



INTERAGENCY COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS

Outcomes and Improvement Committee Recommendations

February 2020

Establishing Annual Performance Goals for the Montgomery County Continuum of Care

The Outcomes and Improvement Committee (OIC) recommends that the Interagency Commission on Homelessness (ICH) vote to adopt the following performance goals for the current federal fiscal year (October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020):

1. **Goal #1 (System Performance Measure #1):** Decrease the average length of homelessness by 15%
2. **Goal #2 (System Performance Measure #2):** Maintain the already low percent of households who return to homelessness, so that no more than 15% of housed households return within two years.
3. **Goal #3:** Decrease the number of people experiencing homelessness on any given night:
 - by 10% among sheltered people
 - by 25% among unsheltered people
4. **Goal #4 (System Performance Measure #4):** Set project-level benchmarks for income growth and evaluate data quality. Needs additional analysis and an interim review of data.
5. **Goal #5 (System Performance Measure #5):** Decrease the number of first-time homeless by 25%
 - a. This goal takes into account the success of implementing a problem-solving/ shelter diversion approach on the family side and the intent to extend this strategy to the single adult system. Historically, homeless prevention/ diversion has not been tracked in Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), but a plan to collect diversion data in HMIS is being developed. In addition, other ongoing activities including expanding the use of shallow subsidies and flexible eviction prevention assistance should decrease the number significantly.
 - b. Review interim data in 6 months.
6. **Goal #6 (System Performance Measure #7):** Increase the number of households placed in permanent housing to 50% of all exits.

The OIC recommends maintaining these goals but revising the targets if/as necessary in September 2020 for the upcoming federal fiscal year (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021).

Why is it important to set system performance goals?

System performance goals will help Montgomery County reduce homelessness if they are used to align resources and guide decision making. Establishing goals will communicate a vision for the future and ensure all stakeholders in the Continuum of Care (CoC) are working towards common results.

How were these goals determined?

In 2016, the OIC adopted the seven U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) System Performance Measures as indicators of performance for Montgomery County. Between 2016 and 2017, the OIC spent considerable time reviewing performance data, evaluating data quality, and understanding the system's performance. The ICH approved the Committee to move forward on establishing system performance goals in March 2018. To establish these proposed goals, the OIC reviewed past performance data and considered reasonable improvements to the homeless system which are expected to improve performance. The Committee has continuously monitored performance data and data quality. The OIC decided that these efforts could be expanded and the new aspirations of the committee are reflected in the goals above and the updates below. These updated goals reflect both the parameters of the HUD System Performance Measures and the consensus of the OIC about what is ambitious, realistic, and achievable for Montgomery County in the coming federal fiscal year(s).

What needs to happen for Montgomery County to achieve these goals?

Montgomery County conducted a gaps analysis in September 2017 which made recommendations to improve the homeless system in the County. In July 2017, the committee recommended ICH implement the following recommendations to meet the performance goals:

- Adopt a performance based contracting system that rewards providers who are contributing to improved system performance.
- Utilize existing prevention resources to establish diversion programs in emergency shelters, particularly for single adults who are not chronically homeless.
- Expand rapid re-housing by 150 units and adopt the Critical Time Intervention as the services strategy to increase the number of households served in existing units.
- Increase investment in housing location services, particularly to households with the longest stays in shelter and transitional housing.
- Expand the Move Up program to determine consumers' ability to transition out of Permanent Supportive Housing and into other permanent housing.

- Move the administration of the Rental Assistance Program into the coordinated entry system.
- Co-locate other mainstream services at coordinated entry to ensure eligible households are connected to public benefits, employment services and behavioral health.

In addition, the OIC recommended ICH implement the following recommendation:

- Improve coordination between the singles and family system to allow pregnant women to receive seamless shelter and support.

How are these goals measured?

The OIC recommends these goals be established for the time period of October to October each year, with the exception of the first goal, which is measured by the Point-in-Time count which takes place in January.

1. The average length of homelessness measures the average length of time people remain in emergency shelter, safe haven, and transitional housing programs.
2. Return to homelessness measures the number of people who exited the homelessness system to permanent housing and who returned to the system within 24 months of their date of exit to permanent housing.
3. The number of people experiencing homelessness is measured by the annual Point-in-Time count of sheltered and unsheltered persons.
4. The income growth of clients is currently measured by comparing the most recent information for every client to the information when those clients entered the program they are currently in.
5. The number of first-time homeless is measured by the number of people who are entered into the HMIS for the first time or who have entered the homeless system for the first time in the last two years (after previously being in the system).
6. The number of households placed in permanent housing is measured by the percent of households who exited safe haven, transitional housing, and rapid re-housing programs to permanent housing destinations.

Permanent housing destinations include rental housing with or without an ongoing subsidy and staying with family or friends permanently.

The OIC has drafted a scorecard for provider-level performance on metrics related to the HUD System Performance Measures, our recommended CoC Goals, and the annual CoC NOFA competition scoring tool for renewal projects. Through the HMIS subcommittee, OIC is testing and implementing the procedures for data collection. The scorecard will inform the committee's regular reports to ICH.