



INTERAGENCY COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS

Housing for all = A Stronger Montgomery

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/homelessness | HousingForAll@montgomerycountymd.gov

July 22, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Meeting Location

[Remote Teams/Zoom Meeting link \(update with actual link\)](#)

Attendance

Commissioners Present (remote)

- Ebony Grey, Co-Chair
- Christine Hong
- Karishma Sheth
- William Johnston for Dr. Kathryn Kelly
- Courtney Hall
- Dr. Gwendolyn Harter
- Margarita Bohorquez
- Stacey Gold
- Deryn Thomas / for Del. Vaughn Stewart
- Pelumi Olatinpo
- Scott Bruton
- Manuel Hidalgo

Members Not Present

- Jeff Goldman, Chair
- Chelsea Andrews
- Beth Shuman
- Dr. Earl Stoddard

Proof of Quorum

Multiple members from various organizations were present, as confirmed in the detailed round of introductions led by Jeff Goldman and others at the start of the meeting.

Staff Present

- Diana Pina| Deputy Chief of SEPH

- Rozina Adhanom CoC Coordinator | ICH Staff
- Gloria Huggins | EAA for SEPH
- Vicky Suero | OSC for SEPH

Guests Speakers

- Priscilla Lissik
- Paloma Arroyo
- Key Kunda
- Lisa Lowe, ICH People's Committee, Chair
- Liz Krueger

Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 PM.

Welcome and Introductions

Co-Chair Ebony Grey welcomed all attendees, thanked them for their patience regarding the delayed start of the meeting, and outlined the importance of the session. She invited each participant to introduce themselves in turn, resulting in a thorough round of introductions that confirmed the presence and engagement of representatives from numerous organizations and agencies central to the ICH mission.

Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Co-Chair Ebony Grey led the review and approval of the minutes from the **May 20, 2025**, meeting. After confirming there were no questions or revisions, Dr. Gwendolyn Harter moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Karishma Sheth. The motion was carried out unanimously, with no objections, thereby approving the minutes of the previous meeting as written.

Meeting Minutes Agenda Items

- a. **ICH-Strategy and Planning Committee** - Ebony Grey, Co-Chair - **Review and approve final draft of the CoC Strategic** - Priscilla Lissik, Committee member.
- b. Priscilla presented the final draft of the CoC Strategic Plan. The plan includes six strategies. Each strategy has three priorities and action steps. The plan aims to make homelessness a brief, one-time experience.
- c. **Strategy 1: Address gaps in services across the system:**
 1. Analyze how the system currently works and address areas for improvement in access and outcomes by revising or replacing assessment tools, considering tools used by other jurisdictions, working with HMIS apps, educating providers and system partners, and identifying gaps across the homeless response system.
 2. Provide guidance to other strategy work groups by being adaptable, elevating individuals with lived experience, coordinating across systems, analyzing cross-sector partnerships, developing data sharing agreements, and improving communication.
 3. Collaborate with the People's Committee to codify their role in reviewing regulations and policies by recruiting and retaining partners with lived experience, incorporating lived experience representation into contract requirements, moving from advisory to

decision-making roles, creating incentives for lived experience participation, and mandating training to help staff receive feedback openly and with cultural relevance.

d. Strategy 2: Build and support strong and adaptable programs:

1. Effectively meet the needs of youth experiencing homelessness and reduce youth inflow into the homeless system by creating targeted interventions like the SHARP program, develop new low-barrier supports for youth at risk of homelessness, engage youth to understand common causes of homelessness, use focus groups and surveys, engage Youth Advisory Board, explore barriers to permanent supportive housing, explore creative housing options and integrate workforce development
2. Provide annual training on key approaches by conducting training on Housing First, harm reduction, motivational interviewing, and trauma-informed care. Maintain high fidelity to the Housing First model, enhance support services to enable individuals to age in place, and integrate behavioral health, primary care, and specialty services.
3. Make best use of existing resources for eviction prevention and homeless diversion by conducting system analysis to understand prevention gaps, improving prevention and diversion programs, developing flexible prevention models, training shelter staff on diversion and rapid resolution, and incentivizing peer employment with lived experience.

e. Strategy 3: Build and support affordable housing solutions across the continuum:

1. Partner with housing developers and funders to increase access to quality housing units by incorporating homeless needs into land use planning, establishing homeless preferences in housing units, working with DHCA and HOC to utilize affordable housing vouchers, improving tenant screening and application processes, and exploring non-traditional housing solutions like modular units.
2. Maintain and increase landlord partnerships by improving the Rent Select landlord database, analyzing existing landlord partnerships, developing creative education strategies, reducing stigma through landlord simulations, addressing communication about potential funding insecurity, and handling neighbor complaints.
3. Support property management professionals working within the homeless system by holding focus groups with existing property managers, providing educational opportunities, offering trauma-informed training, reviewing and improving referral processes, and ensuring efficient referrals to project-based rental assistance units.

f. Strategy 4: Coordinate Effectively across other systems of care:

1. Establish defined liaisons across key partners by brainstorming a list of key partners (e.g., HOC, DHHS, Aging and Disability, Behavioral Health, Crisis Services, Youth Services, School District, Sheriff's Office, Hospital System Nexus), creating standard partnership agreements, building formalized communication structures, develop cross-jurisdictional referral processes and analyzing data sharing across districts and counties.
2. Improve collection and sharing of data by identifying cities with strong data-sharing practices, conducting a scan of existing data-sharing agreements, exploring integrating CRISP into data sharing, drafting new data-sharing agreements, and learning from successful models in other cities.
3. Evaluate existing case conferencing practices and structures by building on existing strengths, creating new practices and structures, and piloting new approaches in the first half of 2026.

g. Strategy 5: Increase and diversify funding:

1. Establish a clear, transparent understanding of current homeless system funding by developing a methodology for collecting and analyzing public and private funding, conducting baseline analysis, creating a communication plan to engage stakeholders, and developing a clear call to action for the community.
2. Identify the full costs of meeting three-year housing placement goals by developing a methodology to estimate total costs, identifying funding needed over the next three years, and preparing to fill funding gaps if federal or state resources are reduced.
3. Increase private funding to prioritize prevention and housing solutions by identifying the best uses of private funding, focusing on decentralizing prevention services, finding upstream solutions to reduce system entry, analyzing current and potential private funding sources, and developing a fundraising plan to expand existing funding and secure new private funding.

h. Strategy 6: Educate and advocate for change:

1. Create a coordinated education and advocacy effort by drafting standard talking points about homelessness, incorporating personal narratives, using infographics and data, informing the public about funding and resource gaps, developing a clear call to action, creating ways for people to get involved, and centering the voices of people with lived experience.
2. Engage in robust outreach to build cross-sector support by creating a broad list of community partners, involving schools, health partners, faith communities, organizing outreach to potential partners, conducting public listening sessions, sharing campaign plans, bringing funders together, and requesting pro bono media support if needed.
3. Identify policy priorities by developing a focus for the county executive, the county council, and the Maryland General Assembly, planning a lobby day for the 2026 Maryland General Assembly, providing compensation for people with lived experience participating in advocacy, narrowing down specific policy priorities, and creating a focused, intentional advocacy approach.

i. Plan-Vote - Ebony Grey, Co-Chair

1. Ebony praised Priscilla for presenting a successful strategic plan and opened the vote on approving the plan. Before voting, Ebony asks if anyone has any questions or comments, whether online or in-person, regarding the strategic plan.
2. Courtney has stated that he will make a motion to approve the strategic plan, as no comment was provided with Stacey seconding the motion. The commissioners voted unanimously to approve the strategic plan.
3. Ebony praised the Strategic Planning Committee for their hard work and efforts, as well as the Commission for their valuable feedback.

j. Next Steps- Implementation Plan – Christine Hong

1. Christine presented a proposed committee structure adjustment aimed at creating more focused and effective committees to better implement the strategic plan. The new structure includes the Governance and Strategy and Planning Committee, which oversees the ICH and ensures progress on the strategic plan. The Programs and Operations Committee covers Strategies 2, 3, and 4, and the Addressing Gaps in Services Committee replaces the Racial Equity Committee, which implements Strategy 1. The People's Committee remains unchanged, focusing on Strategy 6 and the voices of lived experience.

2. The current subcommittees and work groups will continue to serve their functions within the ICH, contributing to the strategies listed. The restructured main committees will enable more efficient meetings and facilitate better discussions that advance the strategic plan, bringing the organization closer to its goals.
3. Christine opens the floor to any questions or feedback regarding the new proposed structure.
4. Courtney inquired about the integration of people with lived experience into all committees, not just the People's Committee. Christine explained that members of the People's Committee are already members of each of the four committees, except for Programs and Operations, which is new and was formerly known as Systems Coordination. The goal is for people with lived experience to be members of each committee. The committee's members typically consist of individuals knowledgeable about programs, such as program managers and directors, system leaders in governance, strategy, and planning, as well as program directors and managers in programs and operations. This approach utilizes each perspective effectively.

2. Manny Hidalgo with the Recognition Certificate - Ebony Grey, Co-Chair

- a. Ebony recognized this was Manny's last meeting with the Commission and acknowledged Manny's contributions and appreciated his work for the commission, recognizing his advocacy for clients and residents. She thanked him for his work with Shepherd's Table and expressed sadness at his departure.
- b. Manny briefly responded, noting his time with the Commission as "an adventure". He also mentioned potential changes at Shepherd's Table, indicating they might not be part of SEPH anymore, and assured continued collaboration and cooperation. He will potentially move to the Office of Food Systems Resilience and confirm that Shepherd's Table will remain a resource for meals and social services.

3. Update on Housing Together Campaign - Paloma Arroyo-LeFebre, Built for Zero

- a. Paloma Arroyo introduced herself as the Housing Together Coordinator in partnership with Bethesda Cares and Services to End and Prevent Homelessness. She presented an update on the Housing Together Campaign, focusing on three key subpopulations:
- b. **Families:** Showed success with the SHARP program, with housing outflows exceeding inflows.
- c. **Veterans:** Highlighted challenges in housing placements, with some months showing zero entries and exits.
- d. **Youth:** Currently served within the single adults' system, participating in a youth data quality cohort.
- e. **Single Individuals:** Continuing to serve this population, though not a specific targeted group.
- f. The presentation sparked significant discussion, particularly around the prioritization process. Key concerns raised included:
 1. **Why were single households not a targeted population**
 2. **The methodology of selecting subpopulations**
 3. **Concerns about the voting process at the community-wide meeting**
- g. Bezawit and Paloma explained that while these three groups were highlighted, work continues for single individuals. The prioritization was based on a community-wide meeting vote, with input from over 200 participants, including 45 people with lived experience.

h. The campaign also received \$250,000 in flexible funding and will continue to receive technical support from Community Solutions.

4. Workforce Development Workgroup – K. Kunda, Chair Donna Gabriel Co-Chair

- a. The Workforce Development Workgroup was highlighted by Ebony, who strongly encouraged providers to actively support job placement efforts as a means of helping individuals achieve economic stability and move out of homelessness.
- b. The Workforce Development Workgroup provided an update on a recent job fair, with Kay leading the discussion on its success.
- c. The Workforce Development Committee's recent job fair, held on May 23rd, saw significant engagement with 454 individuals registered and 363 attendees. The event featured 13 community resource providers and 18 participating employers.
- d. Among the notable outcomes, Wegmans emerged as a highly popular employer for job seekers, while Extended Stay successfully hired five individuals across three of its locations. Additionally, Community support was evident through Shepherd's Table, providing hot meals and snacks to participants.
- e. Plans are being considered for a future job fair, with an emphasis on expanding employer connections to continue assisting individuals in securing meaningful employment.
- f. Vicky contributed to the reporting by sharing a video about the job fair and the attendee testimonials.
- g. Looking ahead, the workgroup plans to organize another job fair, is actively seeking more employer connections, and aims to build stronger relationships with employers to better understand the needs of the population they serve, all in furtherance of their mission to facilitate meaningful employment and connect individuals with employers.

5. Committee and Workgroups Updates:

- a. **Outcome and Improvement Committee** - Deborah Taylor, Chair|Beza Bahru, Co-chair
 1. Beza provided an update to the Outcomes and Improvement Committee:
 2. **System Performance Measures:** An in-person meeting was held on June 27th to discuss FY26 goals. A memo for feedback and approval at the September meeting is being drafted.
 3. **HMIS Manual:** The manual has received approval from the HMIS subcommittee and OIC and is undergoing final touch-ups, with completion expected by August 1st.
- b. **People's Committee** - Lisa Lowe, Chair |Shatara Rolle, Co-Chair
 1. Lisa reported on two legislative policy areas. The first concerns Eviction Notice Legislation, specifically a new state bill mandating eviction notices be posted on the day of eviction. This legislation allows counties or jurisdictions to set the notice period, ranging from 4 to 14 days. The committee aims to identify the local decision-makers for this policy.
 2. The second area focuses on the Grievance Process and Shelter Certification, addressing discrepancies between county standards and shelter operations. The committee plans to host a half-day workshop, has revised standard language, and seeks input from shelter operators to enhance the enforcement of policies and standards. Overall, the committee's objective is to understand and influence local policies that affect individuals experiencing homelessness, prioritizing the inclusion of those with lived experience in decision-making.

- c. **Racial Equity Workgroup - Ralph** Belk, Chair| Liz Krueger, Co-chair
 - 1. Liz, co-chair of the group formerly known as the Racial Equity Work Group (now tentatively named "Addressing System Access for All Committee"), reported on Strategy One's recent completion. This strategy, initiated in August, focused on integrating partners with lived expertise into every priority, granting them decision-making power rather than just advisory roles.
 - 2. The group emphasized the inclusion of historically marginalized stakeholders and believed that sustainable policies necessitate direct input from those most affected, ensuring meaningful stakeholder involvement in policies and protocols. The group is also in the process of changing its name from Racial Equity Work Group, with "Addressing System Access for All" as a temporary placeholder while the final name is confirmed.

6. Public Comments – Public

- a. No public comment was made.

7. Announcements - All

- a. Diana Pina announced the HUD plans to publish a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) after CIWS submissions and review in August. Potential changes to the NOFO include moving away from the Housing First approach, removing questions about racial equity, possibly adding questions about income therapy treatment, and introducing bonus opportunities for outreach and transitional housing.
- b. Rozina announced the Homeless Resource Day is scheduled for November 6, with Gloria leading the planning efforts. Further details will be provided later.
- c. A VIP Grand Carpet Block Party, aimed at supporting individuals experiencing homelessness with resources and giveaways, will take place on August 9.
- d. **Closing Remarks**
 - 1. Ebony thanked commissioners for a productive year, highlighting progress on key issues despite challenges.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on 09/23/2025 from 3–5 pm, virtual.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5 p.m.