Interagency Commission on Homelessness
HOUSING FOR ALL = STRONGER MONTGOMERY
Strategic Plan

Montgomery County ICH Strategic Plan:
January 2020 – December 2023

Montgomery County is at an important moment as a community. Through partnership with non-profit providers of homeless assistance services, foundations, corporations, consumers, donors and the community, the Montgomery County's Interagency Commission on Homelessness (ICH) is working toward a common vision of "Housing for All=A Stronger Montgomery".

In support of this partnership, the community came together in 2019 to build a strategic plan to end homelessness in Montgomery County by the end of 2023. The resulting strategic plan is designed to ensure Montgomery County's priorities and assets are positioned to best meet the community need and guide the county's efforts January 2020 through the end of December 2023.

Strategic Plan Core Components

VISION

Articulates the change we want to see in in Montgomery County, painting a compelling picture of the future that we are all committed to achieving. *Page 3.*

MISSION

Defines the shared purpose and work that the ICH and community will undertake to achieve this vision. *Page 3.*

BOLD GOALS

Set ambitious, population-specific targets for ending homeless for everyone in Montgomery County. *Pages 3-4.*

VALUES

Underpin Montgomery County's approach to ending homelessness and serves as the foundation for all strategies and actions. *Page 4-5.*

STRATEGIES

Provide prioritization of ICH's efforts to end homelessness in Montgomery County. *Pages 6-12.*

ACTION PLANS

Provide specific actions to be taken for each strategy. *See Appendix.*

HOUSING FOR ALL = STRONGER MONTGOMERY

Montgomery County believes that homelessness is a problem that can be solved. The county has made tremendous progress in recent years ,and we have the resources, solutions, and significant public and political will needed to achieve continued success. This strategic plan is designed to provide focus and direction to Montgomery County over the next four years, from January 2020 through the end of December 2023. The plan provides an acute emphasis of what success looks like under the guiding direction of the vision and mission and what Montgomery County should focus on to end homelessness for everyone by the end of 2023.

VISION

We envision a home for everyone in Montgomery County, where the experience of homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time only.

MISSION

Through commitment and collaboration, we will create effective systems in our community to achieve our vision. We strive to be a leader in the work to end homelessness across our nation.

BOLD GOALS

Montgomery County's strategic plan overarching goal is to ensure that by 2023 homelessness will be rare, brief, and one time only for everyone. In order to get there, Montgomery County will reach and maintain the following goals[1]:

- o End homelessness among Veterans by 2015 - **Achieved!**
- o End homelessness among chronically homeless individuals by 2019 - **Achieved!**
- o End homelessness among families with children by the end of 2020.

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[1] *Some people may identify with multiple populations listed here. In these cases, we aim to end their homelessness by the earliest date associated with one of their identities.*

- End homelessness among unaccompanied youth (ages 16-24) by the end of 2021.
- End homelessness among seniors by the end of 2022.
- End homelessness among everyone in Montgomery County by the end of 2023.

Ending homelessness means that we have a comprehensive response system in place that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible, or, if it cannot be prevented, it is a rare, brief and one-time experience. Ending homelessness requires us to prevent housing crises and homelessness for those at-risk, divert people from entering the homelessness services system, prevent returns to homelessness, and to build and sustain systems and practices that end homelessness.

VALUES

The values that guide the strategic plan efforts are as important as the strategies. Supporting the following core values will help to ensure that each person who interacts with the homeless services system is met with the highest standard of dignity and respect and receives the highest quality solutions. Each value is supported by a set of norms that describe the specific actions and beliefs we will uphold.

1. Housing First and Person-Centered Approaches

- We believe that housing first is key to ending homelessness and addressing the challenges associated with experiencing homelessness.
- We seek to learn from people experiencing homelessness and their unique journeys, as they are the experts.
- We value the importance of creating distinct programs for different population level needs.
- We believe in the importance of community connections and social inclusion.

2. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- We believe it is critical to acknowledge and address the racial disparities and biases that lead people to become homeless and create barriers from moving out of homelessness.
- We seek to ensure there is an equitable distribution of resources and access to resources across the continuum of care.

- o We welcome people of all identities and backgrounds and work to ensure that all vulnerable populations are welcomed, supported, and safe across the continuum of care.
- o We value the importance of being responsive to unique experiences and factors that lead to inequities.

3. Collaboration Across the Continuum of Care

- o We seek to break down the silos across all parties working to end homelessness.
- o We believe in shared decision making across parties.
- o We encourage patience and an open-minded approach to support collaboration.
- o We seek to openly share information and build trust across parties.

4. Data and Results Based Decisions

- o We believe in making decisions backed by data.
- o We value a focus on the final outcome and accountability to the end goal.
- o We seek to be strong financial stewards, ensuring resources lead to results and create strong capacity across the system to sustain those results.

5. Continuous Change and Improvement

- o We believe in remaining open to creative approaches.
- o We seek to regularly evaluate programs and processes and make changes as needed.
- o We seek to try new things.
- o We value adaptability.

STRATEGIES

Overview of Strategies:

The following six strategies will lead Montgomery County's efforts to end homelessness and achieve our population-specific bold goals.

Strategy 1: Reduce Racial Disparities Across the System	**Strategy 2:** Build and Support Strong and Adaptable Programs	**Strategy 3:** Build and Support Affordable Housing Solutions within the Homeless Continuum
Strategy 4: Coordinate Effectively Across Other Systems of Care	**Strategy 5:** Increase and Diversify Funding	**Strategy 6:** Educate and Advocate for Change

Objectives, Outcomes, and Strategic Priorities:

The following details provide direction and guidance for each of the six strategies.

STRATEGY 1   Reduce Racial Disparities Across the System

OBJECTIVE:

Work to eliminate racial disparities across the systems that lead to people experiencing and re-entering homelessness and prevent people from exiting homelessness.

OUTCOMES:

- Average length of time people of color are homeless is 30 days or less
- Percent of people of color exiting to permanent housing is at least 80%
- Percent of people of color returning to homelessness is less than 15%
- Reduction of inequitable regulations and laws.
- Reports from people experiencing homelessness of receiving high quality, non-discriminatory support across the continuum of care.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

2020 Priorities
Priority 1: Explore Reasons for Entering Homelessness and their Connections to Race.

Priority 2: Provide Racial Equity Trainings and Coaching.

2021-2023 Priorities
Priority 3: Drive Regulatory and Statutory Changes.

Priority 4: Mitigate the Impact of Structural Racism on Access to Affordable Housing and Housing Subsidies.

STRATEGY 2   **Build and Support Strong and Adaptable Programs**

OBJECTIVE:

Ensure programs across the continuum of care are effectively designed, executed, and supported to meet the diverse needs and experiences of people, providing high quality, trauma informed services to all people, absent of discrimination.

OUTCOMES:

o Number of people entering homelessness for the first time is reduced by 20%.
o Average length of time homeless is 30 days or less.
o Percent of people exiting to permanent housing is at least 80%.
o Percent of people returning to homelessness is less than 15%.
o Percent of households retaining Permanent housing after 24 months is at least 90%.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

2020 Priorities

Priority 1: Apply Existing Resources and Best Practices for Eviction Prevention and Homeless Diversion/ Rapid Resolution.

Priority 2: Expand and Enhance the Rapid Rehousing Program.

Priority 3: Enhance Employment Services and Job Opportunities for Households Experiencing or At-Risk of Homelessness.

Priority 4: Continuously Improve the Coordinated Entry System.

Priority 5: Identify Youth (under 24) Experiencing or At Risk of Homelessness, with Intentional Outreach to LGBTQ Youth.

2021-2023 Priorities

Priority 6: Provide Appropriate Housing Solutions for Youth (under 24) Experiencing or At Risk of Homelessness, with Non-Traditional Housing Options for LGBTQ Youth.

Priority 7: Address the Needs of the Unsheltered Population.

Priority 8: Reduce the Number of Households who Return to Homelessness from Permanent Supportive Housing.

Priority 9: Identify Non-Traditional Housing Options for Non-Disabled Single Individuals including seniors.

STRATEGY 3	**Build and Support Affordable Housing Solutions across the Homeless Continuum**

OBJECTIVE:

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

OUTCOMES:

Increase in availability of affordable housing units, including dedicated PSH units, and an increase in the number of people from the homeless continuum who are able to access these units and remain housed.

o Increase PSH by 100 units.
o Increase RRH by 350 units.
o At least 10% of all newly produced or preserved affordable units dedicated to households experiencing homelessness

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

2020 Priorities
Priority 1: Increase Coordination, Collaboration, and Communication among Public and Private Partners Involved in Housing Solutions.

Priority 2: Ensure the 6-Year Fiscal Plan of the Housing Initiative Fund Includes the Funding Required to Meet Projected Housing Need.

Priority 3: Increase Landlord and Property Management Participation, with the Goal of Increasing Available Units.

Priority 4: Create a Risk Mitigation Fund that Offers Added Protection for Landlord Partners.

2021-2023 Priorities
Priority 5: Implement More Innovative Affordable Housing Solutions by Building on Existing Models and Exploring New Models of Innovation.

STRATEGY 4   **Coordinate Effectively Across Other Systems of Care**

OBJECTIVE:

Shift the continuum of care from siloed services to coordinated services. Agencies across the continuum of care work in alignment, with clarity on roles, complementary services and ease of sharing information and feedback.

OUTCOMES:

Satisfaction and cooperation of agencies across the continuum of care, as reported by agencies and people experiencing homelessness.

Increase the percentage of households experiencing homelessness receiving mainstream services (e.g. entitlements, behavioral health). Increase the percentage of eligible school-aged youth receiving appropriate school-based education services.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

2020 Priorities
Priority 1: Support Co-Location of Services.

Priority 2: Increase Representation of Homeless Service Providers on Boards and Committees Across the County.

2021-2023 Priorities
Priority 3: Formalize Boundary Spanners Role.[2]

Priority 4: Improve Collection and Sharing of Data.

STRATEGY 5 **Increase and Diversify Funding**

OBJECTIVE:

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.

OUTCOMES:

Increase in the availability of federal funding, state funding, local funding, and all non-governmental funding.

o   Increase funding from non-county sources by 10%
o   Increase overall funding by 25%

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[2] A boundary spanner is a dedicated job, role, or responsibility that works in a multi-agency or multi-system environment to ensurine the connection of resources and information across agencies and systems.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

2020 Priorities
Priority 1: Identify and Agree on Shared Vision with County (Office of the County Executive, County Council, Health and Human Services, Department of Housing and Community Affairs), Cities of Rockville, Gaithersburg, Poolesville, and Takoma Park.

Priority 2: Conduct Further Research in Alternative Funding Models (Pay for Success, Social Impact Bonds).

2021-2023 Priorities
Priority 3: Explore/Implement a Funder's Collaborative.

Priority 4: Secure Alternative Federal and State Funding.

STRATEGY 6   Educate and Advocate for Change

OBJECTIVE:

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

OUTCOMES:

Coordination across agencies, number of agencies and individuals involved in a common agenda, favorable policies and funding that support the strategic plan. Increase in community understanding of homelessness and reduction of associated stigma.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

2020 Priorities
Priority 1: Create a Coordinated Education and Advocacy Effort with Supporting Infrastructure to Heighten the Issue of Homelessness Across the Community.

2021-2023 Priorities
Priority 2: Launch the Coordinated Education and Advocacy Effort.