



Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government  
**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

Jim Gray  
Mayor

May 11, 2012

Contact: Susan Straub  
Office: 859-258-3111  
Cell: 859-576-2564

## **Gray plans to form Commission on Homelessness**

Mayor Jim Gray today announced the formation of the Mayor's Commission on Homelessness and said he will ask it to examine issues and concerns surrounding Lexington's homeless population and recommend needed changes.

"Our community has a long record of reaching out to help those who need shelter. We can be proud of many of those efforts, including the Hope Center, the Salvation Army and MASH," Gray said. "But we also have ongoing challenges. This is a complex issue. It's clear we need to step back and take stock ... to examine long-term challenges and outstanding needs."

The city routinely dedicates approximately half of its funding for social service partner agencies to faith-based, non-profit or citizen-led agencies that work with people who are homeless or marginally housed. In the Mayor's Proposed Budget for next budget year, that amounts to almost \$1 million, or 57 percent of the funding for social service partner agencies.

**FOLLOW MAYOR GRAY:**

[www.facebook.com/MayorJimGray](http://www.facebook.com/MayorJimGray)   [www.twitter.com/JimGrayLexKY](http://www.twitter.com/JimGrayLexKY)

In addition to examining the roles of the partners addressing homelessness, the Commission will evaluate the impact of facilities that serve the homeless population on neighbors.

Gray said he is forming the commission because of a number of recent reports related to homelessness, including concerns raised about Messner's Boarding House, the impact of a food program on Phoenix Park and its neighbors, shelter over-crowding, and issues related the operation of the Community Inn.

The Community Inn is scheduled for a Board of Adjustment meeting on May 18, when the Board could revoke its permission to operate at 824 Winchester Road. "I don't know what if any decision the Board of Adjustment will make, but I will encourage the Board to allow the Community Inn time to make any changes," Gray said. Councilmember Bill Farmer has also been working on the issues with the Community Inn and its neighbors.

The Mayor said he wants the Commission to hear from advocates for citizens who have no homes, from neighbors, businesses and schools that operate near shelters for the homeless, from public safety officials, from veterans groups and from the homeless citizens, themselves.

"I'm convinced through planning and problem-solving we can follow our laws, help citizens who need help and, at the same time, show respect for neighbors," he said.

Gray said he will appoint the members of the Commission by June 1. Anyone interested in serving should contact the Mayor's Office at 258-3100.

-30-