



Good Faith Communities Coalition

Taking action on homelessness and affordable housing with and for the poor in the District of Columbia

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June 27, 2017

Chronically Homeless Persons and Families Living in Deep Poverty No one chooses to be poor!

Challenges await a new fiscal year...

- **FEDERAL FUNDING:** Most District programs to address the needs of those living in poverty include both federal and local dollars. In the President's proposed budget, all programs for the poor, from housing to food stamps, are drastically reduced.

- **BUILDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING:** Gentrification in the District will certainly continue into the near future. Few public programs are able to build affordable housing on a scale that approaches the need of those living in extreme poverty. **The lack of affordable, sustainable housing for those living at or below 30% Area Median Income (AMI) is a major, if not the #1, challenge confronting the District.**

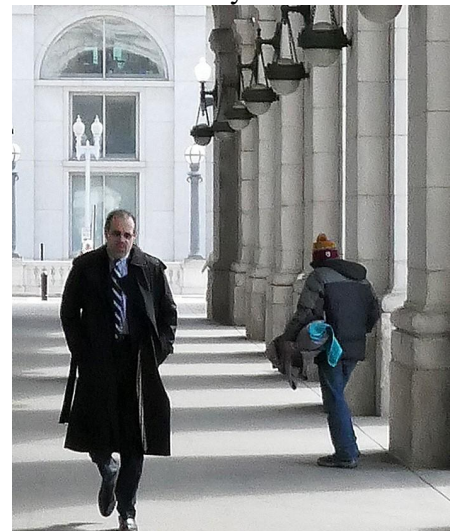
- **RENTAL VOUCHERS:** The District government is not inclined to use housing vouchers (long term rental assistance) broadly to address homelessness because of two factors: long term budget indebtedness, and the belief that many who are currently poor (perhaps 70% of the currently homeless) can reach the "middle class" by personal initiative with the assistance of education and training.

- **NO EASY ANSWERS:** The challenge before the District is complex with no easy answers:

- *"Everyone must work"* is the mindset of the country including the District. Only documented mental or physical disabilities are generally considered acceptable reasons for long term rental assistance (vouchers). For those with minimal skills, employment is mostly at minimum wage which does not make market rate housing affordable.

- *Barriers to consistent employment* for many individuals and families living in extreme poverty are great, even with new public programs such as free transportation to adult education programs. Are these barriers likely to be overcome in any reasonable period of time, or for some, at all?

- The proposed DC Homeless Services Reform Act of 2017 currently before the Council *tightens shelter access requirements* for families significantly, so that fewer would be allowed to enter shelter. The legislation also sets *rigid time limits on rental assistance* for transitional housing after exit from shelter. Limiting access and enforcing exit raise significant moral and humane questions.



[District of Columbia Comprehensive Plan](#)

The Comprehensive Plan is a 20 year framework that guides future growth and development in the city: land use, economic development, housing,

environmental protection, historic preservation, transportation and more.

Amendments to the plan have been proposed. Plan to participate in community review this fall to help create an inclusive DC community.



"There are no 'homeless people', but rather people who have lost their homes and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect." Homeward DC, Strategic Plan to End Homelessness. Chapter 2, Guiding Principles.



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