



Interagency Commission on Homelessness

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FAQs

Inside (not Outside)

For ICH member organizations

May 30, 2017

What is *Inside (not Outside)*?

Inside (not Outside) is a new initiative dedicated to ending chronic homelessness for individuals and families in Montgomery County by the end of 2017. This effort is being led by the County's Interagency Commission on Homelessness (ICH).

Inside (not Outside) builds on the successes of previous efforts to combat homelessness in the County. Through the *Inside (not Outside)* initiative, the **242** Montgomery County residents who have been identified as currently or at risk of being chronically homeless will be permanently housed

What is the definition of chronic homelessness?

The County follows the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition, which is that a chronically homeless individual:

- has a diagnosable disability, and
- lives on the streets, in a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and
- has been homeless continuously for at least 12 months or on at least 4 separate occasions (7+days) in the last 3 years where the combined occasions must total at least 12 months.

A chronically homeless family is one in which the head of household meets the definition for an individual.

What is the ICH asking member organizations to do as part of *Inside (not Outside)*?

At the outset of this initiative, all ICH member organizations are asked to endorse the *Inside (not Outside)* initiative to end chronic homelessness in Montgomery County, and share this information with your networks. Over the next months, individual, programmatic and organizational efforts that are underway to combat chronic homelessness will be spotlighted as work towards the shared goal progresses. This will include advocacy for increasing the

availability of housing options, assistance with furnishings/supplies to help our chronically homeless neighbors transition into permanent housing, and support for ongoing services to help ensure as much self-sufficiency as possible for everyone who is housed through this initiative.

Is *Inside (not Outside)* just about getting people into a shelter and out of the cold?

Emergency shelter and transitional programs are essential parts of the County's programs to serve persons who are homeless, but this effort is focused on providing permanent housing for individuals and families who meet the chronic homelessness definition.

What makes *Inside (not Outside)* different from previous efforts to address homelessness in Montgomery County??

For years, Montgomery County has been a national leader in developing innovative programs designed to reduce homelessness, and the *Inside (not Outside)* initiative is intended to continue the County's leadership role. Montgomery County was one of the first four jurisdictions in the country to effectively end homelessness for Veterans, and the methods used in that effort are now being applied as we focus on addressing chronic homelessness.

What types of services are needed to help a person find a permanent home?

A guiding principle of the *Inside (not Outside)* initiative is that the level of service should be matched to the specific short-term and long-term needs of each person who is experiencing chronic homelessness. For many, this will be on-going supportive social services and rental assistance in a permanent housing setting. For others, this assistance may be help in finding a permanent housing placement, some limited financial assistance, and connections to services that will provide opportunities for greater independence.

Who can help make *Inside (not Outside)* a success?

Tackling an ambitious initiative like *Inside (not Outside)* will require the dedicated effort of the entire community, including government leaders, social service providers, businesses and faith-based groups. In addition, a public awareness campaign will complement implementation efforts, raising the visibility of the goal and attendant successes, which will encourage support and, as appropriate, involvement of the broader Montgomery County community.

This seems like a huge goal. What makes the ICH believe that *Inside (not Outside)* can be successful?

Homelessness is a solvable issue. The work on the initiative will include efforts to maximize the use of existing resources, advocacy for the availability of new housing options, and development of new collaborations. We have the tools, resources, and experience in Montgomery County to reach the goal of ending chronic homelessness by the end of 2017, and our most vulnerable neighbors deserve our focused effort to assist them in getting housed.