



# INTERAGENCY COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS

Housing for all = A Stronger Montgomery

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/homelessness](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/homelessness) | [HousingForAll@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:HousingForAll@montgomerycountymd.gov)

Tuesday, June 4, 2024 | 3-5p

APPROVED: August 7, 2024

Present		
Chelsea Andrews	Courtney Hall	Robin Lewis
Margarita Bohorquez	Gwendolyn Harter	Pelumi Olatinpo (Pelumi)
Scott Bruton	Manuel Hidalgo	Karishma Sheth
Ebony Grey, Co-Chair	Terence Hill	Vaughn Stewart
Stacey Gold	Christine Hong	Earl Stoddard

**Welcome, introductions and approval of the March 20 meeting notes:** Co-Chair Dr. Ebony Grey Manny Hidalgo motioned to approve the March 20 meeting notes. Gwendolyn Harter seconded the motion. The notes were approved unanimously.

**Zero For All Populations Goal update and discussion:** Paloma Arroyo-LeFebre, MSSW Zero for All Strategy and Collaboration Coordinator in partnership with SEPH and Bethesda Cares.

Paloma reviewed the subpopulations and shared the progress that has been made as of April. Details were presented on PowerPoint presentation.

Courtney Hall shared that it was good to see adults-only numbers of people being housed. Courtney asked where this work positions us in relation to obtaining functional zero numbers and how do we interpret this data compared to the increase of people experiencing homelessness in the point-in-time count?

Christine shared that the average length of stay in shelter is 136 days which shows that we struggle to get people housed. We are working on different approaches to reduce the length of stay. Many single adults were sheltering in emergency shelters and hotels. SEPH is making progress to move people out of these settings to shelter where they can receive regular case management which is progress toward their obtaining permanent housing.

Gwen Harter asked what is the total number of people that are still unhoused? Christine responded that there are about 500 people on the coordinated list which are waiting for housing. Bezawit Baheru reported that the 310 people reported as housed exited to permanent housing.

**2024 Point-in-Time (PIT) update:** Christine Hong, Chief of SEPH

On January 24, more than 167 volunteers turned out to participate in the PIT count. The PIT counts individuals experiencing homelessness who were sheltered and unsheltered.

- Montgomery County had 1,144 people experiencing homelessness (20% increase over 2023).
- There was a significant increase in family households with minor children 85 to 103 (47% increase).
- Total number of adult households increased from 611 to 721.
- Chronic homelessness shows an increase (22 to 100). However, this is due to a change in methodology where the chronic homeless definition is now more expansive and accurate.

The Point-in-Time count is a one-day snapshot of the numbers. Looking at the numbers served in emergency shelters for a calendar year, reflects the same evidence of significant increases.

Conclusion: Homelessness is increasing in Montgomery County, particularly family homelessness. It is concerning that more children are entering homelessness with their families.

Among the eight local jurisdictions, which are part of the Council of Government (COG), six saw increases including the District of Columbia. See 2024 COG PIT Count Report: <https://www.mwcog.org/homelessnessreport/>

**Community-wide Meeting:** Christine Hong

The Communitywide meeting was held on May 13 and over 200 people attended. Elected officials, partners, community members and staff came together to share accomplishments. Individuals shared their experience of working with the homeless system. There was an individual who felt safe to share her personal negative experiences that were difficult for many to hear. There were 37 people who responded to the survey and most said they had a positive experience at the meeting, and they would attend again.

Terence Hill expressed gratitude to the Commission for the Community-wide event. The People's Committee would like to see people with lived experience feel safe to express concerns and a grievance process where people can be confident to get a response. Homelessness is traumatizing and causes a great deal of pain that lingers.

**Public Comments**

Claudia Young shared that she was homeless but now she has a HOC voucher, is working for Shepherd's Table and is in recovery. She expressed gratitude for the assistance Montgomery County provided her. Claudia stated that she is a prime example that things can turn around.

Michaele Patterson also expressed gratitude toward Montgomery County. She shared that she was homeless due to her addiction. Michaele is currently housed, in recovery and a member of the ICH People's Committee. She was assisted by staff at Taft Court who gave her hope and strength to keep going and not give up. Michaele expressed appreciation for the various shelter services. Pathways helped her find permanent housing.

David Echesge is a US veteran and a resident at Progress Place. He shared that he will be moving into his own place in 6 months. David has his key and is grateful to Progress Place for helping him secure his "own spot." David shared his concerns about the loss of security at Progress Place. He shared that "the staff are doing their best to keep people safe, but it is not fair that they must work so hard providing security in addition to all they do." David asked for information on when Progress Place will be getting security.

**Progress Place Security Enhancements:** Dr. Earl Stoddard

Dr. Stoddard shared the Security Services Division of the County Police will enhance Progress Place security in a three-phase plan. Currently, County Police officers and Contract Officers will provide Progress Place security. Eventually, when vacancies are filled and new Police Officers are hired, more officers will be assigned to cover weekdays and weekend shifts. The final phase will place two officers per shifts Monday-Sunday.

## **Committee and Workgroup Updates:**

- **People's Committee** - Lisa Lowe, Chair  
Lisa Lowe shared that the People's Committee has been working on a survey and exploring becoming a peer support group. Lisa express interest in partnering with shelter and PSH providers. She also asked what the steps are to implementing a grievance process and more work groups to look at policies. Christine encouraged all to join the People's Committee meetings to increase partnerships.
- **Workforce Development Workgroup** - K. Kunda, Co-Chair  
The workgroup distributed a survey, and the group is waiting for additional responses. The group is working on hosting a job fair in the fall and is collaborating with Workforce Montgomery to provide insight into how to work with employers to give our clients a second chance. The group is working toward having conversations with employers about reducing barriers and employing people who experience homelessness.
- **Youth Workgroup** - Alycia Chuney, Chair  
In May, the Youth Workgroup met with providers, local agencies and young people to work on the youth coordinated system. The Build for Zero Team assisted in making improvements in access and understanding what youths need to get out of homelessness. Young people shared their stories which assisted in understanding the gaps and barriers they experience.

**Housing Initiative Program Rate Study:** Alyssa Languth, Senior Program Manager, CSH (Corporation for Supportive Housing)

CSH is partnering again with SEPH to conduct a rate study to look at the rates, cost, and expenses for each program. CSH completed a similar study in 2020 which showed that rates were not fully covering costs. The 2020 analyses revealed a reimbursement gap which led to an increase in rates for providers. This year's study started May 17 giving providers a tool to complete and email to Alyssa due Friday, June 7. CSH will compile the results of the tool submissions and conduct follow up with providers. Late July, CSH will review results with providers and SEPH and discuss possible rate changes.

### **Announcement:**

The Community Homeless Memorial is scheduled Thursday, June 13 at 9-11a at Executive Office Building/Circuit Court 101, Monroe Street, Rockville.

### **Next Meeting:**

Tuesday, August 13, 2024 Hybrid and Zoom Webinar.

**Meeting adjourned.**