



Quarterly Implementation Update: September 2015 Highlights

Strategy 1: Crisis Response

- Ending Veteran Homelessness.** The Veterans Now team has ramped up efforts as the City moves into the final stretch in its work to end Veteran homelessness by December 2015. With a monthly housing placement target of 68 Veterans per month, the team housed 110 Veterans in April, 67 in May, 76 in June, and 52 in July. Under the leadership of TCP and our partners at the VA, the team has continued to test new strategies to identify, locate, and engage Veterans and innovate in myriad ways to help us reach our goal. The Veterans Now team holds two meetings a week to match assessed clients to a housing resource. DCHA, with the support of ICH staff and other partners, hosted a successful Meet and Lease Event in August and will be hosting three additional events through the end of the calendar year. (At the Meet and Lease events, clients with vouchers have access to a pre-inspected pool of units and receive move-in assistance on the spot.) The team has also been developing written protocol to ensure the approach is institutionalized and can be brought to scale for other populations experiencing homelessness. (Homeward DC Action Items 1J, 1K, 2A, 2B, 2D, 3A, 3B, 3E).
- Creating Year Round Access to Emergency Shelter for Families:** The team at DHS has been working hard to create a system of year-round access to shelter for families so that shelter is available to families who need it when they need it—not just during hypothermia season. In addition, together with DGS and other key partners, they have been putting the pieces in place to replace DC General with small, service enriched, community-based emergency housing facilities across DC in the coming years. To facilitate exits from shelter, DHS has proposed updates to the FRSP rules (that govern the District’s Rapid Re-Housing program for families). The updates will create a customer-centered approach that offers services such as individualized case management, housing identification, and connections to workforce development and employment. Finally, DHS is implementing a targeted homelessness prevention program to curb entry into emergency shelter facilities. During the last quarter an RFP was issued and grants have since been awarded to implement the new program. (Homeward DC Action Items: 1A,1D, 1F, 1I and 5A)
- Developing a Daytime Services Center :** With the goal of providing additional programming and services for single adults (e.g., employment, mental health and substance use treatment), a

temporary daytime services center has been established at 2210 Adams Place, NE. It opened in June 2015. Search for a downtown location also continues. (Homeward DC Action Item: 1F)

- **Expanding Street Outreach Services.** In August, the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) received a 3-year, \$9 million Cooperative Agreements to Benefit Homeless Individuals (CABHI) grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services. The CAHBI grant will allow the District to develop a city-wide infrastructure to engage and connect the target population (homeless veterans and chronically homeless individuals experiencing substance use disorders, serious mental illnesses, or co-occurring disorders) with evidence-based housing interventions, treatment, and recovery support services and eligible benefits. In addition to expanding outreach services across the District, the grant will provide the staffing support needed to develop written policy and procedures to coordinate services across providers working in different catchment areas to ensure that all providers are working within the City's Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement (CAHP) System to assist with client assessment, documentation collection, housing search, and stabilization. DBH has begun working with DHS and ICH staff to plan for the rollout of the grant, which is expected later this fall. (Homeward DC Action Items 1K, 1L, 3E)

Strategy 2: Increase Supply of Affordable/Supportive Housing

- **Significant Investments in Affordable and Supportive Housing.** In addition to the Homeward DC resources, the City also invested \$100M to support the development of affordable housing. The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) released a [Consolidated Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#) on July 29, 2015, kicking off a two month application period. Applicants are required to submit their proposals online via DHCD's new electronic application portal before the October 5, 2015 deadline. At least 40% of expenditures will be dedicated to housing for households earning between 0 and 30% of Area Median Income (AMI), and at least 5% of all units produced will be for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) using a Housing First approach. According to the RFP, units dedicated to the homeless services system will be filled through the City's Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement System, in alignment with Homeward DC. (Homeward DC Action Items 2A and 3A)
- **Leveraging Medicaid to Increase Services for Individuals in PSH:** Consultants were engaged to assess the potential for leveraging Medicaid to increase services for vulnerable clients experiencing homelessness, particularly those with frequent and avoidable use of emergency services. Based on the analysis, a 2-Day Action Planning Session was organized (July 29 – 30) to focus on the most promising areas identified: 1) Coordination with Managed Care (MCO) related to Care Management and Case Management Services, 2) Leveraging Mental Health Rehabilitative Services (MHRS), Adult Substance Abuse Rehabilitative Services (ASARS), and Health Homes and 3) Medicaid Services for Older Adults. A report outlining priorities and a framework for implementation has been drafted. The District team, led by DHCF with support from the ICH, will be reconvening in early September. (Homeward DC Action Items 2E)

- **Transitional Housing Conversion Project.** Although our transitional housing stock is an important part of our system, during the strategic planning process, it became clear that we have more “transitional programming” than we actually need in a system that is committed to moving to a Housing First approach. Further, it became clear that the transitional housing that remains in the community will need to be more effectively targeted to have the greatest impact. Therefore, at the beginning of the summer, the ICH engaged consultants to assist the District with an analysis of its existing transitional housing inventory (reviewing programs based on mission, current population served, facility configuration, supportive service resources, etc.) Each transitional housing provider participating in the analysis has already received a project-level report providing recommendations on how they could align their programming with Homeward DC. This fall, the providers will be working with ICH, DHS, and TCP staff to review the resources needed and make final decisions on program conversions (e.g., to emergency shelter, permanent supportive housing, or transitional housing targeted to a specific subpopulation such as survivors of domestic violence or transition aged youth). Moving into the winter, the consultant will engage in one-on-one technical assistance with the providers to support their conversion to the new program model. (Homeward DC Action Items 1C, 2D)

Strategy 3: Reduce Barriers to Supportive and Affordable Housing

- **Increasing Participation of Landlords:** To increase the participation of landlords, a multifaceted approach is being developed. Strategies include creating a centralized messaging packet that streamlines requirements for landlord participation, a consolidated calendar of events across all participating agencies and programs, a unified PR campaign that takes advantage of existing network and proven marketing strategies to create high profile political and community support, and a robust IT solution that can match landlords and prospective residents in line with the coordinated assessment and housing placement (CAHP) tools. (Homeward DC Action Item 3E).

Strategy 4: Increase Economic Security of Households

- **Targeted employment assistance.** The Department of Employment Services (DOES) has taken a number of targeted steps over the past quarter to increase access to employment services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness:
 - Workforce Connections. To improve coordination and information sharing between the District and nonprofit job developers, DOES has begun planning an initiative called *Workforce Connections Partners*. The effort will enable job developers to a) update their training methods to create resumes consistent with the modernized methods used by employers and labor organizations; b) develop a common understanding of “job readiness” to maximize the customer’s success and ensure positive ongoing relationships with employers; and c) provide job developers with information about upcoming jobs, including the skill requirements. DOES is currently in the process of making the necessary system changes and developing/launching a training module for partners.

- LEAP Academy: DOES launched the DC LEAP (Learn Earn Advance Prosper) Academy earlier this year – a network of interconnected partners that will train residents in growing fields and place them in jobs. DOES is developing training modules for case managers that focuses on how to use *DC Networks* to register customers for workforce services, help customers establish profiles in the *DC Networks* system, search for jobs, and obtain information about upcoming hiring events and training programs in advance. DOES released a new Request for Qualifications for workforce training programs on July 31. DOES is working with DHS and its network of Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) providers to ensure RRH customers are automatically screened for LEAP.
- Financial Empowerment. Project Empowerment recently entered into an agreement with Citi Bank and the Capital Area Asset Builders for financial awareness workshops and the provision of matching funds towards saving. The initiative is open to all Project Empowerment participants. DOES has also partners with Bank on DC to help District residents get banked and use Direct Deposit services to avoid service charges and learn money management skills.
- Co-Location at Adams Place Day Center. DOES Project Empowerment staff have been assigned to the Adams Place Day Center to conduct job readiness workshops. Although the effort was just launched, 68 customers from Adam’s Place have participated in workshops to date. In addition, DHS staff from the Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) Program are also co-located at Adams Place and are able to register clients for both Food Stamps and FSET employment services on the spot. ICH and DHS staff are looking at opportunities to bring in additional resources from the US Department of Labor that would allow the District to expand FSET services directly into our low-barrier shelters in 2016.
- Training Round-up. Beginning, September 4, and each first Friday of the month thereafter, DOES will host training providers to share information to customers about their training programs, career pathways, and enrollment information. Staff will be available to enroll and register customers on site.

(Homeward DC Action Items 4A and 4B)

Strategy 6: Monitoring, Reporting, and Planning Updates

- **Youth Strategic Plan.** Youth serving agencies in the District are forging new paths as they work to design and develop a coordinated entry system for youth. Only a handful of other communities in the country have tackled coordinated entry for youth, which means the DC team has had to blaze new trails. The team has selected a common assessment tool and begun testing system-wide protocol to match youth with available beds throughout the City. As the District transitions from standalone programs, each with its own waitlist, to a central registry, we are improving our data on the number and needs of the youth in the City experiencing homelessness. In addition to the youth coordinated entry work, the District government also just completed its first-ever comprehensive youth census from August 17-25. The census data will also serve as an important building block for our efforts to develop the comprehensive plan to end youth homelessness later this fall. **(Action item 6a)**