THE PRESENTATION PROVIDED TO THE PHED and HHS COMMITTEE AT THE
FEBRUARY 10, 2020 SESSION IS ATTACHED TO THE END OF THIS MEMO.

MEMORANDUM

February 6, 2020

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee
Health and Human Services Committee

FROM: Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: Interagency Commission on Homelessness Three-Year Strategic Plan; Housing
for All = Stronger Montgomery

PURPOSE: Briefing and Discussion

Expected Attendees:
Dr. Raymond Crowel, Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
Amanda Harris, Chief, DHHS Services to End and Prevent Homelessness
Sharan London, County Executive's representative to the Interagency Commission on
Homelessness

      The Interagency Commission on Homelessness (ICH) was established by the Council in
2014 to improve the coordination and cooperation among government, service providers, and
community organizations that is needed to reduce homelessness. In addition, the ICH serves as
the governing board of the Continuum of Care as required by federal law or regulation. The
2019 ICH Annual Report is attached at © 29-43 and provide information on the number of
homeless in the County, information on shelter resources, system performance and gaps in
resources.

      Over the last year, the ICH has engaged in a strategic planning process. The new three-
year plan is attached at © 1-11. It contains goals and strategies to be achieved by December
2023. In addition to workgroups and discussion at the ICH, it has been presented at a
community-wide meeting.

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
End[1] homelessness among Veterans by 2015 - achieved
End homelessness among chronically homeless individuals by 2019 - achieved
End homelessness among families with children by the end of 2020
End homelessness among unaccompanied youth (age 16-24) by the end of 2021
End homelessness among seniors[2] by the end of 2022
End homelessness among everyone in Montgomery County by the end of 2023

The Plan has six strategies:
1. Reduce racial disparities across the system
2. Build and support strong and adaptable programs
3. Build and support affordable housing solutions within the homeless continuum
4. Coordinate effectively across other systems of care
5. Increase and diversify funding
6. Educate and advocate for change

Each strategy has measurable outcomes and priorities. For example, the outcomes for the strategy to reduce racial disparities across the system are:

- 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

The first priority action attached to this strategy is to explore the reasons for entering homelessness and the connectors to race. Last March, the Joint Committee was briefed by Mark Johnston on national best practices and Amanda Harris on the efforts to continue to improve the Montgomery County system. The information provided for that briefing included the findings from a 2018 report based on the 2017 Point-in-Time count:

- ➢ Almost 65% of the homeless population in Montgomery County is Black.
- ➢ 55% of the chronically homeless population is Black.

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[1] "End" means reaching a level of "functional zero" where the number of homeless in a category can be housed in a relatively brief period of time, such as one month. It is acknowledged that people will continue to enter the homeless system, but the system will have resources to make homelessness brief.

[2] People may fall into more than one category and will be served in the category that will house them the soonest. For example, if a senior were a Veteran or met the definition of chronically homeless, they would be prioritized accordingly.

> Over half of those seeking and receiving eviction prevention assistance are Black.
> Disparities are not just a reflection of income; 37.8% of people in the County with very low incomes are Black but over half the people experiencing homelessness are Black.

It is important to consider the outcomes and the strategies together. In this case, it is not enough to have the average length of time in homelessness be 30 days or less, it must be combined with efforts to prevent homelessness among people of color. The full Action Plan around this strategy is included in the Appendix (© 12-28). The full Action Plan for the objective to eliminate racial disparities across the system is attached at © 12-15.

The linkage to affordable housing production and preservation is also critical. The Plan notes the estimated need to increase the number of Permanent Supportive Housing units by 100, increase the number of households that can participate in Rapid Re-Housing by 350, and dedicating at least 10% of all newly produced or preserved affordable units to households experiencing homelessness. Having Moderately Priced Dwelling Units, tax-credit units, and other income-restricted units available is critically important for households in the Rapid Re-Housing program as the goal is for households to be able to pay their rent in about a year or less. Rapid Re-Housing is not successful when households are given supports to live in housing that they will not be able to afford when the support payments end.

The Plan calls for increased coordination across systems, such as the behavioral health system and schools. The Plan introduces the position called a "Boundary Spanner"[3] which is dedicated to working in a multi-agency or multi-system environment.

The Plan includes a strategy to increase and diversify funding. At the briefing last March, the Joint Committee was told that in FY19 over $55 million was allocated to Continuum of Care/homeless services. Of that 73% was local funding, 19% federal funding, 7% State funding, and 1% private funding. The Plan calls for increasing total funding by 25% but also looks to increase non-county resources by 10%. This recommendation implies an increase of $10 million in local funding over the three years of the plan. However, as this is connected to the cost of providing affordable housing the amount of direct tax dollars will be impacted by the ways the County moves forward with supporting the creation and preservation of affordable housing that serves low income households.

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[3] Boundary spanning is reaching across borders, margins, or sections to build relationships, interconnections and interdependencies in order to manage complex problems. Boundary-spanning individuals develop partnerships and collaboration by building sustainable relationships, managing through influence and negotiation, and seeking to understand motives, roles and responsibilities. Boundary-spanning organizations create strategic alliances, networks, partnerships, and many other forms of collaboration across organizational boundaries. (from the organization Promoting Health Across Boundaries' website)

Interagency Commission on Homelessness
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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.*

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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.

- 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.
- We value the importance of being responsive to unique experiences and factors that lead to inequities.

3. Collaboration Across the Continuum of Care

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

4. Data and Results Based Decisions

- We believe in making decisions backed by data.
- We value a focus on the final outcome and accountability to the end goal.
- 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

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

- Number of people entering homelessness for the first time is reduced by 20%.
- Average length of time homeless is 30 days or less.
- Percent of people exiting to permanent housing is at least 80%.
- Percent of people returning to homelessness is less than 15%.
- 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.

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ICH 2020-2023 Strategic Plan Appendix: Action Plans

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]:

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

Strategies and Action Plans: The following six strategies will lead Montgomery County's efforts to end homelessness and achieve our bold goals. Action plans for each strategy are provided on the pages listed below.

Strategy 1: Address Racial Disparities Across the System *Pages 2-4*	Strategy 2: Build and Support Strong and Adaptable Programs *Pages 5-8*	Strategy 3: Build and Support Affordable Housing Solutions within the Homeless Continuum *Pages 9-10*
Strategy 4: Coordinate Effectively Across Other Systems of Care *Pages 11-13*	Strategy 5: Increase and Diversify Funding *Pages 14-15*	Strategy 6: Educate and Advocate for Change *Pages 16-17*

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[1] *Intersectionality exists across all populations listed in the bold goals.*

Strategy 1 Action Plan: Address 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	• Equitable demographics among people being served and exiting homelessness, as evidenced by data from HMIS. • Reduction of inequitable regulations and laws. • Reports from people experiencing homelessness of receiving high quality, non-discriminatory support across the continuum of care.
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:* 　• *Priority3: Drive Regulatory and Statutory Changes.* 　• *Priority 4: Mitigate the Impact of Structural Racism on Access to Affordable Housing and Housing Subsidies.*
Priority 1: Explore Reasons for Entering Homelessness and their Connections to Race	Objectives: 　1. Increase understanding of trends (e.g. predictors of homelessness) used to more efficiently target prevention and improve solutions. Actions: • Identify data assumptions. • Review existing data in HMIS. • Identify additional data to collect in HMIS. • Review the OLO eviction report. • Identify the top 5 predictors and create plan for tracking. • Track the top 5 predictors. • Use information to improve prevention solutions.
Priority 2: Provide Racial Equity Trainings and Coaching	Objectives: 　1. Ensure clients are served with a lens of racial equity, resulting in better outcomes and experiences for clients. Actions: • Review existing internal tools and assessments. • Conduct an assessment of internal policies and processes to identify any intrinsic bias and include client voice. • Conduct training across all agency levels. Create a structure and plan to provide ongoing coaching to support ongoing improvement. • Build in structure to formalize process and ID trends and make changes based on analysis. • Provide racial equity and implicit biases awareness training for all agency staff across all levels. • Provide tenants' rights trainings with a lens of racial equity and biases awareness, training for all clients.

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Priority 3: Drive Regulatory and Statutory Changes	*Objectives:*
	1. Ensure property manager/landlord requirements for tenant applications and renewals are transparent, clearly stated online in an accessible manner.
	2. Ensure penalties for not transparently providing this information are in place and enforced.
	3. Ensure DHCA provides an annual summary of property manager/landlord violations.
	
	Actions:
	• Draft initial desired regulations:
	    • Engage DHCA and review current Montgomery County regulations to understand what is currently in place.
	    • Conduct best practices research. Identify what is happening across other jurisdictions regarding transparency requirements and penalties.
	    • Identify what might by missing from Montgomery County regulations based on best practices from other jurisdictions.
	
	• Engage rental community to understand needs and build ideas:
	    • Reach out to the Renter's Alliance and Realtor Community to invite them into the discussion.
	    • Share the resources that are currently available in Montgomery County, ask what resources would be supportive to them and what incentives would be helpful.
	
	• Build a coalition and being to advance regulations:
	    • Create a coalition of stakeholders to help move the regulations forward.
	    • Share the draft regulations and refine based on coalition input.
	
	• Host a landlord/property manager symposium:
	    • Provide racial equity and bias training alongside data to help illuminate why the regulatory changes are important.
	    • Share regulatory changes and support/incentives to support landlords/property managers in these changes.

Priority 4: Mitigate the Impact of Structural Racism on Access to Affordable Housing and Housing Subsidies	*Objectives:* 1. Ensure racial demographics do not impact people's ability to receive and use vouchers. 2. Collect data to understand who is being served by the voucher program vs. who is in need. 3. Advocate for policy changes to allow individuals with criminal records to access the voucher programs. *Actions:* • Review existing policies and procedures and identify potential areas for improvements, prioritizing: ○ Current criminal background check policies

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	○ Termination and appeals data and processes. Identify the racial demographics of who: ▪ Is terminated ▪ Appeals ▪ Gets overturned ○ Waitlist requirements ○ Regulations for household additions, reviewing parameters and transfers (looking at HUD's regulations as a starting point) • Review best practices, looking at areas such Seattle and Fairfax, as a point of comparison with the above policies and procedures. • Engage people experiencing homelessness for input and suggestion to the policies and procedures improvements. • Create proposed improvements based on research and inputs. • Create coalition to review and build support for proposed improvements (possibly working with coalition from Priority 1). • Put the proposed changes forward for public comment and hearing. • Implement changes, as appropriate.

(15)

Strategy 2 Action Plan: Build and Support Strong and Adaptable Programs

Objective	Ensure programs across the system are effectively designed, executed, and supported to meet the diverse needs and experiences of clients, providing high quality, trauma informed services to all clients, absent of discrimination.
Outcomes	- Number of people entering homelessness for the first time is reduced by 20%. - Average length of time homeless is 30 days or less. - Percent of people exiting to permanent housing is at least 80%. - Percent of people returning to homelessness is less than 15%. - Percent of households retaining Permanent housing after 24 months is at least 90%.
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 Experiencing or At Risk of Homelessness, with Intentional Outreach to LGBTQ Youth. *2021-2023 Priorities:* - Priority 6: Provide Appropriate Housing Solutions for Youth 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.
Priority 1: Apply Existing Resources and Best Practices for Eviction Prevention and Homeless Diversion/ Rapid Resolution	*Objectives:* 1. Make the best use of existing resources and best practices for eviction prevention and homeless diversion/ rapid resolution. *Actions:* 1. Target eviction prevention assistance to households most at risk of homelessness. 2. Explore flexible prevention models that allow for multiple months of assistance and case management. 3. Train all shelter staff on diversion and rapid resolution. 4. Create a learning collaborative for diversion workers.
Priority 2: Expand and Enhance the	*Objectives:* 1. Increase access to and quality Rapid Rehousing programs.

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Rapid Rehousing Program	*Actions:* 1. Identify opportunities to increase access to existing Rapid Rehousing programs for single adults and families with children. 2. Modify the traditional Rapid Rehousing model to meet the needs of specific subpopulations including seniors, survivors of domestic violence, youth (age 18-24) and households with no income. 3. Implement a Landlord Risk Mitigation Fund that acts like an insurance fund for landlords/property managers renting to participants in a Rapid Rehousing Program. 4. Convene a Rapid Rehousing learning collaborative with a goal of reducing the length of stay.
Priority 3: Enhance Employment Services and Job Opportunities for Households Experiencing or At-Risk of Homelessness	*Objectives:* 1. Increase income of households experiencing or at-risk of homelessness including. *Actions:* 1. Create an Employment Coordinator position to support the work of all Employment Specialists in the Continuum of Care, conduct job development and build relationships with employers, and promote access to local employment programs currently serving households experiencing homelessness. 2. Engage Career Catchers, a local employment service provider, to pilot projects that pairs employment services with housing and shelter programs. 3. Request a preference for serving households experiencing homelessness from local employment agencies receiving state and/or federal funding.
Priority 4: Continuously Improve the Coordinated Entry System	*Objectives:* 1. Ensure everyone has fair and equitable access to housing that best meets their needs. *Actions:* 1. Conduct annual evaluation to assess fair and equitable access to housing to ensure housing is meeting needs. 2. Use results to inform focus areas for improvement.
Priority 5: Identify Youth Experiencing or At Risk of Homelessness, with Intentional Outreach to LGBTQ Youth. (under 24)	*Objectives:* 1. Ensure youth experiencing homelessness are identified so that they can be effectively served. *Actions:* 1. Partner with community stakeholders to conduct annual youth count. 2. Create a Coordinated Entry System specific to youth.

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Priority 6: Provide Appropriate Housing Solutions for Youth (under 24) Experiencing or At Risk of Homelessness, with Non-Traditional Housing Options for LGBTQ Youth	*Objectives:*
	  1. Ensure the unique needs of youth are effectively served.
	
	Actions:
	  1. Establish a homeless youth drop-in center coordination with the re-engagement center and in partnership with the Collaboration Council.
	  2. Explore other alternative housing interventions such as host homes and shared housing.

Priority 7: Address the Needs of the Unsheltered Population	*Objectives:*
	  1. Ensure the unique needs of unsheltered individuals are effectively served.
	
	Actions:
	  1. Conduct quarterly surveys of unsheltered individuals to better understand their needs and the inflow of new people entering the County.
	  2. Ensure all shelters offer low barrier, housing-focused shelter to all individuals including those with substance use disorders, serious mental illness, and chronic health conditions.
	  3. Partner with community stakeholders to including business owners, libraries, police, hospitals, and other County employees to provide adequate street outreach to meet the need.

Priority 8: Reduce the Number of Households who Return to Homelessness from Permanent Supportive Housing	*Objectives:*
	  1. Ensure people are effectively supported in permanent supportive housing to reduce recidivism into homelessness.
	
	Actions:
	  1. Provide annual training for all housing support staff on Housing First, harm reduction, motivational interviewing, and trauma-informed care.
	  2. Offer representative payee services for individuals with a history of not paying rent.
	  3. Allow for program transfers to better meet the needs of the household
	  4. Maintain high fidelity to the Housing First evidence-based program models and monitor programs on a biannual basis.
	  5. Enhance support services to allow individuals to age in place in permanent supportive housing.

Priority 9: Identify Non-Traditional Housing	*Objectives:* 1. Increase the availability and options for safe and affordable housing.

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Options for Non-Disabled Single Individuals	Actions: 1. Promote shared housing programs and roommate matching services. 2. Explore other extremely affordable housing options like single room occupancies, boarding houses, etc.

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

Objective	Increase and preserve the supply of affordable housing to ensure clients 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. • Increase PSH by 100 units. • Increase RRH by 350 units. • At least 10% of all newly produced or preserved affordable units dedicated to households experiencing homelessness.
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 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.
Priority 1: Increase Coordination, Collaboration, and Communication among Public and Private Partners Involved in Housing Solutions.	Objectives: 1. Build a strong flow of information from the County (Planning Board and DHCA) to partners involved in housing solutions exist. 2. Create an active and effective forum for PSH partners to share information and coordinate projects and advocacy efforts is built. 3. Ensure opportunities for housing providers and developers to shape development decisions before they are made by the county are available. Actions: • Build PSH track at HOME and Affordable Housing conferences. • Develop formal working group with public and private partners to address development of permanent housing solutions. Include public partners (DHCA, MCPPC, DHHS) as well as nonprofit and for profit developers.
Priority 2: Ensure the 6-Year Fiscal Plan of the HIF Includes Funding	Objectives: 1. Ensuring funding required to meet housing needs is fulfilled. Actions: • Annually updated the gap analysis to identify projected housing needs.

Required to Meet Projected Housing Need.	• Incorporate funding to meet the projected need in the 6-year HIF.
Priority 3: Increase Landlord and Property Management Participation, with the Goal of Increasing Available Units.	*Objectives:* 1. Increase geographic dispersion of housing units. 2. Increase number of units available for people exiting homelessness. 3. Provide additional resources so as to increase landlord participation. 4. Build stronger connection between properties and case management. *Actions:* • Recruit more landlords in other geographic areas. • Expand ACT teams. • Establish 24hr hotline for case management. • Create central website/resource for people seeking/receiving services.
Priority 4: Create a Risk Mitigation Fund that Offers Additional Protection for Landlord Partners	Priority 4: Create a Risk Mitigation Fund that Offers Additional Protection for Landlord Partners <u>Objective:</u> 1. Provide additional incentives to landlords to increase participation in housing programs. *Actions* • Work with leadership and key stakeholders (including landlords) to shape and operationalize risk mitigation fund (how much, who). • Advocate to get risk mitigation fund into the budget. • Define roles and responsibilities, needs and expectations of landlords/service providers. • Create risk mitigation fund.
Priority 5: Implement More Innovative Affordable Housing Solutions by Building on Existing Models and Exploring New Models of Innovation	*Objectives:* 1. Enhance and accelerate PSH-PSH transfer system and emergency housing for critical situations in place. 2. Explore need of site-based vs. scattered site programs and what is best for the clients . 3. Build upon existing models (Housing First, Rapid Rehousing, MPDU). 4. Explore and create housing solutions, as driven by the needs and demands of clients (Corporation for Supportive Housing). *Actions:* • Explore alternative models for highest needs/acuity score. • Conduct data analysis and recommendations on highest need residents and challenges.

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

Objective	Shift the system from siloed services to coordinated services. Agencies across systems 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 % of households experiencing homelessness receiving mainstream services (e.g. entitlements, behavioral health). • Increase the % of eligible school aged youth receiving appropriate school based education services.
Priorities	2020 Priorities: • Priority 1: Support Co-Location of Services. • Priority 2: Increase Representation of Homeless Service Providers on Boards Across the County. 2021-2023 Priorities: • Priority 3: Formalize Boundary Spanners Role[2]. • Priority 4: Improve Collection and Sharing of Data.

Priority 1: Support Co-Location of Services	Objectives:
	1. Ensure that people experiencing homelessness have ease of access to the entitlements and services needed to help move them out of homelessness.
	2. Ensure that the providers have the capacity and tools needed to effectively work together to provide ease of services and quality support to people experiencing homelessness.
	
	Actions:
	• Review the existing co-locating models in Montgomery County.
	  • Identify what is working and why.
	  • Identify what is not working and why.
	• Use these insights to build a shared vision for co-locating services and revised MOU expectations.
	• Roll this vision out to the provider community for input.
	• Pilot the vision and MOU.
	• Engage external advisors from the community for input.
	• Review and revise the vision and MOU at the end of the year based on lessons learned.

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

Priority 2: Increase Representation of Homeless Service Providers on Boards Across the County.	*Objectives:* 1. Ensure a shared vision of success and a shared sense of responsibility to support people experiencing homelessness across the continuum of care. *Actions:* • Identify where homeless serving organizations are already partnering/directly engaged with systems outside of homeless services. • Identify where ICH would like to be present/would like to be with systems outside of homeless services. Build relationships with those organizations and ask for a role on their board. • Identify specific people to sit on boards and share back information with ICH.

Priority 3: Formalize Boundary Spanners Role	*Objectives:*
	1. Ensure boundary spanners exist and are resourced across all systems.
	
	Actions:
	• Identify what is already happening across the region with boundary spanners:
	   • Where are they already in place?
	   • What's working well?
	   • What isn't working?
	• Bring providers together to share the boundary spanner concept and overview of what is already happening. Use this information to:
	   • Create a shared vision and goals for the boundary spanner role.
	   • Identify where natural connections across the systems where there isn't a formal partnership, but where there could be a shared interest in creating one.
	   • Identify incentives to encourage continued progress and commitment (highlighting organizations, showcasing progress, etc).
	   • Identify group of boundary spanners to move forward with testing.
	• Pilot boundary spanner role across the system with identified group.
	   o Share points for feedback and progress across the 6 months.
	• Assess progress the end of the year.
	   o Share with funders for support.

Priority 4: Improve Collection and Sharing of Data	*Objectives:* 1. Improve data at the aggregate level, ensuring it is easy to see and share where the client is connected across the system and that it is easier to see where progress is being made across system wide Objectives (e.g. racial equity Objectives).

	Actions:

	- Identify locations where the collection and sharing of data has been improved (e.g. New York, Chicago, Seattle, and cities in Connecticut).
	    - Learn what changes were made, what hurdles were overcome, and how the changes were implemented.
	- Conduct a scan of existing Montgomery County data sharing agreements.
	- Use insights to develop Montgomery County's plan for improving data sharing.
	    - Engage IT and Legal.
	    - Consider provider portal EICSM.
	- Begin to draft new data sharing agreements.
	- Share with the community of providers for input.
	- Move forward with implementing new agreements.

Strategy 5 Action Plan: 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. • Increase funding from non-county sources by 10%. • Increase overall funding by 20%.
Priorities	*2020 Priorities:* Priority 1: Identify and Agree on Shared Vision with County. Agencies (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.
Priority 1: Identify and Agree on Shared Vision with County Agencies (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.	*Objectives:* 1. Create one joint funding application. 2. Align providers. 3. Build clearly stated funding priorities in place. *Actions:* • Establish funding and partnership committee. • Gather/analyze all current funding applications. • Gather funders. • Meet with council staff to understand and align with budget changes. • Document, share and seek feedback on current process. • Share first draft funding application with funders. • Build performance-based contracts. • Develop infrastructure/capacity to evaluate programs (county and providers).
Priority 2: Conduct Further Research in Alternative Funding Models (Pay for Success,	*Objectives:* 1. Become more informed as a community about alternative funding models for future pursuit. *Actions:* • Conduct research, building on existing models and research that exists.

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Social Impact Bonds).	• Host a convening to share learnings (to include presentations from experts; consider linking together with convening mentioned below).
Priority 3: Explore/Implement a Funder's Collaborative.	*Objectives:* 1. Ensure funders give based on shared vision/Objectives for county. 2. Increase funding, exploring new sources such as health care funding. *Actions:* • Identify all nonprofits who receive funds and provide services. • Research other funders collaboratives (national and local). • Outreach to the national collaborative- ask for help/support. • Go to existing healthcare funders and find out what sold them. • Convening of business and philanthropy. • Collect more data from hospitals/MCOs (getting agreements in place). • Establish starting metrics/benchmarks for current funding (different sources). • Facilitate conversations/build trust (with NPs who receive funds and provide services). • Continue building relationships with healthcare funders.
Priority 4: Secure Alternative Federal and State Funding	*Objectives:* 1. Increase federal and state funding to $3 million (including from FEMA, VA, Dept. of Labor, SAMSA, HHS-Fed, DOJ, CMS, DHS, DHMH, DHCD, DOLLR). *Actions:* • Research what's available (in coordination with the Office of Intergovernmental Relations). • Identify staff person/capacity. • Begin application process.

Strategy 6 Action Plan: 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 comm unity understanding of homelessness and reduction of associated stigma.
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.

Priority 1: Create a Coordinated Education and Advocacy Effort with Supporting Infrastructure to Heighten the Issue of Homelessness Across the Community.	Objectives:
	1. Create consistency and ease of messaging across the homeless services system.
	2. Develop an understanding and compassion of homelessness across the community is developed.
	3. Establish Montgomery County as a model/known expert for preventing and ending homelessness.
	Actions:
	• Draft a narrative to share with other providers, including:
	    • Education about homelessness so that people understand:
	        i. A problem does exist in Montgomery County
	        ii. The problem isn't intractable
	        iii. Government alone can't solve the problem, that the entire community has a role to play
	        iv. This is both a moral and financial imperative
	        v. The criminalization, discrimination and injustice of homelessness
	    • A clear call to action, sharing ways for people to get involved with addressing homelessness
	• Share the narrative with homeless service providers for input and feedback, using this as a launch pad for campaign

Priority 2: Launch the Coordinated Education and Advocacy Effort.	Objectives: 1. Create and launch a campaign that heightens the issue of homelessness across the community. Leading to: ○ Broad community support to end homelessness (from individuals, businesses, and community groups), with a sense of urgency to pressure council members and to provide financial resources and volunteer time

		o Financial commitment from the philanthropic community to support internal government ICH position

o Financial commitment from the philanthropic community to support internal government ICH position
o Empowerment of the ICH to take more action
o New supportive policies in place from the council
o On the ground organizers/advocacy leaders across organizations working to support the campaign
o Well known champions of the campaign to end homelessness in Montgomery County

2. Secure well-known champions of the campaign to help end homelessness in Montgomery County.

Actions:
- Build draft outline of campaign for partners and funders to provide input into, identifying:
  - Potential actions to take,
  - Possible structure for engagement,
  - Volunteer support needed,
- Bring partners together to share the draft narrative and campaign plans:
  - Ask for input and support.
  - Create a partners committee to help drive the campaign.
- Bring funders together to share the draft narrative and campaign plans:
  - Ask for input and funding.
  - Create a funders committee to help drive financial support.
- Request pro-bono support (PR advisors and Media support).
- Conduct public listening sessions, sharing campaign plans for their input and support.
- Begin to build support and align around shared financial Objectives/common budget support across the partners involved.
- Create a collective proposal for funders support of advocacy roles.

Interagency Commission on Homelessness

Annual Report | 2019

Housing for All

A Stronger Montgomery

Table of Contents

OVERVIEW

The Interagency Commission on Homelessness (ICH) was established by the Montgomery County Council in 2014 and began its work in 2015 to promote efforts to end and prevent homelessness in Montgomery County. The mission of the ICH is to:

- promote a community-wide goal to end homelessness,
- develop and implement a strategic plan,
- educate the community about homelessness,
- promote partnerships to improve the County's ability to prevent and reduce homelessness,
- monitor programs that are components of the Continuum of Care, and
- make recommendations to the County Executive and County Council to improve the Continuum of Care.

The ICH has also been designated as the Governing Board of the Continuum of Care (CoC).

The CoC is Montgomery County's local homeless program planning network. It is a public-private partnership that includes County and other government agencies, non-profit service providers, landlords and others who have a role in preventing and ending homelessness. The purpose of the CoC is to coordinate the implementation of a housing and service system within the Montgomery County CoC geographic area that meets the needs of individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The Montgomery County CoC provides a full continuum of housing services to homeless persons including:

- outreach and engagement,
- emergency and transitional shelter,
- rapid re-housing,
- permanent supportive housing, and
- prevention strategies.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

In October 2014, the ICH approved a Ten-Year Strategic Plan to End Homelessness after an extensive, community-wide planning process. The resulting plan is aligned with the Federal Plan to End Homelessness, Opening Doors, which was developed by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. The plan's overarching goals are as follows:

- Prevent and end homelessness among Veterans by the end of 2015.
- Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness by the end of 2017.
- Prevent and end homelessness for families, youth, and children by 2020.
- Set a path to ending all types of homelessness.

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Since the adoption of the current Ten-Year Strategic Plan, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness has developed a new Federal plan titled Home, Together. In turn, the ICH embarked on updating and revising the Montgomery County's strategic plan to end homelessness. This community-wide effort began in February 2019 and involved multiple stakeholders including elected officials, non-profit service providers, representatives from other systems of care, and government agencies. The Strategy and Planning Committee led the development of the plan and organized a series of work sessions to inform the community's strategies. The final plan will be launched in January 2020. See highlights below.

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

Values
- Housing First and Person-Centered Approaches
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Collaboration Across the Continuum of Care
- Data and Results Based Decisions
- Continuous Change and Improvement

Strategies
- Reduce Racial Disparities Across the System
- Build and Support Strong and Adaptable Programs
- Build and Support Affordable Housing Solutions within the Homeless Continuum
- Coordinate Effectively Across Other Systems of Care
- Increase and Diversify Funding
- Educate and Advocate for Change

ICH Infrastructure

This year, the ICH evaluated its current membership, committee structure, and governance. As a result, the CoC approved a revised Governance Charter and recommended legislative changes to the existing ICH statute. The intent is to improve effectiveness and efficiency as well as increase participation from other systems of care. See highlights of the revised committee structure below.

Committee	Key Roles and Responsibilities
STRATEGY AND PLANNING **Long-term vision and strategy**	Develop and oversee the strategic plan to end homelessness, including monitoring progress toward goals, conducting an annual gaps analysis and reviewing external policies that may affect local efforts.
COMMUNICATION **Public education and messaging**	Educate the public on issues related to homelessness and the community's response, including managing the CoC's website and communications strategy for initiatives and campaigns.
PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE **Ensuring people- centered efforts**	Facilitate the leadership and authentic collaboration with individuals with lived experience in all aspects of the community's efforts to end homelessness, including advising other committees and recruiting individuals with lived experience to participate.
OUTCOMES AND IMPROVEMENT **Harnessing data for improvement**	Establish performance targets and monitors and evaluate program level performance, including supporting improvement efforts through identifying training on best practices. Oversee the implementation of HMIS (through the HMIS subcommittee).
PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING **Mobilizing Resources**	Forge partnerships and assist funders to establish priorities that further the CoC's strategic plan, including overseeing the annual application for federal homelessness funding (through the Allocations Subcommittee).
SYSTEM COORDINATION **Cross sector program and policy implementation**	Coordinate the implementation of a housing and services system across sectors, including recommending improvements for policies and overseeing the CES (through the Coordinate Entry System Subcommittee).

Initiatives

The *Housing for All = A Stronger Montgomery* campaign encompasses the broader vision of making homelessness rare, brief, and one-time only for all. In 2017, Services to End and Prevent Homelessness (SEPH) began to restructure programs to align with this vision and encompass the new federal mandates on Coordinated Entry Systems (CES) for both single adults

and families with minor children. The restructure utilizes the guiding principles and shared values of our CoC as identified in the Strategic Plan to End Homelessness.

ICH's work over the past year has been focused on three initiatives as part of the *"Housing for All"* campaign. These include the Zero:2016, Inside (Not Outside), and At Home Together campaigns, detailed below.

Zero: 2016   In December 2015, Montgomery County was one of the first four jurisdictions in the Country to effectively end Veteran homelessness This success was confirmed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, and the Community Solutions *Built for Zero (BFZ)* campaign. We have housed more than 156 Veterans since the *Zero:2016* effort officially kicked off in June 2015 and only 5 % of them have returned to homelessness. The chart below shows the number of Veterans experiencing homelessness for each month since January 2016. Our goal is to have no more than six Veterans experiencing homelessness at any give time.

Actively Homeless Population · Veteran ·
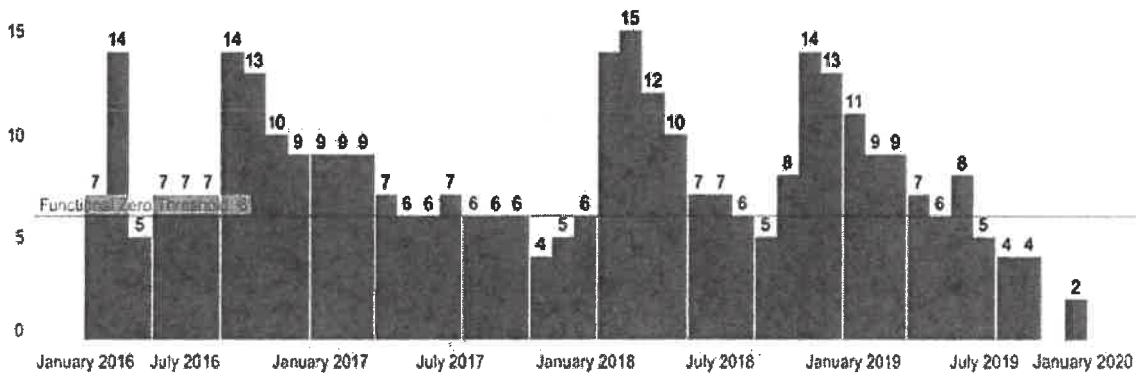
The *Inside (not Outside)* Initiative is Montgomery County's campaign to end chronic homelessness.

In January 2016, Montgomery County CoC committed to the ambitious goal of ending long-term homelessness for people with disabilities. To date, 424 people have been housed through this initiative and 11 individuals remain to be housed. Although the CoC has not officially met the target for "functional zero," Montgomery County has consistently had less than 12 unhoused people identified as chronic since May of 2018. See the run chart below.

Actively Homeless Population
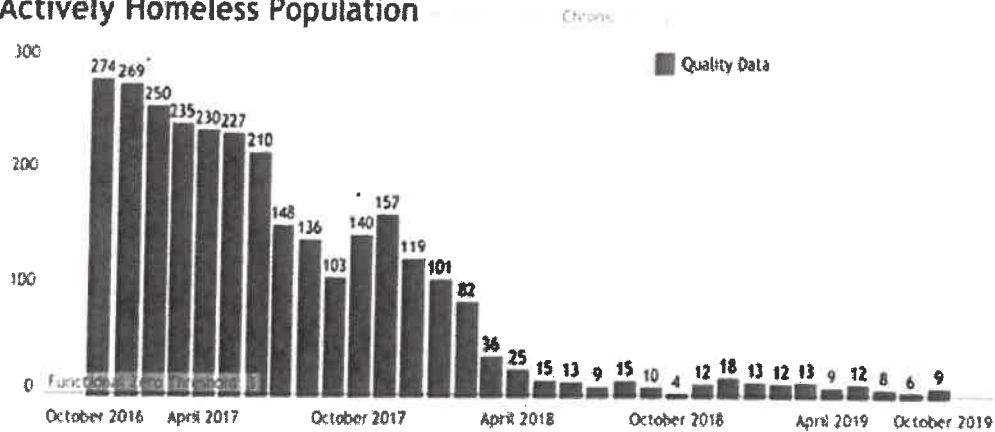
In July 2018, the ICH launched the *@HomeTogether* Initiative to end and prevent homelessness for families with children by the end of 2020.

Unlike the previous initiatives addressing Veteran and chronic homelessness, success is not defined by a "functional zero" number but instead by making the experience rare, brief, and one-time only. Montgomery County will measure success by reducing the number of families experiencing homelessness for the first time, shortening the length of time a family experiences homelessness, and decreasing the rate of returns to homelessness for families with children. The chart on page 7 describe our performance over the last four years.

In Fiscal Year 2019, Montgomery County served 275 households' families in the homeless system. This includes more than 500 children. The strategies of the *@HomeTogether* Initiative include new and enhanced programs to better engage families early before they become homeless, and better targeted resources to provide rental assistance to families who are at risk of losing their housing. For families who enter the emergency family shelter, there will be more integration between agencies to quickly connect to mainstream resources, employment, and affordable childcare. We believe ending homelessness is possible by providing the right amount of assistance to help families obtain or regain permanent housing quickly and ensuring access to services to help them remain stably housed.

Over the last year, the County has made some early improvements in serving families experiencing homelessness. From 2018 to 2019, there was a 27% decrease in the number of households served and a 42% reduction in the number of people in families experiencing homelessness for the first time. This can be directly attributed to the County's work on homeless prevention. In turn, the heavy emphasis on prevention, has contributed to an increase in the length of stay for shelters. The families we are serving in shelter have significantly more complex challenges than we have seen in the past as those households with less barriers are provided with early interventions and support eliminating the need for emergency shelter.

Making Homelessness for Families RARE

Number of people in households experiencing homelessness for the first time

FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
678	801	776	449
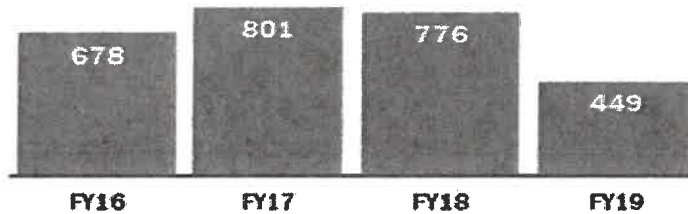
Making Homelessness for Families BRIEF

Length of stay (days) in motels and in shelter + motels

—O—LOS in Motels   —O—LOS in Shelter + Motel

	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
LOS in Motels	50	48	46.5	54.5
LOS in Shelter + Motel	31	31	29.5	32.5
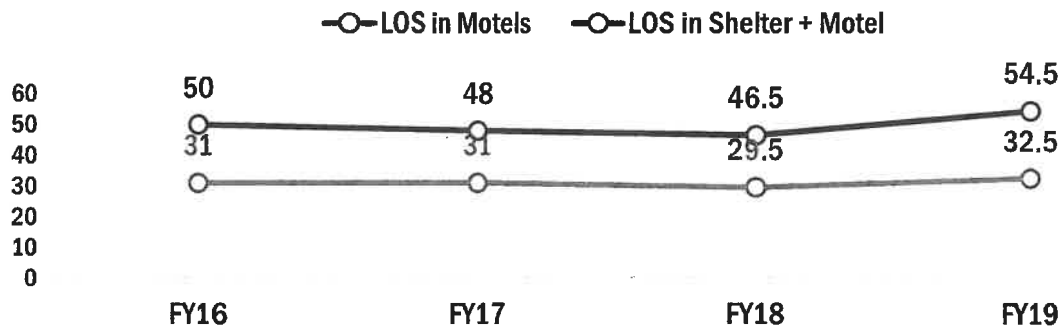
Making Homelessness for Families One-Time Only

Returns to homelessness within 24 months: Households

FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
18	29	12	13
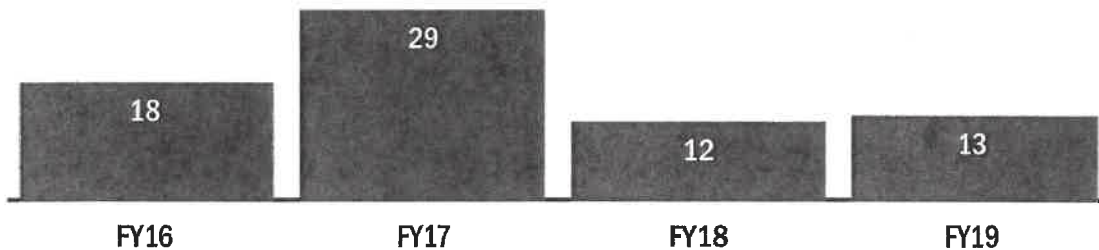
COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The ICH was involved in a variety of community outreach events to engage the public. These include:

- The third annual Community Memorial Event honoring individuals who were part of the homeless community who died during 2018. More than 100 family, friends, policy makers, service providers and members of the faith community attended the event which provided education on the connection between health and housing.

- Montgomery County in partnership with the City of Gaithersburg held its eighth "Homeless Resource Day" to reach out to residents experiencing homelessness and connect them with needed community resources and services. More than 380 households attended this highly successful event and received health screenings, registration for mainstream benefits, legal assistance, employment, haircuts and more. Over 330 volunteers make the event possible.

- Developed a communications strategy and launched the *@HomeTogether* Initiative to end family homelessness in Montgomery County.

- Representatives of the ICH engaged a variety of stakeholder groups by providing education on issues surrounding homelessness. These groups include the Montgomery Cares Advisory Board, Commission on People with Disabilities, funding collaboratives, civic associations and many others.
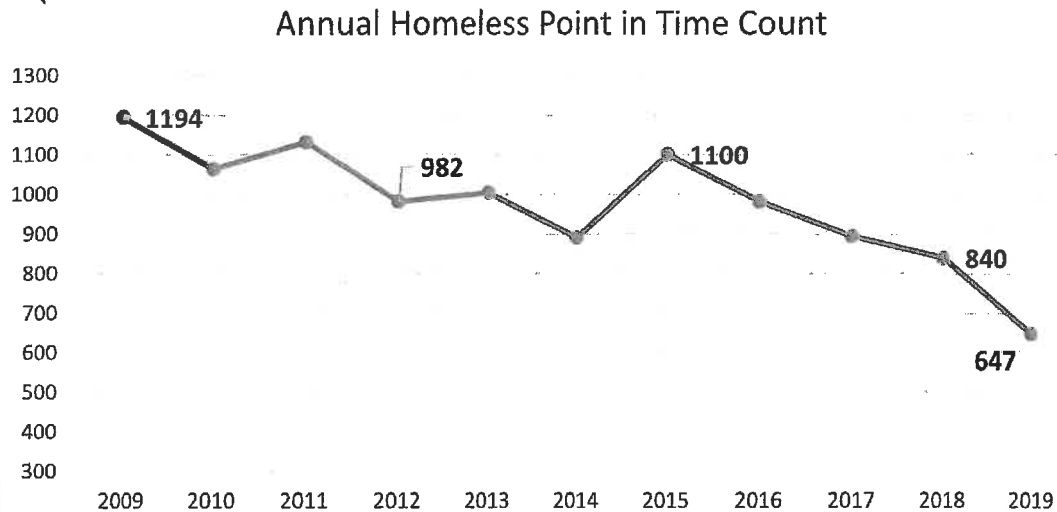
DATA AND TRENDS REGARDING HOMELESSNESS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Point-In-Time Count

Montgomery County's Homeless Point-in-time (PIT) Count was conducted on January 23, 2019. A total of 647 homeless persons were counted that day, a decline of 23% from 2018 and 28% from 2017 count. Montgomery County attributes the decrease in the number of persons experiencing homelessness to a multipronged approach to ensuring that all residents experiencing a housing crisis and entering the homeless services system are supported and housed as quickly as possible. Since January of 2016, more than 400 people experiencing homelessness have been placed in permanent housing through the Inside (not Outside) Initiative, resulting in a 93% decrease in chronic homelessness. In addition to the concentrated effort to end long-term homelessness, the CoC instituted a shelter diversion program for families, leading to a reduction in the number of households entering the homeless continuum. Staff offer support in problem solving and conflict resolution that allows families to resolve their housing crisis quickly. A similar approach is used at the single adult emergency shelters resulting in shorter length of stay. In addition, the CoC has increased the number of Rapid Rehousing units and made the program more flexible to meet the varying needs of all households.

Households without children experienced an 22% decrease in 2019 from 568 in 2018 to 441 in 2019. There was a decrease of 44% in the number of unsheltered populations, 75 in 2019 compared to 133 in 2018. In addition to the annual PIT Count Montgomery County plans to conduct quarterly counts of unsheltered persons to identify, engage, and track those experiencing street homelessness.

The chart below provides a comparison of the past 10 years.

Annual Homeless Point in Time Count

Line chart titled "Annual Homeless Point in Time Count" with y-axis from 300 to 1300 and x-axis years 2009 through 2019. Labeled data points: 1194 (2009), 982 (2012), 1100 (2015), 840 (2018), 647 (2019).

Montgomery County's Homeless Count by Category					
Category	2017	2018	2019	Percent Change 2017 to 2019	Percent Change 2018 to 2019
Total Number Counted	894	840	647	-28%	-23%
Total Individuals	616	568	441	-28%	-22%
Total Number of Families	84	86	61	-27%	-29%
Total Persons in Families	278	278	206	-26%	-26%
Total Adults in Families	106	93	76	-28%	-18%
Total Children in Families	172	185	130	-24%	-30%

The number of households with children headed by transition age youth (18-24 years old) decreased 82% from 11 in 2018 to 2 during the 2019 count. This is an 85% decrease from the 2017 count. However, it is unclear why the number of transition age parenting youth households has decreased so drastically. In calendar year 2018, 57 youth-headed households were served in the continuum which is similar to previous years. In July 2018, the CoC began implementing homeless diversion for families with children. Preliminary numbers suggest that nearly 2/3 of all households seeking shelter can resolve their housing crisis without needed emergency shelter. If the trend continues, the CoC will attribute the decline in transition age youth-headed households with children to this change in practice. The number of unaccompanied transition age youth decreased in 2019 to 20 (31%) from 2018.

For more information on the PIT Count in Montgomery County and the Washington metro region, see the full report.

HOUSING INVENTORY

The CoC continues to provide emergency shelter to households with minor children through three year-round family shelters, one domestic violence (DV) shelter, and limited hotel subsidies used as overflow. During the hypothermia season from November 1 to March 31, additional overflow shelter is provided through a non-profit organization. During the 2019 enumeration, a total of 47 households with minor children were residing in emergency, overflow, or DV shelter which is a significant decrease (32%) from 2018.

Emergency shelter capacity for adults without children remains 140 for year-round capacity. This includes the DV shelter with five beds designated for this household type, three designated as medical beds, and two designated for older adults or people with disabilities. During hypothermia season, capacity expands to 383 beds. On the day of the 2019 enumeration, there were 298 emergency shelter and overflow beds occupied; a decrease of 4% from 2018 and 15% from 2017. Over the last few years, the need for emergency seasonal beds have not exceeded the CoC capacity.

Over the last few years, the CoC has reallocated funding from safe havens and transitional housing to permanent housing programs. This partially accounts for the decrease in the number of people served on the night of the PIT count. On the night of the PIT count, the bed capacity for transitional shelter and Safe Haven was 88. On the day of the enumeration, there were only 46 beds occupied. The continued decrease during the past two years' enumerations highlights the need to explore alternative uses for transitional housing facilities. The summary below represents the literal homeless capacity.

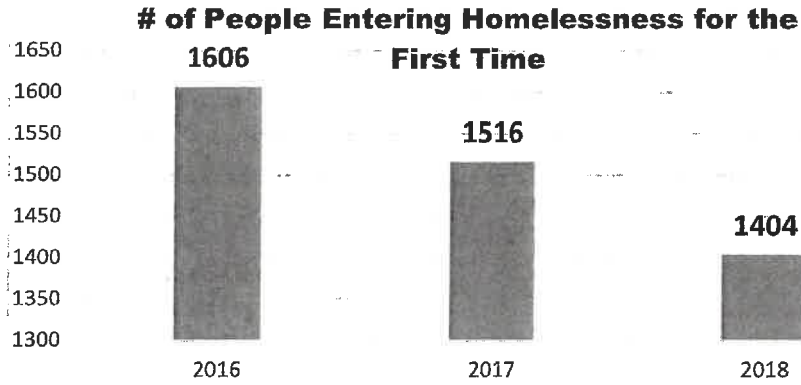| MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S YEAR-ROUND AND WINTER INVENTORY OF BEDS				
	Beds for Households without Children	Beds/Units for Households with children	Total Year-Round Beds	Total Winter Beds
Hypothermia/Overflow/Other (Additional Winter Capacity)	244	70/18	0	346
Emergency Shelter Beds	140	143/41	283	0
Transitional / Safe Haven Beds	88	46/8	134	0
TOTALS	472	285/80	417	346

In addition, the CoC continues to expand permanent housing options including Rapid Re-housing and Permanent Supportive Housing for persons in need of supportive housing options to exit homelessness. From 2017 to 2019, the number of units of permanent housing in Montgomery County has increased by 223 (16%) from 1,138 to 1,361.
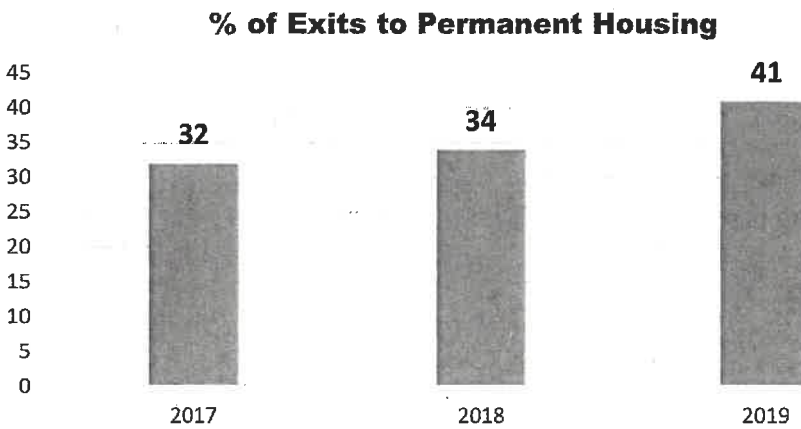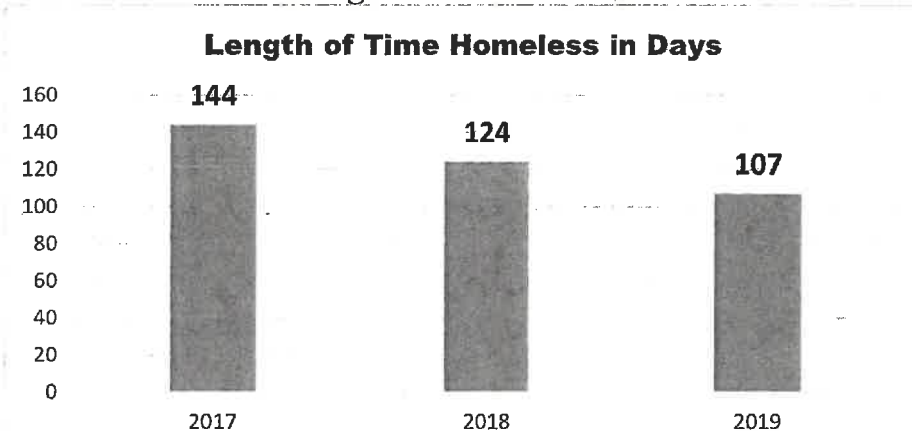
SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

Recognizing the limitations of the PIT Count, the CoC also measures success by monitoring overall system performance. All measures are put in the context of making homelessness rare, brief and one-time only. Data is collected and reported to HUD annually based on the federal

fiscal year. The charts below demonstrate the performance of the entire system unlike the charts on page 7 which represents only families served by the Continuum.

Making homelessness RARE

of People Entering Homelessness for the First Time

Year	Value
2016	1606
2017	1516
2018	1404

Making homelessness BRIEF

Length of Time Homeless in Days

Year	Value
2017	144
2018	124
2019	107

% of Exits to Permanent Housing

Year	Value
2017	32
2018	34
2019	41

Making homelessness One-time only

% of People Retaining Housing

	2017	2018	2019
	97	98	98

(y-axis: 96.4, 96.6, 96.8, 97, 97.2, 97.4, 97.6, 97.8, 98, 98.2)

% of People Returning to Homelessness after 24 months

	2017	2018	2019
	23	17	16

(y-axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25)
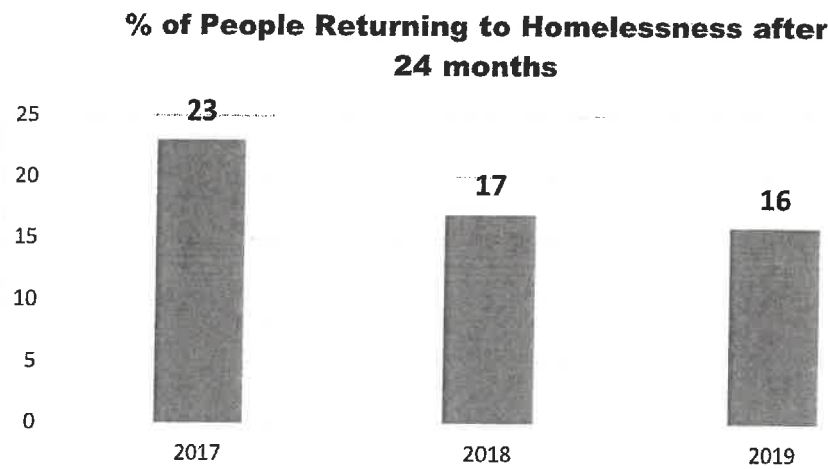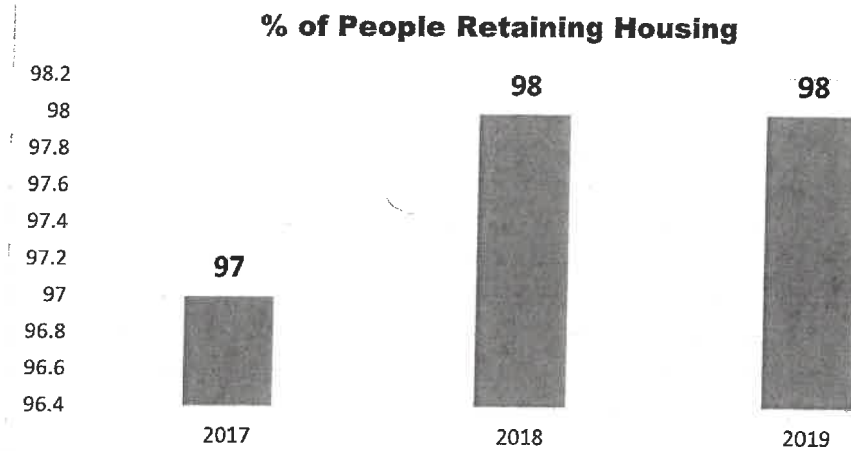
GAPS IN THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

The Montgomery County CoC has developed a diverse range of services to end and prevent homelessness in the County, yet gaps remain. These include:

- Dearth of affordable housing for extremely low-income homeless individuals and families (i.e. households at or below 30% of the area medium income).
- Lack of adequate permanent supportive housing programs equipped to provide intensive support services to those who do not meet the definition of chronic homelessness (individuals with serious mental illness, chronic substance use, and/or co-occurring disorders). Based on current data, the CoC would need to increase the number of permanent supportive housing units by 100 to meet the need.

- Lack of adequate Rapid Re-housing units and employment services for individuals and families. Based on current data, the CoC would need to increase the number of Rapid Re-housing units by 350 to meet the need.
- Lack of access to employment services and job opportunities for persons experiencing homelessness.

FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

In support of the CoC's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness, the ICH recommends the following:

- Increasing the supply of affordable housing to extremely low-income families (those below 30% of area median income) who do not have high service needs.
- Provide $4 million in funding for the County Rental Assistance Program to allow an increase in the maximum rental subsidy amount that is equal to 25% of Fair Market Rent.
- Provide $4.2 million in funding to increase Rapid Re-housing by 350 units to better serve households that are currently employed or employable.
- Increasing the capacity of the CoC to develop a robust CES that is aligned with HUD policy by funding additional street outreach workers and coordinated entry staff to conduct assessment and data analysis.
- Provide $2.5 million in funding for 100 units of permanent supportive housing to meet the needs of vulnerable adults to sustain the success of the *Inside (not Outside)* Initiative on ending chronic homelessness.

LEGISLATIVE OR REGULATORY CHANGES REQUESTED

The ICH recommends stronger fair housing policy and legislation that protects individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness against discrimination based on criminal history. Montgomery County has made great strides in promoting equity in housing by protecting against discrimination based on source of income. By limiting a landlord or property manager's ability to automatically deny applicants with a criminal history, we can begin to address the significant disparities Black households experience in obtaining and sustaining permanent housing as evidenced by the high rates of Black people (64%) in the homeless continuum.

To increase the availability of affordable housing, the ICH encourages the commitment of dedicated, set aside units or a local homeless preference in multifamily housing developments using federal, state, or local financing and public housing authorities.

The ICH supports the changes to the Rental Assistance Program recommended by the Department of Health and Human Services to better target limited resources and to more effectively serve people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, particularly seniors and people with disabilities.

Over the past year, the CoC has been successfully implementing a CES that ensures fair and equal access to housing and services that are prioritized based on need. To ensure continued

commitment to CES by all housing and homeless providers, the ICH encourages the County Council and the County Executive to codify in law participation in coordinated entry.

CONCLUSION

The Montgomery County CoC's goal is to end homelessness for all individuals in our community by making homelessness a rare, brief, and one-time only for everyone. Although government resources have been strained over the past few years, the County has continued its commitment to end and prevent homelessness through strategic investment in critical resources. Such strategic investment produced a more effective system that ultimately succeeded in ending Veteran homelessness and effectively ending chronic homelessness. While additional targeted funding will likely be needed to produce similar results for families with children, youth, and seniors, the ICH is confident that the CoC is operating efficiently and is equipped to serve the County's most vulnerable residents with continued support.

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Montgomery County's Strategic Plan to End Homelessness

Council Briefing

February 10, 2020

Homelessness from a National Perspective

- 552,830 people were experiencing homelessness on a single night in 2018

- 67% Individuals

- 33% People in families with children

- 7% Unaccompanied minors (under 25)
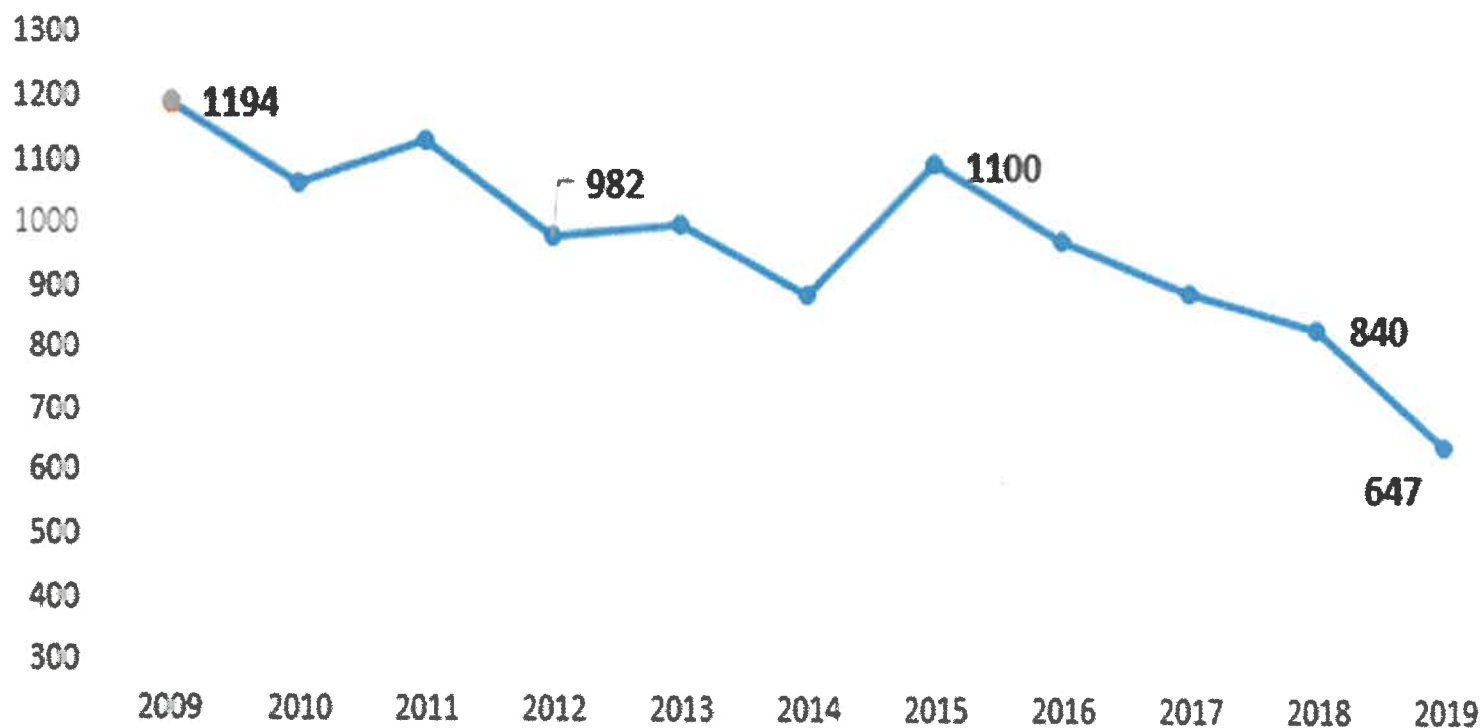
- 7% Veteran

- 18% Chronically Homeless

Montgomery County 2018 Homeless Point-in-Time Count

Understanding who is experiencing homelessness and the changing trends

Homelessness in Montgomery County

Annual Homeless Point in Time Count

Year	Count
2009	1194
2012	982
2015	1100
2018	840
2019	647

Homelessness by Population Type

% of People Experiencing Homelessness during 2019 Point-in-Time Count
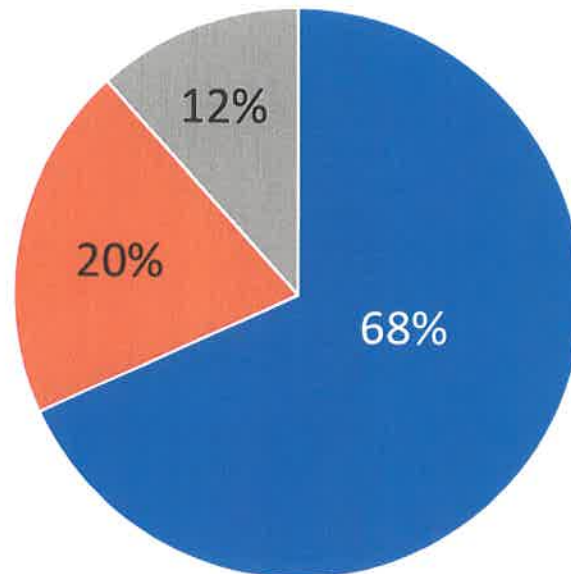
■ Single Adults ■ Children ▨ Adults with Children

Age of People Experiencing Homelessness

Age Distribution of Households without Children

Legend: 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-61, 62 or older

Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-61	62 or older
Count	22	71	73	100	112	63
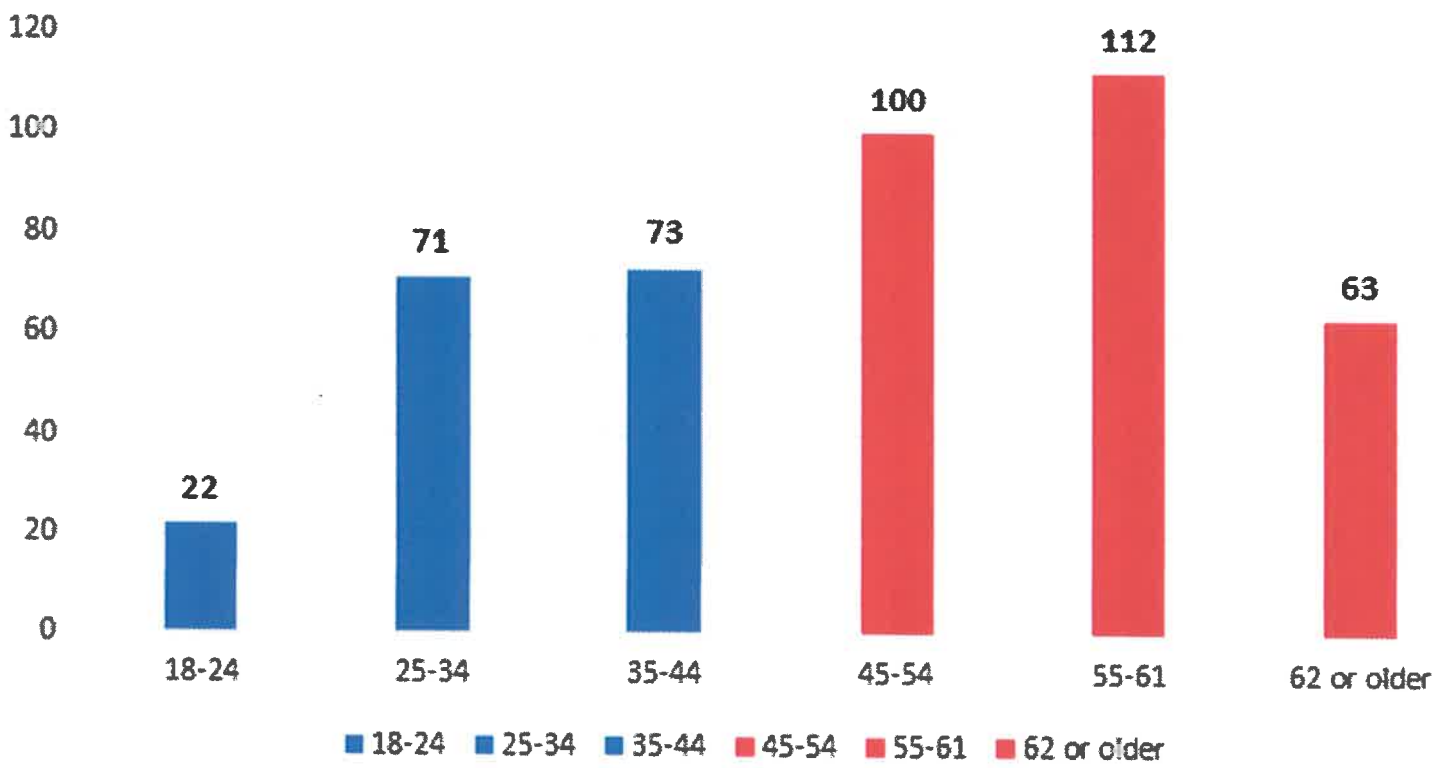
Subpopulations of People Experiencing Homelessness

	Adults Only in all Households FY17	Adults Only in all Households FY18	Adults Only in all Households FY19	Percent Change 2017 – 2019
Chronic Substance Abuse (CSA)	104	66	28	-73%
Severe Mental Illness (SMI)	175	170	126	-28%
Dual Diagnosis (CSA&SMI)	101	97	73	-28%
Chronic Health Problem	162	144	84	-48%
Living with HIV/AIDS	8	6	2	-75%
Physical Disability	76	110	136	+44%
Domestic Violence Victim History	146	147	106	-27%
Limited English	56	63	32	-43%
U.S. Veterans	33	13	13	-61%
Chronically Homeless	167	124	11	-93%

Scope of Homelessness in Montgomery County Compared to People with Service and Housing Needs

Receiving DHHS Services — 110,027

Rent Burdened — 60,259

Receiving SEPH Services — 15,422

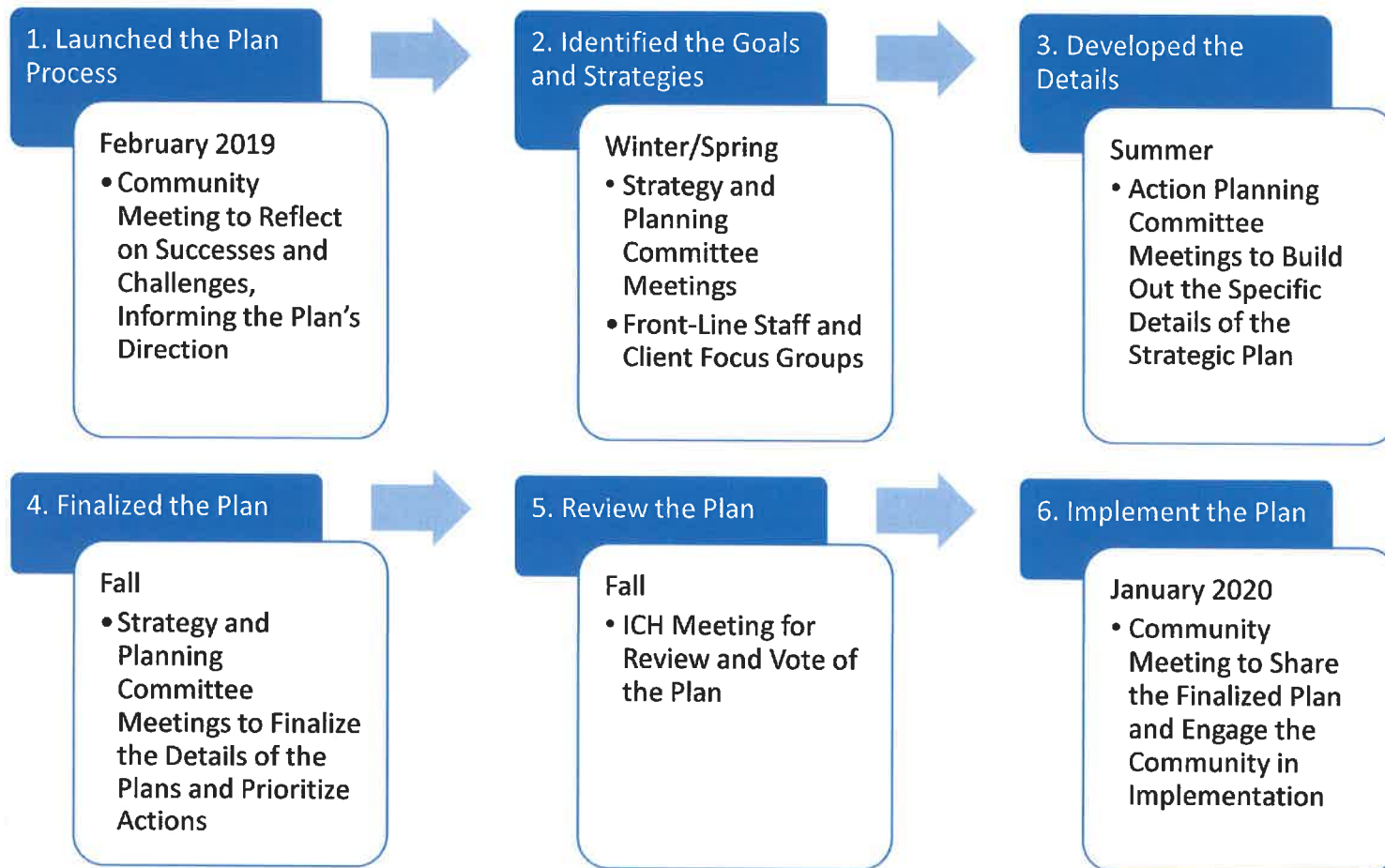**Received Prevention Services** — 12,116

Receiving Homeless Services — 1,960
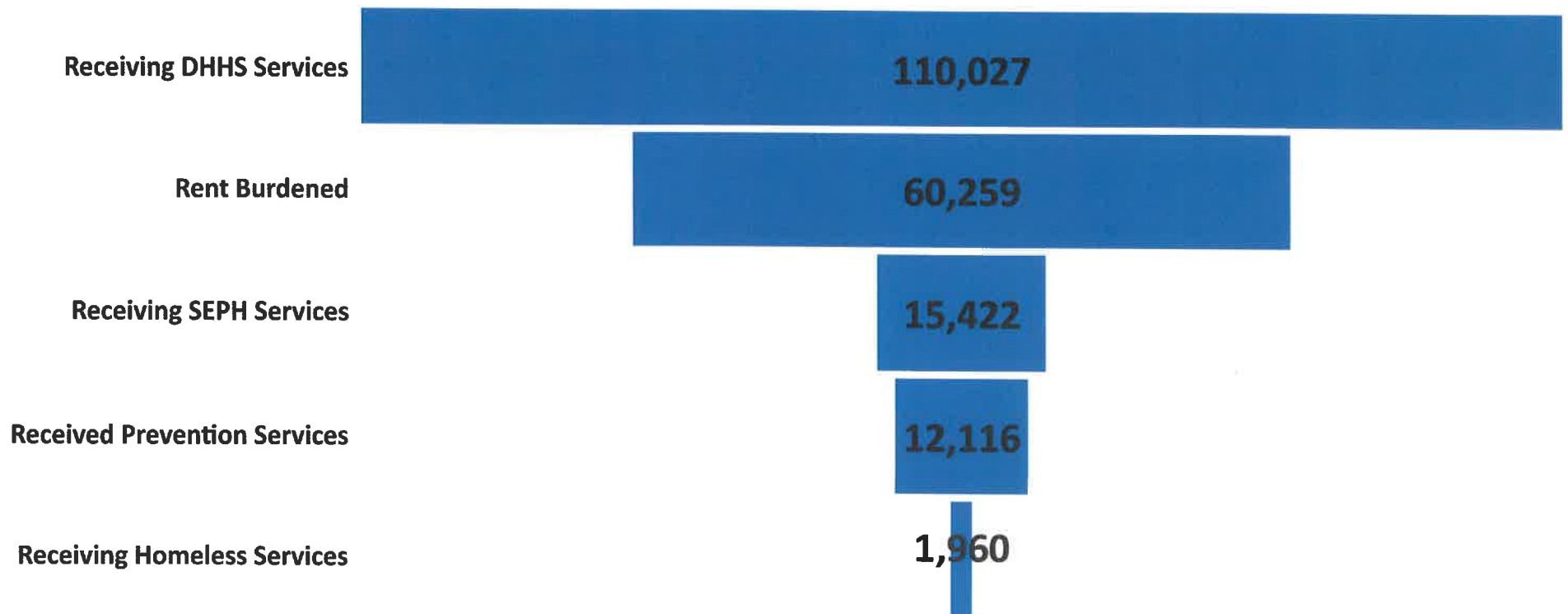
The Plan to End Homelessness

Planning process, detailed plan, and implementation

Comprehensive Approach to Building the Plan

1. Launched the Plan Process

February 2019
- Community Meeting to Reflect on Successes and Challenges, Informing the Plan's Direction

2. Identified the Goals and Strategies

Winter/Spring
- Strategy and Planning Committee Meetings
- Front-Line Staff and Client Focus Groups

3. Developed the Details

Summer
- Action Planning Committee Meetings to Build Out the Specific Details of the Strategic Plan

4. Finalized the Plan

Fall
- Strategy and Planning Committee Meetings to Finalize the Details of the Plans and Prioritize Actions

5. Review the Plan

Fall
- ICH Meeting for Review and Vote of the Plan

6. Implement the Plan

January 2020
- Community Meeting to Share the Finalized Plan and Engage the Community in Implementation

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Community Engagement

The strategic plan was built with strong involvement across the community, including:

- Community Meeting Strategic Plan Launch in February 2019

- Provider Focus Groups

- Lived Experience Focus Groups

- Action Planning Working Groups

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Other Information Used to Develop the Plan

- Annual Point-in-Time Count, System Performance Measures, other data from HMIS (Homeless Management Information System)

- National Best and Promising Practices

- 2017 Gap Analysis
  - Scale Rapid Rehousing
  - Refine Diversion and Prevention
  - Expand Housing First Permanent Supportive Housing
  - Expand Rental Assistance Shallow Subsidy Program
  - Expand Housing Initiative Program

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Strategy and Planning Committee

Co-Chairs	
Fred Swan	Housing Opportunities Commission
Sharan London	Interagency Commission on Homelessness
Members	
Amanda Chesney	Catholic Charities
Amanda Harris	DHHS-Services to End and Prevent Homelessness
Diana Pina	Interfaith Works
Elijah Wheeler	Collaboration Council
Jen Schiller	Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless
Linda McMillan	Montgomery County Council
Meredith Myers	Education and Workplace
Pam Taylor	Community Member
Ralph Belk	National Center for Children and Families
Roberto Pinero	Interagency Commission on Homelessness
Stephanie Killian	Department of Housing and Community Affairs

👥 Working Group Participants

Over **60 participants** from more than **20 organizations** along **with independent community members** came together to build action plans for each of the 6 strategies.

Sharing the Plan

- Vision and Mission
- Bold Goals
- Values
- Strategies

Vision and Mission

- **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:

- End homelessness among Veterans by 2015 – **Achieved.**

- End homelessness among chronically homeless individuals by 2019 – **Achieved.**

- End homelessness among families with children by the end of 2020.

- 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.

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.
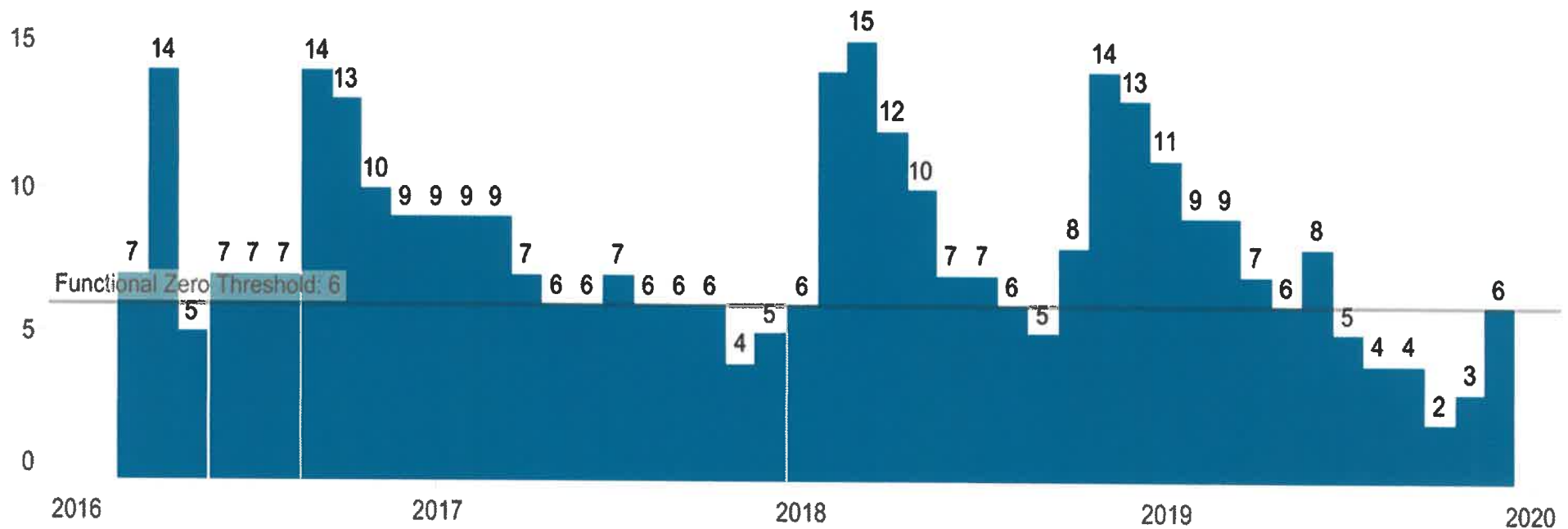
Update on Current Initiatives to End Homelessness
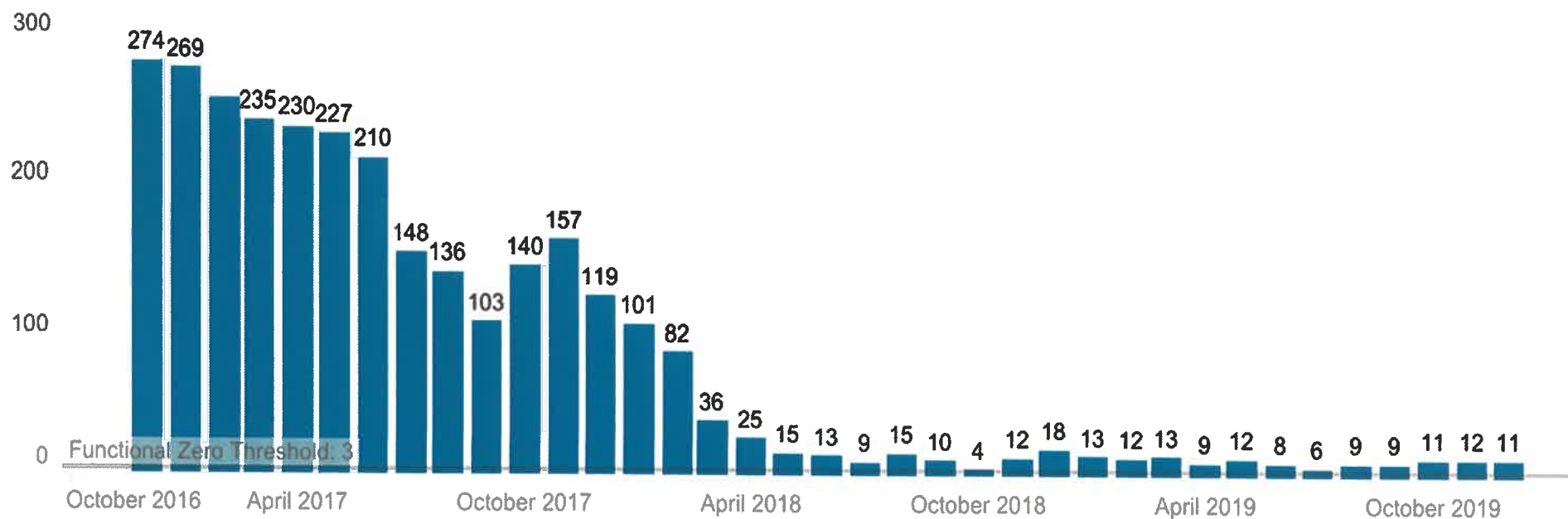
Veteran, Chronic, and Family

Status on Zero: 2016 Ending Homelessness for Veterans

Actively Homeless Population Monthly count for Veteran subpopulation(s)

Status on Inside (Not Outside): Ending Chronic Homelessness

Actively Homeless Population (Monthly count for Chronic subpopulations)

Status of @ Home Together: Ending and Preventing Homelessness for Families with Children

Households with Children Experiencing Homelessness

Active Homeless:
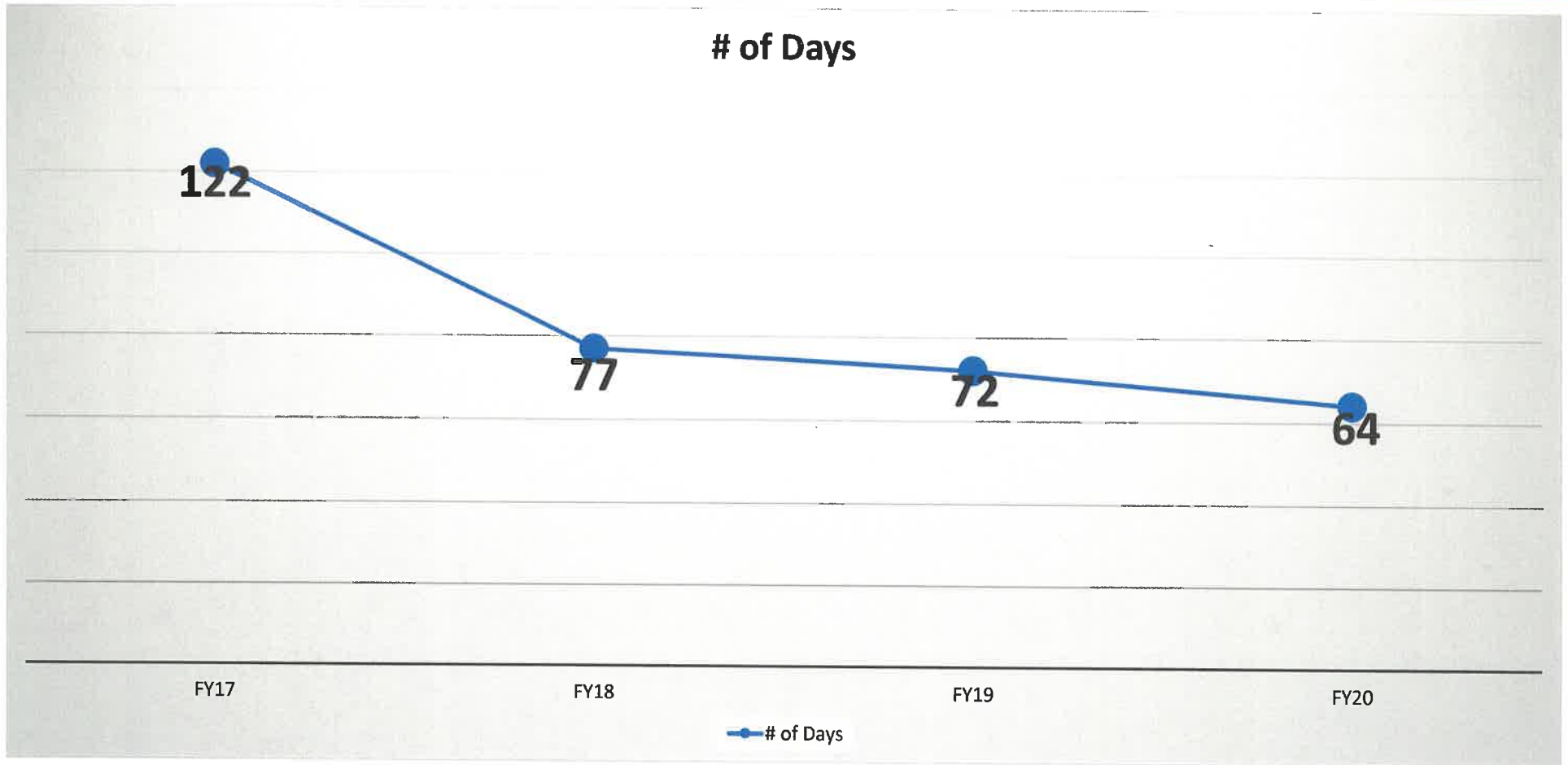**57 TOTAL**

15 TOTAL
Monthly Inflow

17 TOTAL
Monthly Outflow

Monthly Reduction: 2

Number of Months to Reach Functional Zero: 28 months

Length of Time Families Experience Homelessness

# of Days

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
# of Days	122	77	72	64

Percent of Exits to Permanent Housing for Families

% of Exits to PH

Line chart showing % of Exits to PH:
- FY17: 50
- FY18: 55
- FY19: 56
- FY20: 62

— % of Exits to PH

Strategies Overview

Strategy 1: Address 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

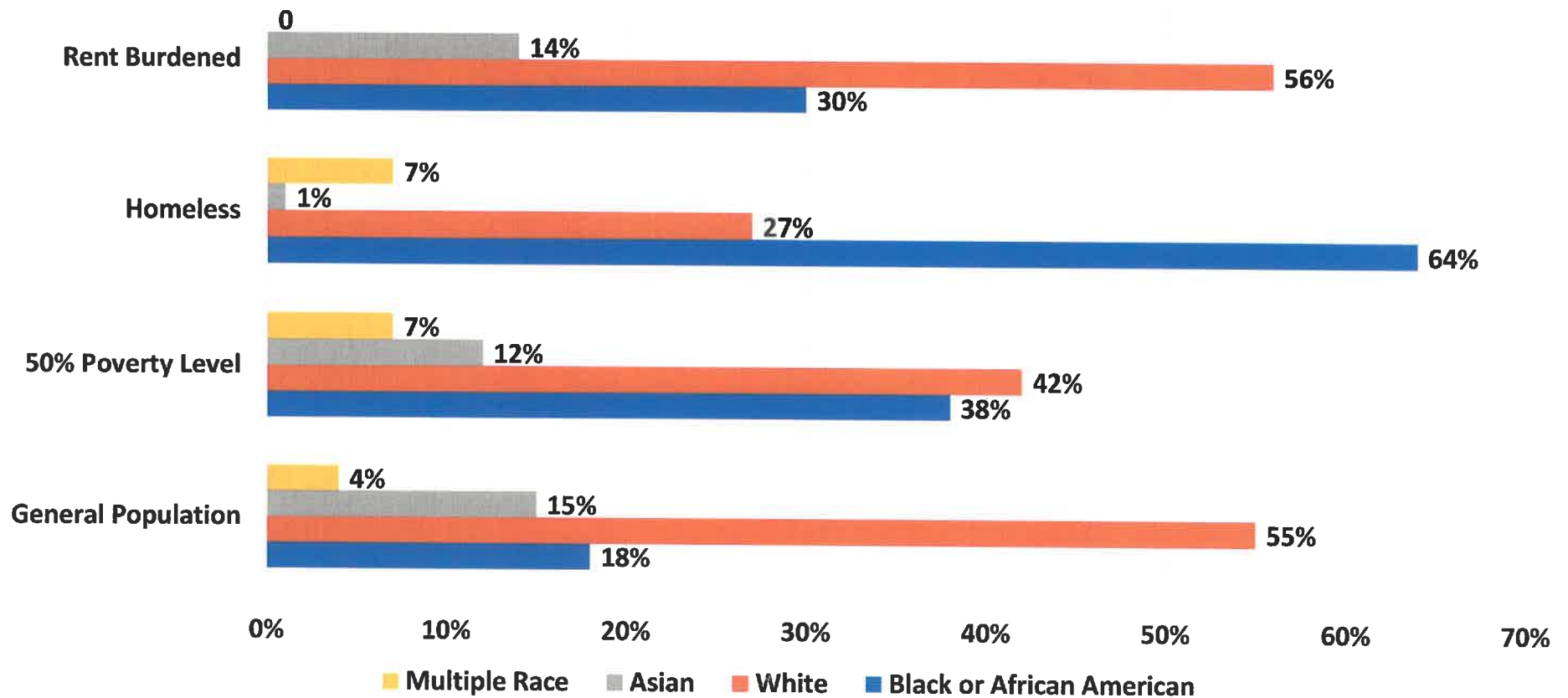## Strategy 1 — Address Racial Disparities Across the System

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.

Racial Disparities in the Homeless Continuum

Distribution by Race

Strategy 1	Address Racial Disparities Across the System

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:

- Number of people entering homelessness for the first time is reduced by 20%.

- Average length of time homeless is 30 days or less.

- Percent of people exiting to permanent housing is at least 80%.

- Percent of people returning to homelessness is less than 15%.

- Percent of households retaining Permanent housing after 24 months is at least 90%.

Strategy 2 | Build and Support Strong and Adaptable Programs

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.

Strategy 2	Build and Support Strong and Adaptable Programs

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 within 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.

- Increase PSH by 100 units.

- Increase RRH by 350 units.

- At least 10% of all newly produced or preserved affordable units dedicated to households experiencing homelessness

Strategy 3	Build and Support Affordable Housing Solutions within the Homeless Continuum

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

OUTCOMES:
- Satisfaction and cooperation of agencies across other systems of care, as reported by agencies and people experiencing homelessness.

- Increase of the percentage of households experiencing homelessness receiving mainstream services (e.g. entitlements, behavioral health).

- Increase of the percentage of eligible school-aged youth receiving appropriate school-based education services.

Strategy 4	Coordinate Effectively Across Other Systems of Care

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.

Priority 4: Improve Collection and Sharing of Data.
A boundary spanner is a dedicated job, role, or responsibility that works in a multi-agency or multi-system environment to ensure the connection of resources and information across agencies and systems.

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.

- Increase funding from non-county sources by 10%

- Increase overall funding by 25%

Strategy 5 — Increase and Diversify Funding

Strategic Priorities

2020 Priorities

Priority 1: Identify and Agree on Shared Vision with County (Office of the County Executive, County Council, Department of 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.

Strategy 6	Educate and Advocate for Change

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.