Fields Theory, the study looked at five domains of change factors that impact a community's ability to collect and utilize data to affect system change and improve service delivery. The five research-based factors – leadership/stakeholder support, shared identity, standards of practice, data/knowledge transfer, and funding/resource use – were examined to identify effective approaches correlated with community processes resulting in decreased homelessness. Communities were chosen for the study based on data showing a decrease in homelessness between 2008 and 2010 as reported in the annual U.S. Housing and Urban Development Point-in-Time count and the 2010 Mayor's Survey on housing and homelessness.

The presentation highlighted the varying degrees of data-driven decision making found at the local level, linking impact outcomes to the key community change factors of strong leadership and shared vision. Funding/resource use was not cited by the communities to be a key factor in their use of data, i.e. one community with strong funding and resources increased their sheltering capacity with little effect on homelessness prevalence, though more effective use of available funding was presented as a key reason for decreases in homelessness. Though shared identity was identified as an important factor, some communities identified system change occurrences as a result of a single service provider.

Twenty-five percent of the communities presented as having strong leadership and a sense of shared vision and were also effectively utilizing their data for setting goals, monitoring local performance measurement, and supporting their own effectiveness in decreasing homelessness. Findings did not indicate that the availability of reliable homeless service system data alone translated to an increase in community knowledge or data-based decision making, indicating that surveyed communities might need assistance to develop a stronger leadership structure as well as assistance with identifying the system level data they need to be reviewing, how to interpret data results, and how to use data to drive and monitor change. Over half of the surveyed communities were not setting system-level goals or data-driven decisions nor did they see their own actions accounting for decreased homelessness within their communities, citing changes in counting methodologies or funding levels as the cause. Cloudburst staff will use these findings to develop performance measurement technical assistance tools to support all communities in their use of data to meet federal and local policy goals to end all homelessness.