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**Recruitment Fair Matches District Homeless
with Apprenticeship Opportunities**

*April 22 Event, Organized by the Coalition for the Homeless,
is One of Many Services for the Community*

Washington, D.C. (April 1, 2009) – As the economy worsens and the unemployment rate rises, the work of one Washington, D.C.-based non-profit – the Coalition for the Homeless – is becoming increasingly critical in the effort to keep individuals and families off the streets. The Coalition offers case management, substance abuse counseling, housing, and employment placement assistance for homeless individuals and families in the nation’s capital. The organization’s goal is to guide them in their path back to self-sufficiency.

“For more than 25 years we’ve helped thousands of homeless individuals and families return to independent living,” says Michael L. Ferrell, the Coalition’s executive director. “One of our most important services is to assist homeless individuals back into the workforce by matching them with opportunities for job training.”

As part of its employment placement assistance, the Coalition will sponsor its first-ever Apprenticeship Recruitment Fair on Wednesday, April 22 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Charles Sumner School, located at 17th and M Streets, NW, Washington, D.C. The fair will connect individuals served by the Coalition to various apprenticeship opportunities and potential employment – in carpentry, plumbing, electrical and air conditioning – throughout the Washington metropolitan region.

“Given the challenging economic climate, it is even more important for us to help individuals get the training they need for stable employment,” explains Linda Fields, the Coalition’s director of employment and training. “By placing participants in apprenticeships, we can help them secure jobs that provide a livable income, above the minimum wage.”

According to a report by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, more than 6,000 District residents were homeless in 2008 – approximately 10 in every 1,000 residents – including 1,149 children in families.

Employment is a key factor in the path from homelessness to self-sufficiency. The report states, “Employment, or an adequate and reliable source of income, is crucial to

individuals' and families' ability to move out of homelessness into permanent housing.” While the highest levels of employment in the Washington metropolitan region in 2008 were reported in Fairfax County/City and Falls Church and Montgomery County (65.6 and 64.5 percent, respectively), the District had the lowest percentage of employed homeless adults in families, at 26.5 percent.

In 2008, the Coalition for the Homeless helped 223 individuals or heads-of-household obtain employment. Program participants collectively earned \$3.4 million in taxable income on an annualized basis. The Coalition hopes that these figures will be even higher for 2009 with programs like the Apprenticeship Recruitment Fair.

“This is the first time we’ve held this kind of event, but we expect a good outcome,” says Fields. “We are looking to expand the program in the future and possibly organize two fairs each year.”

While the Coalition has matched participants with opportunities in carpentry, plumbing, electrical and air conditioning in the past, there is a new program available this year: “Go Green” will train them in the use and installation of solar panels.

As of April 1, 125 attendees are expected to visit the April 22 Apprenticeship Recruitment Fair.

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About the Coalition for the Homeless

The Coalition for the Homeless is a non-profit organization that has served the Washington metropolitan area since 1980. Its mission is to help homeless, at-risk individuals and families return to self-sufficiency and independent living, through a range of residential and social services. Conceived by the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington in 1979, the Coalition evolved into a direct provider of services to the homeless in 1985 and now operates 13 program facilities across Washington, D.C. For more information about the Coalition, visit www.dccfh.org.

For more information or to arrange an interview with Coalition staff, contact:

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