



## Interagency Commission on Homelessness

### HOUSING TOGETHER = STRONGER MONTGOMERY

#### *ICH Strategic Plan Action Appendix: One-Year Action Plan July 2025-June 2026*

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Montgomery County's vision is to ensure that homelessness will be rare, brief, and one-time only for everyone. To make progress towards this vision over the next 3 years, Montgomery County will focus efforts on ending homelessness among **youth, veterans, and families** experiencing homelessness. The focus on these sub-populations, does not replace or lessen the continued effort to permanently house single adults and people experiencing chronic homelessness. Rather, it represents a renewed and targeted response to these sub-populations identified in the Housing Together campaign.

*Strategies and Action Plans:* Montgomery County will employ the following six strategies to work to end homelessness and achieve our goals. Action plans for each strategy are provided on the pages listed below.

Strategy 1: Address Gaps in Services Across the System  Pages 2-3	Strategy 2: Build and Support Strong and Adaptable Programs  Page 4-5	Strategy 3: Build and Support Affordable Housing Solutions within the Homeless Continuum  Page 6-7
Strategy 4: Coordinate Effectively Across Other Systems of Care  Pages 8-9	Strategy 5: Increase and Diversify Funding  Pages 10	Strategy 6: Educate and Advocate for Change  Pages 11-12

One ICH Committee or Workgroup will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of each strategy, including assigning tasks, tracking progress, updating action plans as needed, and reporting back to the ICH Strategy and Planning Committee, who will oversee the plan as a whole. Additionally, each strategy's implementation will be heavily shaped by the voices of people with lived experience of homelessness. Montgomery County is committed to centering the voices of people with lived experience through representation and leadership in all committees and workgroups, and creating accessible, low-barrier opportunities to offer feedback. As such, each strategy will be implemented in collaboration with those who are most impacted by the homeless response system.

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## **Strategy 1 Action Plan: Address Gaps in Services Across the System**

Work to eliminate gaps in services across the systems that lead to people experiencing and re-entering homelessness and prevent people from exiting homelessness.

### **Priorities**

1. Analyze how the system is currently working and identify areas for improvement in access and outcomes.
2. Provide guidance to other Strategy Workgroups to improve access to services for all.
3. Collaborate with the People's Committee to codify the role of the People's Committee in reviewing policies and regulations that are implemented in the continuum.

<b>Action Plan</b>	
<b>Priority 1:</b> Analyze how the system is currently working and identify areas for improvement in access and outcomes.	<b>Action Steps:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Review assessment tools used for housing and housing services.</li><li>2. Determine revisions and/or replacement assessments that improve outcomes. Consider tools from other jurisdictions that have proven to be effective.</li><li>3. Work with HMIS data team to what gaps exist when it comes to key metrics (ex: length of stay, return to homelessness).</li><li>4. Consider which gaps are within the scope of the homeless response system and where action can be taken to address these.</li><li>5. Educate providers and system partners about these findings and create action plan to address them.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Ex: training on self awareness, respect, etc</li></ol></li></ol>
<b>Priority 2:</b> Provide guidance to other Strategy Workgroups to improve access to services for all.	<b>Action Steps:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Work with Strategy 2 working group to advocate for opportunities for PLWEH to work within the homeless continuum.</li><li>2. Work with Strategy 4 Working Group to analyze and assess cross-sector partnerships and support integration of gaps analysis into emerging data sharing agreements.</li><li>3. Provide guidance to Advocacy coalition and Strategy 6 working group on centering the voices of people served by the homeless response system in set of policy priorities.</li></ol>
<b>Priority 3:</b> Collaborate with the Peoples' Committee to codify the role of the People's Committee in reviewing policies and regulations that are implemented in the continuum.	<b>Action Steps:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Create conditions to recruit and retain partners with lived expertise in multiple parts of the CoC experience and range of demographics and household composition to reflect population served (single adults, families, families with minor children).</li><li>2. Incorporate PLE representation into contract requirements.</li></ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Elevate PLE from advisory to more decision-making roles, particularly regarding all processes/outcomes impacting utilizers of CoC services.</li> <li>4. Incentivize PWLEH by identifying an appropriate amount of compensation for their ongoing expertise.</li> <li>5. Explore assistance with childcare or childcare costs and transportation to remove barriers for PWLEH.</li> <li>6. Develop process for People's Committee to provide ongoing feedback across systems to include all departments and providers within the CoC.</li> <li>7. Mandate training for CoC on decentering self to receive feedback openly and demonstrating cultural relevance when interacting with clients.</li> </ol>
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## **Strategy 2 Action Plan: Build and Support Strong and Adaptable Programs**

Ensure programs across the system are effectively designed, executed, and supported to meet the varied needs and experiences of clients, providing high quality, trauma informed services to all clients, absent of discrimination. Montgomery County will continue to effectively meet the needs of county residents as federal priorities, practices and requirements change.

### **Priorities:**

1. Effectively meet the needs of youth experiencing homelessness and reduce the inflow of youth entering the homeless services system.
2. Ensure people are effectively supported in permanent housing to reduce returns to homelessness.
3. Make the best use of existing resources and best practices for eviction prevention and homeless diversion/rapid resolution to curb inflow to homelessness.

<b>Action Plan</b>	
<b>Priority 1:</b> Effectively meet the needs of youth experiencing or and reduce the inflow of youth entering the homeless services system.	<b>Action Steps:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Build on the success of targeted interventions like the SHARP program to create new supports for youth at risk of homelessness. Ensure these supports are expansive, comprehensive, and low barrier to access.</li><li>2. Engage youth experiencing homelessness to understand and address common causes of youth homelessness to reduce inflow.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Employ a variety of engagement tools including focus group, survey, Youth Advisory Board support, and others</li></ol></li><li>3. Identify and address barriers to youth entering permanent housing in order to increase system outflow.</li><li>4. Formally explore creative housing options such as shared housing, workforce development, and other interventions to support youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness.</li><li>5. Engage in partnerships with Montgomery County Public Schools and other partners that encounter youth regularly to ensure no youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness goes without support.</li></ol>
<b>Priority 2:</b> Ensure people are effectively supported in permanent housing to reduce returns to homelessness.	<b>Action Steps:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Provide annual training for all housing support staff on Housing First, harm reduction, motivational interviewing, and trauma - informed care.</li><li>2. Maintain high fidelity to the Housing First evidence-based program models and monitor programs on a biannual basis.</li><li>3. Enhance support services to allow individuals to age in place in permanent housing programs (PSH, RRH, others).</li><li>4. Create intentional pathways to integrated care by</li></ol>

	<p>developing real and meaningful coordination with behavioral health, primary care, and other specialty services based on individual needs.</p> <p>5. Partner with Maryland Department of Health for success of ACIS coordination to ensure people have robust services needed to remain stably housed.</p>
<p><b>Priority 3:</b> Make the best use of existing resources and best practices for eviction prevention and homeless diversion/rapid resolution to curb inflow to homelessness.</p>	<p><b>Action Steps:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct Systems Analysis focused on gaps to understand needed improvements to eviction prevention and homeless diversion interventions. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Use results of the gaps analysis to make needed improvements to make prevention and diversion programs more effective, comprehensive, and consistent across the homelessness response system.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Explore flexible prevention models that allow for longer term assistance and housing focused case management.</li> <li>3. Train all shelter staff on diversion and rapid resolution.</li> <li>4. Incentivize the hiring/employment of people experiencing homelessness and peers.</li> </ol>

### **Strategy 3 Action Plan: Build and Support Affordable Housing Solutions within the Homeless Continuum**

Increase and preserve the supply of affordable housing to ensure clients within the homeless continuum have sustainable and affordable housing opportunities.

#### **Priorities:**

1. Partner with housing developers to obtain dedicated units for homeless system referrals as part of affordable housing production efforts.
2. Maintain and increase landlord partnerships.
3. Support landlords and property management professionals in working with the homeless system and people served through the homeless system.

<b>Action Plan</b>	
<b>Priority 1:</b> Partner with housing developers and funders to increase access to quality housing units as part of affordable housing production efforts.	<b>Action Steps:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ensure the needs of people experiencing homelessness are incorporated into land-use planning and funding considerations.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Advocate for new dedicated funding sources for deeply affordable housing (both capital funding and rental subsidies).</li></ol></li><li>2. Work with local and state funding and developer partners to establish and implement homeless preference and set-aside units to create more housing units specifically for people coming out of homelessness.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Cultivate close working partnership with DHCA and HOC to ensure existing affordable housing and vouchers, as well as homeless preference units are fully utilized.</li></ol></li><li>3. Ensure the needs of tenants are incorporated into project design, screening and application processes, including the need to reduce barriers to acceptance and lease up.</li><li>4. Create a committee to explore nontraditional solutions to expanding housing stock such as Accessory Dwelling Units, modular units, alternative building methods, and others.</li></ol>
<b>Priority 2:</b> Maintain and increase landlord partnerships.	<b>Action Steps:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Consider any necessary improvements to RentSelect to make it a more effective landlord database that lists all programs and requirements. Keep it updated.</li><li>2. Analyze existing landlord partnerships to understand unit types, accessibility, and location. Identify gaps based on population needs and use information to target landlord engagement efforts.</li><li>3. Creatively and responsively educate and engage landlords</li></ol>

	<p>using homeless simulations and other tools to communicate the needs and reduce stigma. Develop communication strategies related to potential funding instability, addressing neighbor complaints, and other topics.</p> <p>4. Educate tenants and advocates on Fair Housing and tenants rights, and enhance enforcement of existing fair housing laws to reduce discrimination and barriers to housing access (ex: background screening, source of income discrimination, etc)</p>
<p><b>Priority 3:</b> Support property management professionals working with the homeless system.</p>	<p><b>Action Steps:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hold focus group(s) with existing property management partners to understand support needs and challenges.</li> <li>2. Provide educational opportunities focused on trauma-informed property management approaches, de-escalation strategies, coordinating with service providers, and homeless system referral processes. Use feedback from property managers to identify additional topics.</li> <li>3. Ensure the referral system makes efficient and appropriate referrals to units with project-based rental assistance.</li> </ol>

#### **Strategy 4 Action Plan: Coordinate Effectively Across Other Systems of Care**

Shift the system from siloed services to coordinated services, so agencies across systems work in alignment, with clarity on roles, complementary services, and ease of sharing information and feedback.

##### **Priorities:**

1. Establish defined liaisons for key cross sector partners and key neighboring jurisdictions to streamline coordination with the CoC.
2. Improve the collection and sharing of data.
3. Build infrastructure for robust case conferencing across systems, jurisdictions, and agencies to more effectively serve households in the homeless continuum.

<b>Action Plan</b>	
<b>Priority 1:</b> Establish defined liaisons for key cross sector partners and key neighboring jurisdictions to streamline coordination with the CoC.	<b>Action Steps:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Brainstorm list of existing and potential partners to focus on to formalize cross-sector partnerships.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Ex: HOC, other DHHS service areas including Aging and Disability Services, Behavioral Health and Crisis Services, Children Youth and Family Services, and Public Health Services, DHCA, Social Security, Montgomery County Public Schools, the judicial system, Sherriff's Office, DOCR, the hospital system, Nexus Montgomery, and neighboring counties.</li></ol></li><li>2. Create a standard agreement that can be easily adapted to each unique partnership, that explains the benefits of partnership and the expectations of each party.</li><li>3. Build on existing relationships to formalize communication and collaboration structures.</li><li>4. Conduct outreach to create new agreements with key cross-sector partners.</li><li>5. Create an established system of communication between partners to consistently evaluate effectiveness of the partnership and update agreements as needed.</li><li>6. Develop processes for referring clients to providers in other jurisdictions or outside of the CoC, based on client needs and preferences.</li><li>7. Analyze data shared between the District and Prince George's County to develop regional solutions to the increased homelessness since the pandemic.</li><li>8. Advocate with Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and other regional partners for data-driven interjurisdictional solutions to homelessness.</li></ol>
<b>Priority 2:</b> Improve the collection and sharing of data.	<b>Action Steps:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Identify locations with robust data sharing practice (e.g. New</li></ol>



	<p>York, Chicago, Seattle, and cities in Connecticut).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Learn what changes were made, what hurdles were overcome, and how the changes were implemented.</li> <li>b. Conduct a scan of existing Montgomery County data sharing agreements and create a list of new desired data sharing partners.</li> <li>c. Engage in outreach to potential new partners to understand feasibility and address barriers.</li> <li>d. Engage IT and Legal.</li> <li>e. Identify a system that supports more robust data sharing with the court and Sheriff's Office related to evictions.</li> <li>f. Explore introduction of CRISP to improve data-sharing</li> </ol> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Begin to draft new data sharing agreements, policies, and procedures <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Share with the community of providers for input.</li> <li>b. Move forward with implementing new agreements.</li> <li>c. Ensure data sharing agreements and procedures include analysis disaggregated by key characteristics.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<p><b>Priority 3:</b> Build infrastructure for robust case conferencing across systems, jurisdictions, and agencies to more effectively serve households in the homeless continuum.</p>	<p><b>Action Steps:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluate existing case conferencing practices and structures to evaluate what is working and what is not.</li> <li>2. Build on existing strengths to create new practices and structures, to pilot in the first half of 2026.</li> </ol>

### **Strategy 5 Action Plan: Increase and Diversify Funding**

Increase the amount of and sources of funding to end homelessness in Montgomery County, ensuring that the availability of resources and the ease of accessing resources matches the need and aligns with the strategic plan's bold goals and timeline.

#### **Priorities:**

1. Establish a clear and transparent understanding of homeless system funding.
2. Identify the full costs of meeting our 3-year population goals.
3. Increase private funding to prioritize funding prevention and housing solutions.

<b>Action Plan</b>	
<b>Priority 1:</b> Establish a clear and transparent understanding of homeless system funding.	<b>Action Steps:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Develop a methodology for collecting and analyzing public and private funding used in the homeless system.</li><li>2. Conduct baseline analysis and a plan for collecting, maintaining, and analyzing information on-going.</li><li>3. Develop and implement a communication plan to engage key stakeholders and the community.</li></ol>
<b>Priority 2:</b> Identify the full costs of meeting our 3-year housing placement goals.	<b>Action Steps:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Develop a methodology to estimate the full costs of meeting Housing Together housing placement goals.</li><li>2. Identify amount needed to fill any funding gaps, including in the event that federal or state funding and resources are further reduced.</li></ol>
<b>Priority 3:</b> Increase private funding to prioritize funding prevention and housing solutions.	<b>Action Steps:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Identify best use of private funding to expand resources for housing solutions and homeless prevention.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Focus on decentralizing prevention services and identifying more upstream solutions to reduce system inflow.</li></ol></li><li>2. Analyze current and potential private funding sources based on criteria above and current partnerships.</li><li>3. Develop a fundraising plan to expand existing and secure new private funding</li></ol>

### **Strategy 6 Action Plan: Educate and Advocate for Change**

Create and support a common advocacy agenda across the homeless services system to increase the understanding of homelessness and decrease its associated stigma across the community, and to create support for the strategic plan's bold goals and timeline.

#### **Priorities:**

1. Create a coordinated education and advocacy effort with supporting infrastructure to raise the profile of the issue of homelessness across the community.
2. Engage in robust outreach to build cross-sector support for the Housing Together campaign.
3. Identify policy priorities for the County Executive, County Council, and the Maryland General Assembly, and educational opportunities to boost public awareness about homelessness.

<b>Action Plan</b>	
<b>Priority 1:</b> Create a coordinated education and advocacy effort with supporting infrastructure to raise the profile of the issue of homelessness across the community.	<b>Action Steps:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Draft standard talking points to be the basis of the advocacy effort, including:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Education about homelessness, incorporating personal narratives, info graphics, definitions, data, and other tools.</li><li>b. Informing the public about funding and resource gaps caused by federal or state funding reductions.</li><li>c. A clear call to action, sharing ways for people to get involved with addressing homelessness – potential actions to take, volunteer support needed</li></ol></li><li>2. Ensure voices of people impacted are central to the narrative and outreach strategy (collaborate with Peoples' Committee on this effort)</li><li>3. Share the narrative with homeless service providers for input and feedback, using these talking points as a launch pad for campaign.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Ask for input and support</li><li>b. Create partners committee to help drive the campaign</li></ol></li></ol>
<b>Priority 2:</b> Engage in robust outreach to build cross-sector support for the advocacy campaign.	<b>Action Steps:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Create list of a wide variety of community partners to join in advocacy efforts<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Ex: Schools, health partners, faith communities, advocacy groups focused on other issues that have close ties to housing, and others</li></ol></li><li>2. Organize outreach to these partners, centering the voices of people with lived experience to share their experiences and advocate<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Conduct public listening sessions, sharing campaign plans for their input and support.</li></ol></li></ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Bring funders together to share the draft narrative and campaign plans:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ask for input and funding.</li> <li>b. Create a funders committee to help drive financial support</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Request pro-bono support (PR advisors and Media support).</li> </ol>
<p><b>Priority 3:</b> Identify policy priorities for the County Executive, County Council, and the Maryland General Assembly, and educational opportunities to boost public awareness about homelessness.</p>	<p><b>Action Steps:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Convene partners to brainstorm policy priorities.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Work with Peoples Committee, Youth Advisory Board, REWG, and other parties with robust lived experience.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Narrow down policy priorities for concerted advocacy effort.</li> <li>3. Cultivate opportunities for public education.</li> <li>4. Plan a 'Lobby Day' for the 2026 MGA legislative session.</li> <li>5. Increase funding for people with lived experience to receive compensation for educational and advocacy projects.</li> </ol>