



Interagency Commission on Homelessness Full Meeting

Wednesday, July 22, 2020 | 3-5p

Zoom Platform

Welcome and Introductions

Jeff Goldman, Chair

ICH Legislation Update

Councilmember Evan Glass

Continuum of Care (CoC) Response to COVID-19

Amanda Harris, Chief of Services to End and Prevent Homelessness

Positive COVID-19 Cases in the CoC

- 20 Positive COVID-19 tests from the CoC (includes shelter, PSH, and other non-congregate sites)
- 0 Hospitalizations
- 70 people released from isolation/quarantine
- 2 people currently in isolation/quarantine from the community
- 1 COVID related death from the CoC, 1 Death from someone recently discharged from the CoC

Universal Testing at Congregate Facilities

- Universal testing at emergency shelter, transitional housing, site-based permanent supportive housing, and hotels
- All new intakes tested on a weekly basis
- Universal testing at shelter on a monthly basis and bi-monthly for other congregate settings
- Testing Results
 - 583 Clients tested, 5 positive
 - 138 Staff tested, 2 positive
 - Less than 1% positivity rate

Shelter Facilities

Year-round Emergency Shelter capacity significantly decreased due to social distancing

- **Current facilities include:**

- Crabbs Branch Way (men)
- 6 Taft Court (men)
- 2 Taft Court (women)
- Coffield Recreational Center (women)
- Long Branch Recreational Center (men)
- Progress Place (men and women)

- **Potential Facilities**

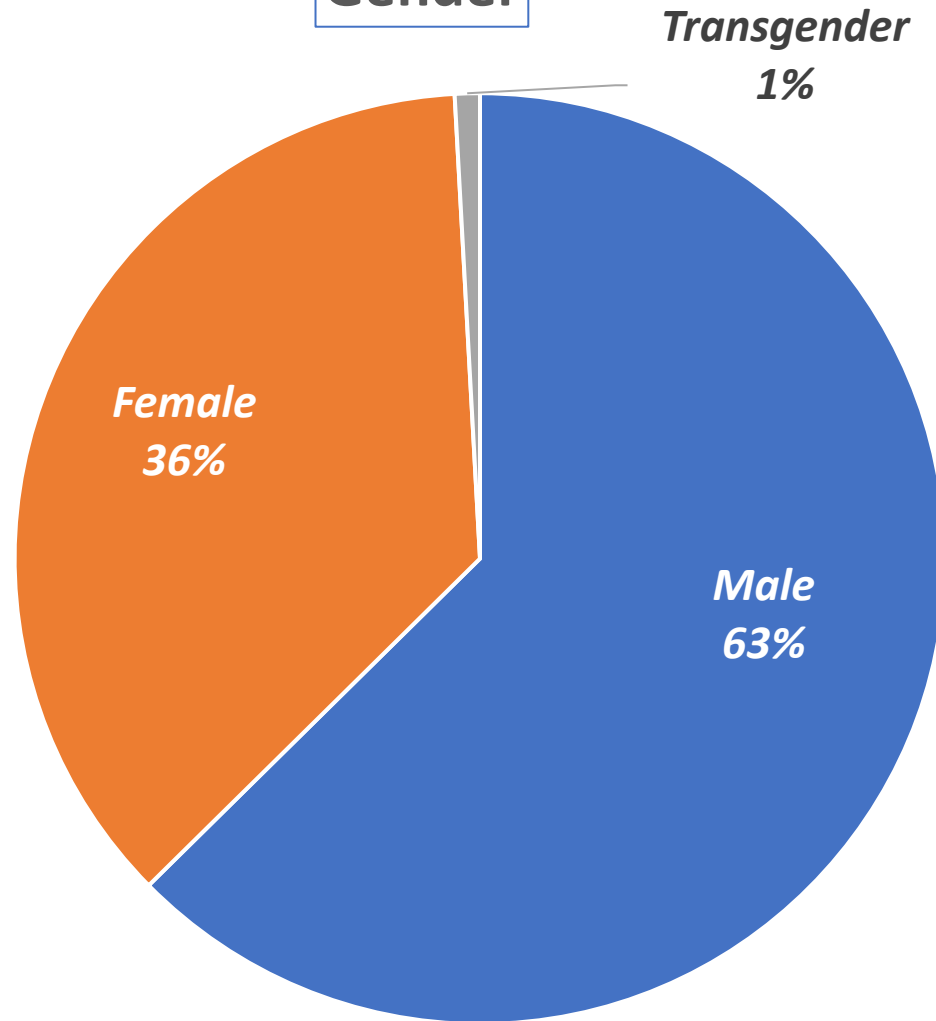
- Carroll House
- Holly Hall
- Rainbow

Single Adults New Intakes Since March 1

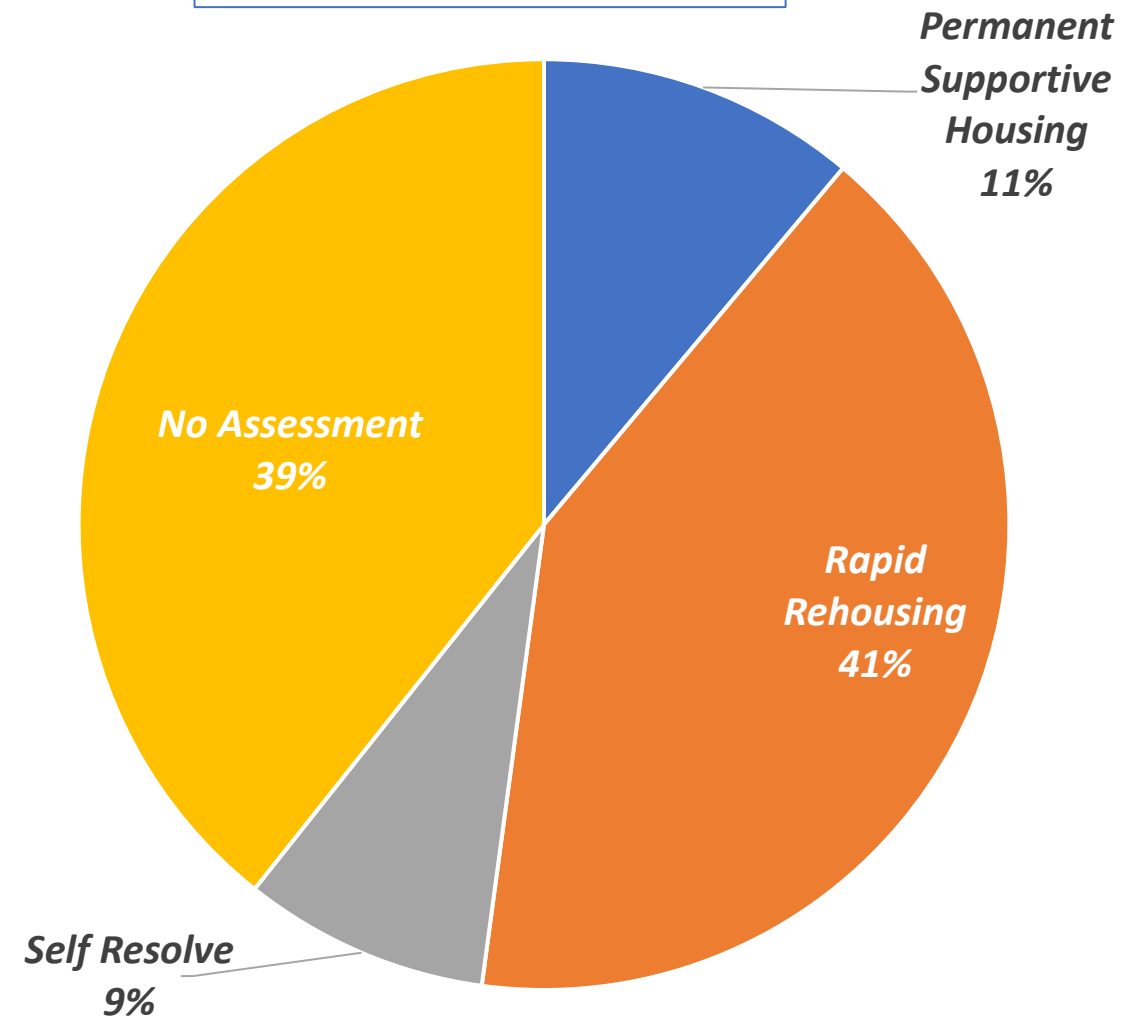
- Total Inflow: 724
- Total Outflow: 461
- Average Length of Stay for Leavers: 21 days
- 117 People added to Coordinated Entry List

Profile of New Intakes After March 2020 | N=117

Gender

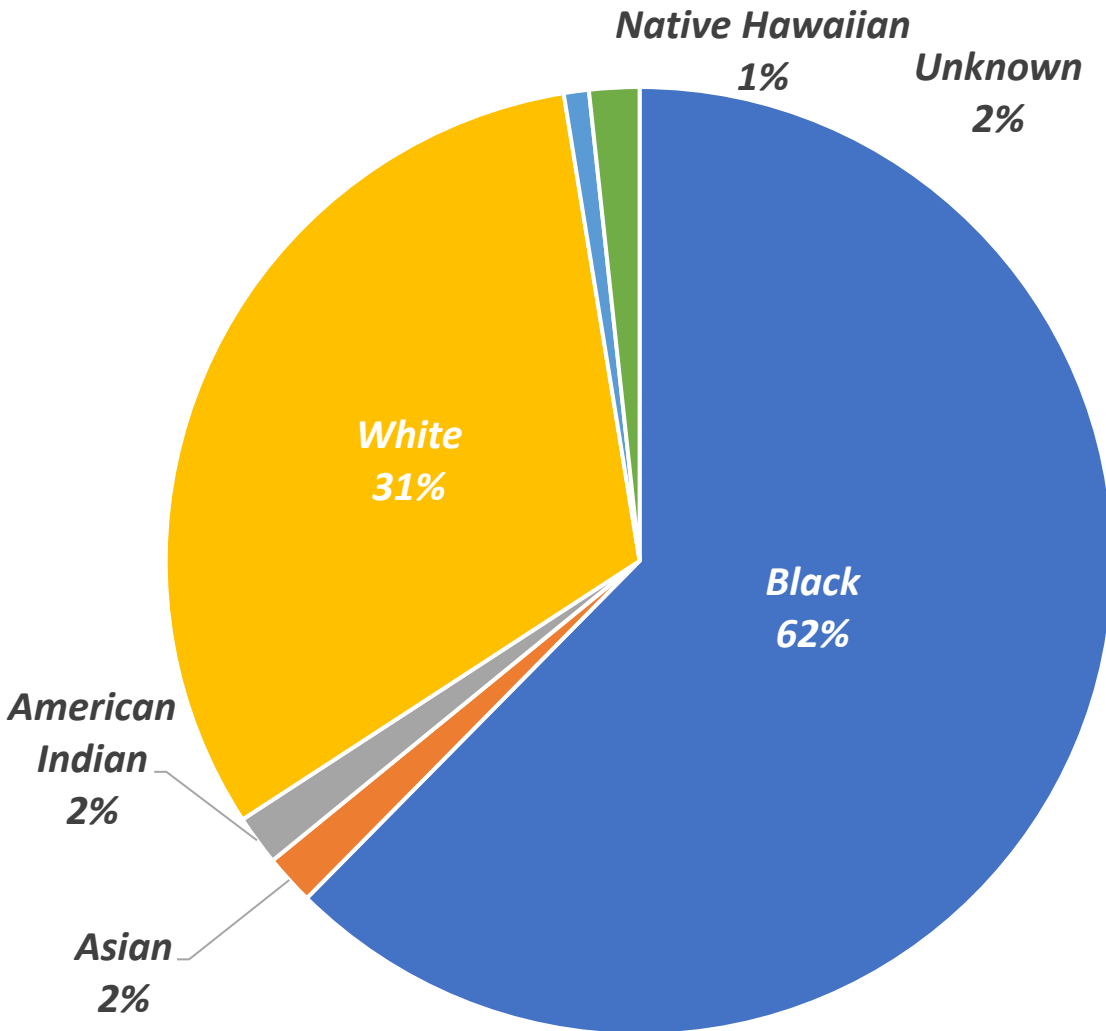


Housing Prioritization



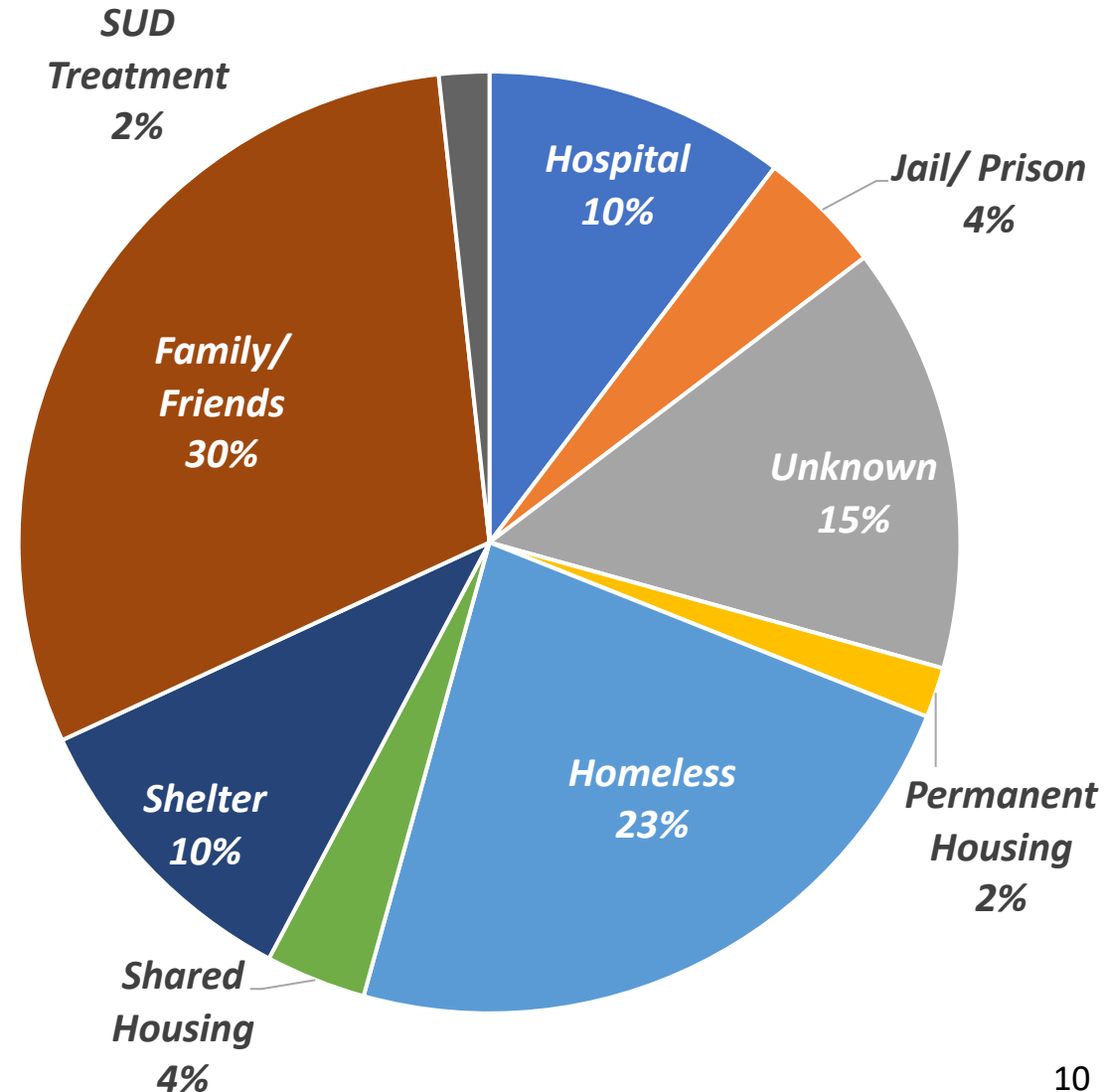
Profile of New Intakes After March 2020 | N=117

Identified Race



* 11% Identified as Latinx

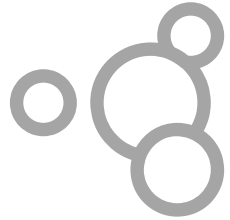
Previous Living Situation



New Programming | Funding

- HUD Emergency Solutions Grant \$6.2 Million
 - Staffing at Emergency Shelter
 - Rapid Rehousing
 - Employment Services
- Housing Initiative Fund \$1.5 Million
 - Short-term Rent Subsidy
 - Homeless Diversion
- Coronavirus Relief Fund \$22 Million (\$20 M is provisional)
 - Eviction/ Homeless Prevention
 - Homeless Diversion and Rapid Exit
 - Permanent Supportive Housing

Continued Efforts to End Homelessness



**Since April 1, 246
people have moved
into permanent
housing!**



Single Adults (84 people)

59 in Permanent Supportive
Housing

23 in Rapid Rehousing

1 in Rental Assistance
Program

1 Self Resolve



Families with Children (162 people)

86 in Rapid Rehousing

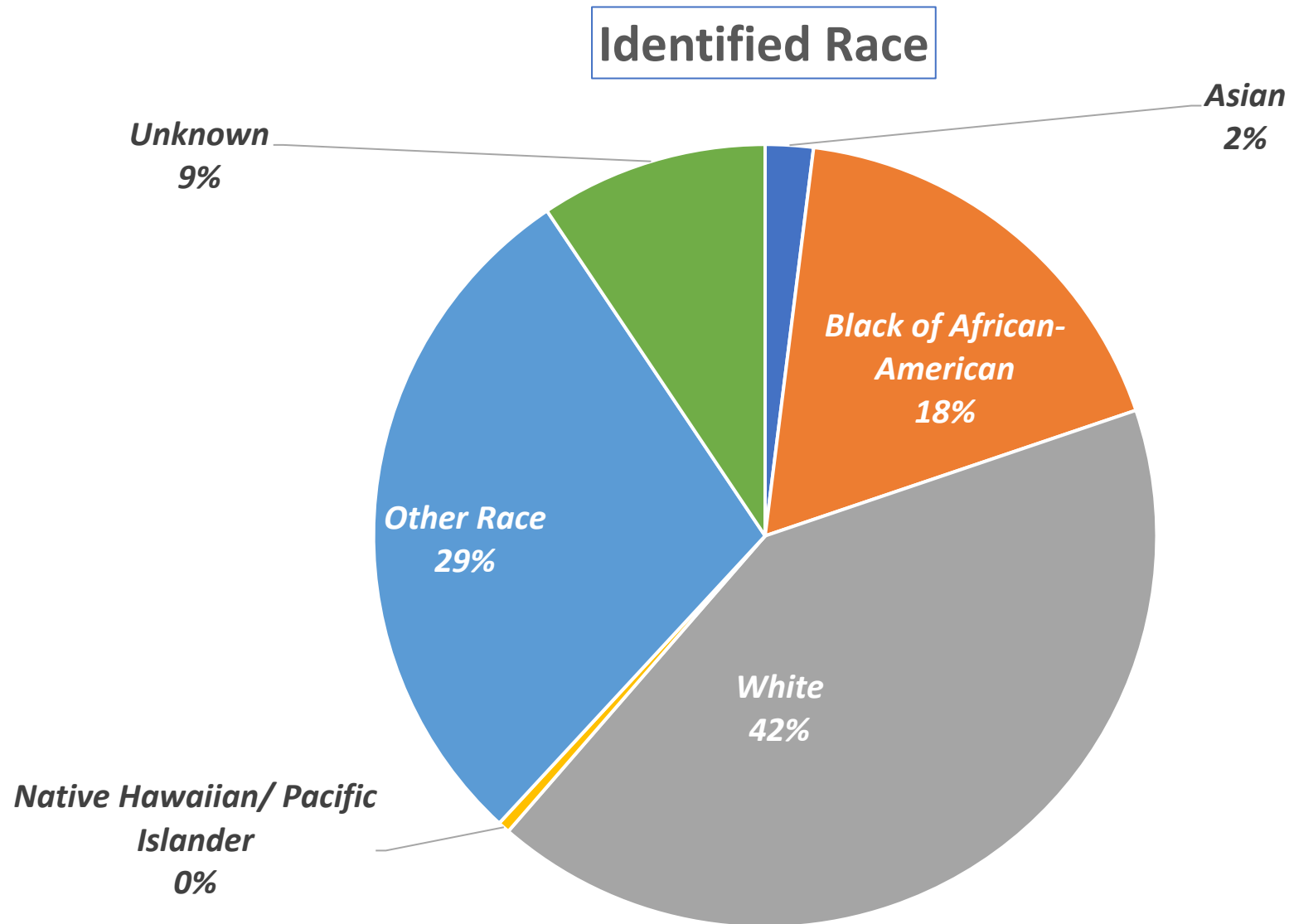
18 in Permanent Supportive
Housing

58 in Other Permanent
Housing

COVID Rent Relief Program

- 1,271 households deemed eligible
 - 205 households have received benefits to date
 - 250 closed due to no response, client decline, other
 - 800 in process
- Approximately 1,500 households on the waitlist for services
- Average Benefit is \$3,258

Profile of COVID Rent Relief Recipients | N=202



***74% Identified as Latinx**

County-wide Recovery Efforts

Raymond L. Crowel, Psy.D., Director, Department of Health and Human Services

Housing and Homelessness Recovery Workgroup Member

Frank Demarais, Deputy Director, Department of Housing and Community Affairs

Recovery Mission Areas and Leads

Recovery Coordination Chart

- Government Operations and Services – Fariba Kassiri
- Economic Revitalization – Jerome Fletcher
- Health and Human Services – Dr. Raymond Crowel
- Housing – Aseem Nigam
- Education – Dr. DeRionne Pollard, Dr. Monifa McKnight

DHHS Mission Areas

- Early Childcare and Education
- Behavioral Health and Crisis Services
- Housing and Homelessness
- Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities
- Public Health
- Service Access Equity

Housing and Homeless Recovery Groups

Amanda Harris, Chief of Services to End and Prevent Homelessness

Group Composition

All recovery groups are composed of staff from:

- DHHS – Services to End and Prevent Homelessness, Behavioral Health and Crisis Services, Aging and Disability Services
- Department of Correction and Rehabilitation (DOCR)
- Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA)
- Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC)
- Nonprofit partners including Bethesda Cares, Every Mind, Homeless Persons Representation Project, Interfaith Works, Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, and Pathways to Housing
- City of Gaithersburg and City of Rockville
- Council staff



A large, abstract blue watercolor splash shape on the left side of the slide, with various shades of blue and white ink-like textures.

Homeless Crisis Response Recovery Group

Goals and Objectives

- Reducing inflow to homeless continuum through diversion, rapid exit, and centralized shelter intake
- Decreasing Length of Stay in shelter
- Identifying additional shelter facilities to maintain capacity to serve growing number of new intakes
- Protocols for COVID-19 testing at congregate facilities

A large, abstract blue watercolor splash graphic on the left side of the slide, with various shades of blue and white ink-like textures.

Homeless Crisis Response Recovery Group: Progress to Date

- Developed protocols for COVID-19 testing at congregate facilities
- Commitment to centralized shelter intake and diversion

Homeless Crisis Response Recommendations

Safe Shelter Facilities

Short-term Strategies

- Continued use of the Long Branch and Coffield Recreational Center as well as Progress Place for emergency shelter through March 31, 2021.
- Utilization of Carroll House for additional women's shelter.
- Utilization of Holly Hall as bridge housing for vulnerable adults currently in hotels.

Long-term Strategies

- Identify and secure funding for an additional facility for emergency shelter for up to 100 men.
- Eliminate the need for winter emergency shelter by increasing year-round bed capacity.

Homeless Crisis Response Recommendations

Reducing Inflow into Homelessness

Short-term Strategies

- Implement a centralized shelter intake and diversion program that includes funding for two Diversion Specialists 2
- Re-open crisis beds, in-patient drug treatment programs, and other supportive housing programs for new intakes and resume face-to-face mobile crisis services
- Enhance communication and coordination with regional partners to ensure warm hand-offs of individuals not eligible for Montgomery County housing programs due to residency status. Fund a full-time Regional Homeless Services Liaison Coordinator. Advocate to all regional partners to fund Liaison Coordinators for each jurisdiction.
- Early involvement of homeless service providers in discharge planning from all behavioral health facilities and funding for an additional Health Care for the Homeless staff focused specifically on people behavioral health.
- Early and continued engagement with homeless service providers in hospital discharge planning for people experiencing or previously homeless. Executive memorandums of understanding with all hospitals in the county to enhance care coordination and treatment.

Homeless Crisis Response Recommendations

Reducing Inflow into Homelessness

Long-term Strategies

- Advocate for a Housing First/ Person-Centered approach to behavioral health housing programs including residential rehabilitation programs, sober living / recovery houses, and adult group homes.
- Remove barriers to accessing substance use treatment by embracing a Harm Reduction approach in programming.
- Give preference to individuals experiencing homelessness to access behavioral health housing programs including residential rehabilitation programs.
- Provide funding for a rapid rehousing and homeless diversion program for individuals exiting the correctional system.
- Ensure boundary spanners exist and are resourced across all systems. A boundary spanner is a dedicated job, role, or responsibility to work in a multi- agency or multi system environment to ensure the connection of resources and information across agencies and systems

Homeless Crisis Response Recommendations

Rapid Exit from Emergency Shelter

Short-term Strategies

- Provide flexible funding for emergency shelter and street outreach providers to assist people with quickly exiting shelter or street homelessness. This funding could be used for transportation, family support, car repairs, supplies needed to secure employment, etc.
- Utilize ESG – COVID funding to create 120 units per year of Rapid Rehousing and intensive employment coaching / services.
- Create a Docket for Homeless Persons to address the barriers to accessing safe and affordable housing.

Homeless Crisis Response Recommendations

Rapid Exit from Emergency Shelter

Long-term Strategies

- Support all recommendations of the Decriminalization Ad Hoc Committee of the Interagency Commission on Homelessness
- Secure funding for additional Assertive Community Treatment teams to provide intensive behavioral health supports. One such team should be specifically focused on serving people experiencing homelessness and should be provided with supplemental local funding to allow for services to people who are disengaged and/or ineligible for Medicaid.
- Give preference or ensure increased access to nursing homes, adult foster care, and home health care services to people experiencing homelessness or in permanent supportive housing programs.

Homeless Crisis Response Recommendations

Increased Access to Services

Strategies

- Stand up a youth homeless drop-in center and incorporate homeless diversion services and youth-specific coordinated entry.
- Create a homeless drop-in center located in up-county to support the growing number of unsheltered individuals, largely from the immigrant community, in the Gaithersburg/Germantown area. Including incorporating bi-lingual staff and culturally sensitive services.

A large, abstract blue watercolor splash graphic on the left side of the slide, with various shades of blue and white ink-like textures.

Housing Supports Recovery Group

Goals and objectives

- Scaling Rapid Rehousing
- Resuming pre-COVID level community-based services
- Addressing inequity in access to permanent housing

A large, abstract blue watercolor splash graphic on the left side of the slide, with various shades of blue and white ink-like textures.

Housing Supports Recovery Group: Progress to Date

- Created Policy for Resuming Home Visiting

Housing Supports Recovery Group Recommendations

Community-based Support Services

- Advocate for community-based safety-net/service providers to resume in-home services
- Secure funding for additional Assertive Community Treatment teams to provide intensive behavioral health supports. One such team should be specifically focused on serving people experiencing homelessness and should be provided with supplemental local funding to allow for services to people who are disengaged and/or ineligible for Medicaid.

Housing Supports Recovery Group Recommendations

Long-term Housing Subsidies

- Advocate for additional federal Housing Choice Vouchers reserved for people exiting homelessness or the Rapid Rehousing program.
- Support program changes to the Rental Assistance Program to target households currently experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness. Increase funding for the Rental Assistance Program by \$4 million to change the maximum subsidy amount from \$200 to \$400 per month.
- Secure set-asides of Housing Choice Voucher turnover for people exiting homelessness or the Rapid Rehousing program.
- Advocate that the Rent Supplement Program take referrals from Coordinated Entry.
- Advocate for an increase in the Housing Initiative Fund to meet the growing need for housing for households exiting or with a history of homelessness
- Dedicate at least 10% of all newly produced or preserved affordable housing units to households exiting (or with a history) of homelessness

Housing Supports Recovery Group Recommendations

Barriers to Housing

- Support “ban the box” legislation
- Support “just cause” eviction legislation
- Advocate that HOC review eligibility criteria on criminal backgrounds and rental history
- Develop an independent pathway to investigate housing discrimination and illegal practices at housing complexes that is not client driven
- Creation of a Landlord Risk Mitigation Fund

Housing Supports Recovery Group Recommendations

Development of Deeply Affordable Housing

- Explore available hotel portfolios and repurpose as extremely affordable micro units.

New Business

Ebony Johnson, Co-Chair

Announcements