

Homeless Services Framework

Maryland's Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH)

The Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) was established by SB 796 (2014) to examine statewide initiatives aimed at ending homelessness throughout the state of Maryland. The ICH repeals the Governor's Advisory Board on Homelessness and includes representatives from 13 state agencies including the Governor's Office for Children Youth and Families, three representatives from local Continua of Care (the sixteen federally-recognized bodies created to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency) and nine advocates and providers from throughout the state as well as a community member who has experienced homelessness.

FRAMEWORK VISION: As a result of aligned resources, policy and practice statewide, those experiencing homelessness and those at risk of becoming homeless in Maryland, will have access to services, emergency shelter and long-term housing options to assist them in attaining self-sufficiency and prevent a return to homelessness.

Updated March 2019

Please Note: The timeframes outlined in this document are based on the calendar year.

GOAL 1 -- Increase the number of permanent supportive housing options available statewide to those experiencing homelessness.

The “Housing First” philosophy of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and Rapid Re-housing (RRH) has demonstrated both cost and outcome effectiveness, and has become the principal public health paradigm to address homelessness in communities across the country. Member agencies of Maryland’s Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) will facilitate increased and improved interagency partnerships to effectively leverage limited federal, state, and local resources for development of more PSH and RRH options statewide.

	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES	STAKEHOLDERS RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAMES
A	Increase the production of housing available to those making 30% AMI or below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DHCD will work to increase the use of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to create units affordable to the homeless earning less than 30% Area Median Income (AMI). ▪ Encourage other Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) statewide to contribute to the need for additional vouchers and units affordable to the homeless earning less than 30% AMI. 	<p>DHCD</p> <p>DHCD, other PHA’s and CoCs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1st Quarter of 2019 ▪ Throughout 2019
B	Prioritize existing PSH resources for those with the highest need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with Continuum of Care (CoC) partners to assess if those living in HUD funded PSH require the high level of supportive service. ▪ Work with PHA’s to secure vouchers for those that can move out of HUD funded PSH and can live independently. 	<p>DHCD, CoCs and Service Providers</p> <p>DHCD and PHA’s statewide.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1st and 2nd Quarter of 2019
C	Identify other housing stock that can be made available to those experiencing homeless.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess the availability of transitional housing stock statewide and identify resources to convert units into shelter or permanent housing. ▪ Work with private owners of subsidized housing to increase vacancy rates. 	<p>DHCD, developers of affordable housing and CoCs</p> <p>DHCD and private property owners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Throughout 2019 ▪ Throughout 2019
C	Establish Housing First guidelines for housing providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft Housing First guidelines for homeless service programs to review, adopt and execute. 	<p>CoCs and funding agencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft to be completed in 2019

Accomplishments to Date:

- ✓ DHCD successfully consolidated six different homeless service grants into the Homelessness Solutions Program (HSP), \$9.3 million in available funds, a streamlined application and funding process, and updated state regulations.
- ✓ DHCD held statewide learning collaborative focused on increasing the use of Rapid Re-housing funding and doubled the funding allocation through the Homelessness Solutions Program (HSP).
- ✓ DHCD has begun engagement with affordable housing developers to encourage more PSH development.
- ✓ Track the annual production of units under the Weinberg, Bridge, 811 and STHFG programs in the ICH Annual Report on Homelessness.
- ✓ Annually project the number of units and costs associated with providing housing solutions and supportive services to veterans, unaccompanied homeless youth and chronically homeless statewide.
- ✓ Annually collect the number of units subsidized through the Weinberg, Bridge, 811 and Shelter and Transitional Housing Facilities Grant (STHFG) programs (DHCD) and include in an annual briefing to members of the Joint Legislative Committee and track outcomes in the ICH Annual Report on Homelessness.

GOAL 2 -- Improve access to and quality of emergency shelter options available statewide to those experiencing homelessness.

Emergency shelter is a short-term public health necessity while we continue to strive for long-term sustainable solutions for those experiencing homelessness. Maryland's ICH will support CoCs efforts to meet federal coordinated entry requirements for shelters, identify and promote best practices and models for providing low-barrier emergency shelter and shelter diversion in a client-centered and trauma-informed manner. The ICH will also work to improve equal access to emergency shelter to protected classes and vulnerable individuals and families.

	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	STAKEHOLDERS RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAMES
A	Increase access to low-barrier emergency shelter statewide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Require the adoption of low-barrier shelter and Housing First principals to qualify for state and federal grant funding. ▪ Establish low-barrier emergency shelter standards of care for CoCs statewide. ▪ Identify the funding requirements necessary to meet the recommendations in the Needs Assessment (mentioned on page 19). 	DHCD and ICH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COMPLETED ▪ Before end of FY19
B	CoCs will meet HUD's Coordinated Entry requirements by 1/23/18.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CoCs will apply for HUD technical assistance for Coordinated Entry. ▪ Work with CoCs to expand coordinated entry for emergency shelter as well as permanent housing. 	DHCD and CoC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COMPLETED ▪ Ongoing throughout FY19
C	Make inclement weather sheltering practices more consistent statewide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create detailed guidelines and expectations for inclement weather sheltering for all CoCs. 	ICH, CoC leads, local Emergency Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COMPLETED

Accomplishments to Date:

- ✓ Completed initial assessment of which CoCs are offering lower barrier shelter options.
- ✓ Worked with MDH to publicize weekly, weather-related deaths of the homeless during summer and winter months.
- ✓ Work with CoC leads and Emergency Management leads within counties to encourage dual-planning efforts for cold weather shelter.
- ✓ Provide general guidelines to CoCs for inclement weather sheltering.
- ✓ Completed needs assessment focused on resource gaps that prevent CoCs from offering low-barrier shelter.
- ✓ Assess local progress made towards achieving Coordinated Access statewide.
- ✓ Establish a Coordinated Entry work group of CoCs to meet federal requirements by January 23, 2018.
- ✓ Establish a repository for all Coordinated Entry resources and a CoC listserv for information sharing.

GOAL 3 -- Improve the emergency services network serving the homeless in order to prevent a return to hospitals or jails.

Maryland’s ICH is committed to ensuring no one is discharged into homelessness from hospital care, emergency rooms, nursing homes, mental health clinics, state hospital facilities, or correctional institutions. The Council will promote the training and relationships necessary to assure consistent and effective discharge planning for health and housing needs. The Council will work with health and service providers to increase respite/convalescent care throughout the state for people experiencing homelessness.

	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	STAKEHOLDERS RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAMES
A	Assess how the homeless are accessing emergency care and how to better coordinate with hospitals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with hospitals and propose questions to add to the intake process to better assess homeless status upon intake. ▪ Consider specific discharge goals and/or adopt a mandate that health care providers will discharge people safely back to their communities and not back to the street. 	ICH Health and Homelessness work group, Medical Respite Care Centers, emergency shelters, CoC leads, Hospital Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ November 2019
B	Increase access to proper respite or convalescent care for the homeless statewide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide support to increase hospitals that determine homeless status upon intake aimed at decreasing the number of people being discharged back to the streets from hospitals. ▪ Consider organizing statewide meetings to increase the number and visibility of medical respite care. ▪ Gather information from existing respite programs and compile a toolkit targeted to interested partners. 	ICH Health and Homelessness work group, Medical Respite Care Centers and emergency shelters, CoC leads CoCs, Hospital leadership, MDH (Medicaid)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ November 2019
C	Assess exit-planning strategies used by jails and other institutions to determine service and housing gaps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with the Department of Public Safety & Correctional Services (DPSCS) to assess the housing and service gaps for people exiting incarceration and provide information on housing services to DPSCS staff. ▪ Assess the availability of permanent subsidy programs (e.g., Baltimore City Re-Entry Vouchers) and whether they are targeted to meet the needs of people most likely to experience chronic homelessness. ▪ Explore opportunities for piloting RRH with employment development programs for people in the 90+ day population who would otherwise become homeless at exit. ▪ Track the number of persons discharged to street/shelter homelessness from DPSCS. 	ICH Health and Homelessness work group, Medical Respite Care Centers, emergency shelters, CoC leads, DPSCS, Emergency Shelters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ November 2019 ▪ 1st quarter, 2020

Accomplishments to Date:

- ✓ Created a needs assessment tool, the Medical Respite Assessment in Maryland (MRAM), administered in 18 of 24 counties to determine what respite services each jurisdiction offers and where additional respite beds are needed.
- ✓ Developed the Re-entry and Exit Planning (REEP) tool to assess how incarcerated individuals are released and disseminated in the jails in 17 of 24 jurisdictions in the State.

GOALS 4 – Ensure veterans experiencing homelessness have sustainable housing options and access to necessary supportive services where they live, to prevent a return to homelessness.

Maryland’s ICH continues to coordinate local efforts that address the housing and service needs of this vulnerable population in line with the strategies and best practices outlined in the federal plan.

	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	STAKEHOLDERS RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAMES
A	Improve access to housing for Homeless veterans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinate all information held by each CoC and all three VA medical centers to establish a statewide by-name list. ▪ Recommend the continuation and expansion of existing housing options, HUD VASH, and SSVF. 	DHCD, MD VA, CoCs, USVA (VISN 5 Homeless Services),	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing
B	Improve and make more consistent, the resources available to homeless Vets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with the Maryland Community Services Locator (MCSL) to enhance the online directory of housing resources for homeless veterans. 	Veterans Work Group members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COMPLETED

Accomplishments Thus Far:

- ✓ Increase information sharing between Homeless Service Providers and the VA to better identify veteran-specific housing and support services.
- ✓ Designated a specific Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist, within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS), correctional institutions to assist incarcerated veterans prior to release with job placement assistance.
- ✓ Complete a statewide survey to assess how the CoC’s respond to the needs of homeless veterans and recommend improvements to service delivery.
- ✓ Created a resource guide for homeless veterans to support the work of CoCs.
- ✓ DHCD, DHS, and the Veterans work group have worked with the VA to assess the number of veterans by CoC, determine which CoCs have a by-name list.
- ✓ Facilitated a statewide veteran homeless services work day, shared best practices for connecting veterans to VA homeless services, identified gaps in services, and developed local action plans for reducing veteran homelessness across Maryland.
 - ✓ Developed and recommended to the ICH a standard model for coordinating housing for homeless veterans.
- ✓ Collaboration established between Career One-Stop Center DVOP and emergency and transitional housing programs.

GOAL 5 – Ensure homeless youth 16-24 years of age have access to quality housing, education and employment options statewide.

Housing instability and homelessness are on the rise among youth and young adults between the ages of 16-24. Youth with histories of foster care and juvenile services involvement are disproportionately represented, as are youth identifying as LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) and youth of color. Specialized strategies and interventions are necessary to prevent and end homelessness for this high risk group. To aid State and local efforts to address youth homelessness, Maryland’s ICH will support the Youth REACH program, facilitate interagency collaboration, develop sound and effective policy recommendations, and provide technical assistance to ensure that existing and new programs and initiatives adequately address the unique needs of this diverse population.

	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES	STAKEHOLDERS RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAMES
A	Address service needs of youth and young adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide status updates on recommendations from the 2013 Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY) Task Force report regarding Supportive Services and outline next steps. ▪ Assist state agencies and community stakeholders in developing funding ideas and proposals to enhance existing strategies and/or develop new programs. 	ICH, State agencies, local stakeholders, community service providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1st quarter of 2019 ▪ Ongoing
B	Increase housing options for youth and young adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess current availability of safe, affordable housing for unstably housed and homeless youth and young adults. ▪ Write a status update on recommendations from the 2013 UHY Task Force report regarding housing options and outline next steps. 	ICH, State agencies, Housing First Workgroup, local stakeholders, community service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing ▪ 1st quarter of 2019
C	Increase participation by youth in policy process and elevate the issue to statewide stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruit persons with personal experience of homelessness and/or other specific knowledge and experience related to youth and young adult homelessness to serve on ICH Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Work Group ▪ Educate the ICH about specific issues related to youth homelessness or subpopulations of homeless youth with significant vulnerability and/or unique needs 	ICH, local stakeholders, community service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing ▪ Ongoing
D	Eliminate education barriers for youth experiencing homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support MSDE in the development and implementation of the McKinney-Vento State plan. ▪ Support local partners as they work to meet the terms of the state plan and assess gaps in education and transportation services. 	ICH, State agencies, local stakeholders, community service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing ▪ Ongoing

Accomplishments Thus Far:

- ✓ Governor signed the Ending Youth Homelessness Act passed during the 2018 legislative session.
- ✓ DHCD expanded the Youth REACH count to 20 jurisdictions in spring of 2018.
- ✓ Conducted survey of Continua of Care, service providers, and youth with lived experience regarding services for youth, barriers to access, and experiences utilizing services.

GOAL 6 - Reduce or eliminate workforce barriers, increase training opportunities, sustainable employment options and earning potential to ensure those experiencing homelessness can become self-sufficient. (This workgroup will begin meeting in 2019).

	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES
A	Form a taskforce comprised of workforce system stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify and recruit taskforce members from stakeholder groups (employers, training providers, and American Job Center Staff) in Maryland providing employment/training services to individuals experiencing homelessness. ▪ Convene the taskforce and finalize a charter for the group’s work, including mission, goals, roles and structure. ▪ Set up a meeting schedule for the first year.
B	Use data to understand the demographics, goals, and needs of homeless job seekers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Link with the Data and Dashboard Committee, working under the Benchmarks of Success for Maryland’s Workforce System initiative, to inventory the specific data points related to homeless job seekers, including homeless youth, collected by state agencies. ▪ Research other resources produced at the state and local level focused on the homeless jobseeker population, including homeless youth, (e.g., The Journey Home’s Journey to Jobs report; the Opportunity Collaborative’s Barriers to Employment in the Baltimore Region, etc.). ▪ Create a statewide “heat map” that graphically displays pockets of poverty where outreach to homeless job seekers can be focused to promote uptake of services.
C	Build an inventory of current workforce system initiatives and programming focused on serving homeless jobseekers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review Maryland’s Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan to identify current workforce programs of all core state WIOA partners (e.g., DLLR’s EARN program, employment services for Disabled Veterans, etc.), that target jobseeker populations with significant barriers, including homeless youth. ▪ Analyze the twelve local area workforce plans to identify initiatives in place at the local level to serve homeless jobseekers (e.g, mobile job units, job fairs, etc.). ▪ Identify other best practices across the nation for providing workforce system services to those experiencing homelessness nationwide.
D	Create two “Guide to Opportunity” publications for workforce system staff and homeless jobseeker populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Map programs and resources identified in the inventory (completed for Objective B) to local areas. ▪ Map support services for homeless jobseekers, including homeless youth, to resources located in local workforce areas, with a particular emphasis on services related to expungement/legal aid, mental health, addiction, domestic violence, and trauma response. ▪ Use data on in-demand occupations listed in Maryland’s Workforce Plan to guide potential job trainings/employment options for those experiencing homelessness ▪ Identify in-demand occupations (and trainings) that individuals experiencing homelessness can realistically pursue.
E	Build awareness of and advocate for the homeless job seeker population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Present to both the Governor’s Workforce Development Board and local workforce development boards on Maryland’s homeless jobseeker populations. ▪ Ensure annual updates on the work of the taskforce are provided to the state’s WIOA Alignment Group.
F	Build systems collaborations between workforce system partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify opportunities for cross-training of workforce and homeless service providers to ensure shared competencies necessary to serve homes jobseekers, including access to specialized vocational services. ▪ Develop a customizable, generic staff role description for a specialist to serve in a dedicated position at the local level as a liaison/concierge that assists homeless jobseekers in navigating the workforce system to access the full menu of system services they need to prepare for, find, and advance in sustainable jobs. ▪ Advocate for federal, state and local funding to support initiatives that serve homeless populations, (e.g., cover the cost of dedicated staff serving in the liaison/concierge role noted above).