Maryland's Interagency Council on Homelessness

September 24, 2014 @ DHR

1. **Introduction of Council Members:**

   Representatives from 12 State Agencies, 3 Continuums of Care (CoCs), and 7 advocacy groups

2. **Reviewed Timeline for the ICH:**

   May 2014: SB796 passed and established ICH membership and purpose
   Sept 2014-June2015:

   - Hold 1st meeting, establish subcommittees, set priorities
   - Hold recurring meetings every 2-3 months
   - Hold subcommittee meetings between ICH meeting

   June 2015: Joint legislative committee of 5 House and 5 Senate members will start meeting to oversee the work of the ICH (e.g. hold hearings, pass legislation)

3. **Reviewed Requirements of SB 796:**
   - Coordinate state policy recommendations and working relationships among state, local, and nonprofit agencies concerning efforts to remedy and prevent homelessness across the state
   - Disseminate information and educate the public about the prevalence, causes of and responses to homelessness
   - Coordinate data sharing between local CoCs and make annual recommendations to the state legislature that are in compliance with federal policy initiatives and funding strategies
   - Analyze the need for and availability of affordable and accessible housing resources and recommend changes necessary to move towards a statewide housing first approach
   - Solicit input from the advocacy, business and faith communities as well as from consumers, regarding policy and program development for the homeless population and identify supportive services necessary to best serve special populations such as veterans, youth, families and individuals with behavioral heath barriers to housing

4. **Reviewed HUD's Definition of Homelessness**
   This definition covers 4 categories:
   - (1) People who are living a place not meant for human habitation, in emergency shelter, in transitional housing, or are exiting an institution where they temporarily resided
   - (2) People who are losing their primary nighttime residence, which may include a motel or hotel or a doubled up situation, within 14 days and lack resources or support networks to remain in housing
   - (3) Families with children or unaccompanied youth who are unstably housed and likely to continue in that state
   Note: this category was newly added in 2012
   - (4) People who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, have no other residence, and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing

Commentary from ICH members on the definition:

- The state definition of homelessness is broader
- There are other definitions of homelessness. Therefore, we may want to consider enhancing Maryland's definition of homelessness.

5. **Reviewed 2014 Point in Time Results by CoC**

Maryland Data:

Total # of Maryland sheltered homeless in 2014 is approximately 6,267

- The greatest # are located in Baltimore City (2,272)

National Data:

Nationally, there are 610,000 homeless (sheltered and unsheltered).

> 9,000/610,000 is Marylanders

Note: though there has been a decrease in veteran homelessness there has been an increase in the sheltered homeless

Facts:

$18/hr is needed to afford housing

1 in 10 Marylanders live below the FPL

There is a statewide data warehouse to track data on homelessness

> 24 local databases are aggregated at the state level

Note: (1) some databases are not compatible with the state-wide data warehouse (2) due to data collection issues, performance measurements is an issue

Background Information on Point in Time Counts:

- Estimate the # of homeless people within each jurisdiction by physically going out into the community and counting the number of homeless
- The count alternates between counting just sheltered and counting both sheltered and unsheltered every other year
- The 2014 results counted just the number of sheltered homeless
- Some challenges with Point in Time Counts:
    i. If individuals are temporarily in institutions (e.g. hospital, prison, etc.) they are not counted
    ii. Since the count takes place in January, weather can prohibit counters from getting to all locations
    iii. Some homeless live in abandoned buildings and counters are not likely to enter those buildings
    iv. Homeless youth may live in their parents' basement and thus will not be counted
    v. Surveyors in each jurisdiction have different approaches to surveying due to differences across localities
    vi. Counts are not conducted on the same night across jurisdictions

6. **Reviewed Comparison of 2012 to 2014 Point in Time Counts**

Sheltered Count for 2012: 5,898

Sheltered Count for 2014: 6,267

7. **Discussed What ICH Should Focus on First**
   - *New resources and how to better utilize existing resources*
     Committee Member Commentary:
     Consider a sub-committee focusing on the Housing First model
     Consider a sub-committee focusing on innovative housing models including Housing First and shelters that provide workforce development training (e.g. Lighthouse Shelter)
     This is not just an issue of need more funding, creative solutions can be implemented including, but not limited to grant redesign and resource delivery redesign
     Should include philanthropy in resource mapping (reference Baltimore's Promise's strategy)

   - *Coordination across jurisdictional lines*
   - *Veterans*
     Committee Member Commentary:
     Some veterans do not self-identify as veterans
     Some veterans do not seek support programs provided by the government despite the fact that they are available

   - *Housing for young adults*
     Committee Member Commentary:
     Young adults often do not have the knowledge of available resources or a way to secure resources (i.e. jobs) due to their young age and lack of education

   - *Health and homelessness*
     Committee Member Commentary:
     There is a correlation between health and homelessness.
     The Medicaid expansion in Maryland under the ACA has increased the number of homeless individuals covered by public health insurance

   - *Seniors*
     (Note: Committee members recommended adding this category)
     Committee Member Commentary:
     Seniors lack resources particularly when they are single
     There are gaps in Medicare and Rx benefits that can contribute to seniors' risk of homelessness
     Housing subsidies are not sufficient for seniors
     Affordable housing uses an asset test; therefore, seniors must have continuing income to subsist which is unlikely – therefore, flawed public program for seniors (most seniors will not qualify since you have to be asset poor)

8. **Discussed Next Steps**
   - DHR will send a survey to committee member to allow them to rank their sub-committee preferences
   - DHR will compile survey data and determine sub-committee member assignments
   - Committee members will consider running for the position of Chair or Vice Chair (serve a 2-year term)
   - Committee members will bring deliverables to present at the next meeting

   Next Meeting: November 18