

MEMORANDUM

March 19, 2019

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

FROM: Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst *LM*

SUBJECT: **Briefing and Discussion: Services to End and Prevent Homelessness and the Continuum of Care**

PURPOSE: Overview briefing

Expected for this session:

Mark Johnston, MarkJohnston Consulting
Victoria Buckland, Acting Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
Amanda Harris, Chief, DHHS Services to End and Prevent Homelessness
Nili Soni, Continuum of Care Coordinator, DHHS Services to End and Prevent Homelessness

Montgomery County has adopted the goal of “making homelessness in Montgomery County rare, brief, and one time only for all residents.”

Overview from a National Perspective

In order to understand how the Montgomery County Continuum of Care and Coordinated Entry System reflect national best practices to reduce homelessness, the Joint Committee will receive a presentation from Mark Johnston. The following is the bio for Mr. Johnston.

Mark Johnston focused on homelessness throughout his 31-year career in the Federal government. He served as the Deputy Director of the US Interagency Council on Homelessness, and at HUD in various positions, including HUD’s Director of the homeless office, Deputy Assistant Secretary, and for his last two years as Acting Assistant Secretary. In these various roles he helped create HUD’s homelessness programs and policies.

For the past 5 years, he has served as a Commissioner and now Vice Chair of the Salt Lake County Housing Authority in Utah and has advised the Secretary of the US Department of Veterans Affairs as the Chair of VA's Advisory Committee to end veteran homelessness. He spends most of his time as a consultant working with individual cities and States in helping them reduce and homelessness.

The presentation will include the definitions of homelessness from the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Approaches to addressing homelessness, funding sources that are available to Continuums of Care, and intervention options.

Overview of Montgomery County System

While the Joint Committee will be briefed by DHHS staff at this session, the Continuum of Care is a system of County Government, the Housing Opportunities Commission, and the County's non-profit housing partners, some of which are Bethesda Cares, Catholic Charities, Interfaith Works, Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, and the National Center for Children and Families.

Information at © 1-9 include some of the outcomes, goals, and data to track the trends for homeless residents.

Dashboard Outcome Measures for 2016 to 2018 (© 1)

Making Homelessness Rare – 14% decrease in annual Point in Time Count
4% increase in people experiencing homelessness for the first time

Making Homelessness Brief – 21.5% decrease in the number of days someone is homeless

Making Homelessness One Time Only – 97% to 98% people retain permanent housing
30% decrease in the percent of households returning to homelessness

While there are programs available for all types of homeless individuals and families, the County decided to prioritize investment in additional resources in specific populations. In some instances it was, in part, because new Federal or State resources were available (such as VASH vouchers for Veterans) and in others a strategic decision to house those with the most serious problems and long-term homelessness (such as the medically vulnerable and chronically homeless). Housing is not only crucial to their health and safety but also to move them from other parts of the continuum (such as emergency shelter) that is not meant to address their very serious needs. There are four priority goals (© 2):

1. Sustain “functional zero” for Veteran homelessness
2. End (reach “functional zero”) for chronically homeless individuals with significant disabilities
3. End and prevent homelessness for families with children and for youth
4. Prevent all household types from entering homelessness

Racial Disparities in the Housing Continuum (© 10-14)

People of color are overrepresented in the homeless population nationally and in Montgomery County; however, there are different disparities in certain populations. In 2018, Anna Blasco completed a research paper on racial disparities for the Interagency Commission on Homelessness. Graphics are attached at © 10-11 and the Executive Summary at © 12-14.

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

Data can be impacted when homeless people are able to “couch surf” or double up with friends or family temporarily and so are not identified in the Point-in-Time.

Coordinated Entry System

One of the biggest efforts of the last few years has been the creation of a Coordinated Entry System (CES). Attached at © 15-17 are graphics regarding the CES. A CES is an evidenced-based strategy that focuses on housing and service coordination to link homeless consumers to the most appropriate housing solution based on their needs. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requires all Continuums of Care to use a CES. The goals of an effective CES are to prevent homelessness whenever possible, appropriately assess needs, and connect people quickly to housing and services. Core components of a CES include:

- **Prioritization** – having a transparent way to prioritize consumers who are most vulnerable;
- **Low-barrier** – operating programs do not screen out consumers for assistance because of perceived barriers, including, but not limited to, lack of employment or income, drug or alcohol use, or having a criminal record;
- **Housing First Orientation** – housing consumers quickly, without preconditions or service participation requirements;
- **Person-Centered** – incorporating consumer choice in the type of housing and level of service and other options relevant to success;
- **Fair and Equal Access** – developing processes in which all consumers have fair and equal access to the CES, regardless of how they present for services;
- **Emergency Services** – ensuring that CES does not unintentionally impede access to emergency shelter; and,
- **Standardized Access and Assessment** – offering the same assistance approach and referrals using the uniform decision-making processes.

The CES is critical to matching people with the correct solution to their homelessness. In broad categories, these include:

- Prevention and Diversion** (which can include financial assistance, utility assistance, or exploration of options with landlords, friends or family)
- Shelter** (including, for example, directing victims of domestic violence to appropriate shelter)
- Transitional Housing** until permanent housing is found (particularly for domestic violence victims and families with children)
- Rapid Re-housing** (short-term assistance with security deposits and rent for households that are assessed to be able to eventually earn enough to sustain their own housing costs)
- Long-term shallow and medium rent subsidies**
- Long-term permanent deep rent subsidies** (such as Housing Choice Vouchers)
- Permanent Supportive Housing** (deep rent subsidies with support services)

Most recently, the Continuum of Care has also established a “move-up” for households that may have needed deep assistance, such as Permanent Supportive Housing, when they entered homelessness but now no longer need the same level of supports. This also frees up those resources for households in need.

Interagency Commission on Homelessness

The Interagency Commission on Homelessness is a County commission under DHHS, a collective impact model, and the designated governing board for the Continuum of Care. 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;
- Monitor programs that are components of the Continuum of Care;
- Make recommendations to the Executive and Council

Gaps Analysis

In 2017, the ICH received a Gaps Analysis. One of the key findings and recommendations was to track additional information in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in order to track performance and to redeploy resources most effectively. It recommended the following be included in HMIS:

- People served through prevention and diversion programs
- Family systems meetings
- People who request shelter but ultimately do not enter the system or disappear
- Rental Assistance Program recipients

The Gaps Analysis also identified that for the emergency shelter system, there is a high rate of people in shelter who are not chronically homeless. In 2016, 24% of individuals in shelter were employed. It suggested that it might make sense to have two service models, one for people with work histories that could have tailored employment services and coordinate with Rapid Re-housing and another engagement system for the chronically homeless that could work with mental health services and bridge housing until Permanent Supportive Housing is available.

Similarly, the analysis found that 49% of families in the family shelter system are working. Early connection with targeted employment services and access to childcare could assist in helping families stabilize.

Because so many in the homeless system are working poor, the report recommends that the County could expand rapid re-housing to help more households exit the system. The program should be able to scale the rent subsidy based on need and have person-focused time frames. It also recommends expanding the Rental Assistance Program which is a county-funded shallow subsidy (\$200 per month) and making it a tool available at coordinated entry.

The Gaps Analysis also started the process of looking at the outcomes and cost effectiveness in terms of positive exits to housing. The Continuum of Care is continuing to work on these efforts and look at effectiveness in developing the recommendations from the County/Continuum of Care to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for annual funding.

SERVICES TO END AND PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

Making homelessness in Montgomery County *rare, brief, and one time only* for all residents.

We believe that access to safe, affordable housing leads to a stronger community. Students do better. Patients are healthier. The economy is growing. People can more readily escape poverty and homelessness.

We view housing as the “unfinished business” of the civil rights movement. The impact of discrimination in the housing sector has had lingering effects on minority populations, particularly Black and African Americans. In Montgomery County, Black persons make up 17.8% of the general population but 63.5% of the homeless population. Even when poverty rates are accounted for, Black persons are overrepresented.

We develop strategies to solve the seemingly intractable problem of homelessness by building on previous successes, employing best and promising practices, engaging multiple stakeholders, using data to make tough decisions about resource allocation, and creating long-term systemic change.

OUTCOME MEASURES: DELIVERING RESULTS

MAKING HOMELESSNESS RARE

Reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness for the first time and reducing the annual point in time counts.

of People Experiencing Homelessness for First Time



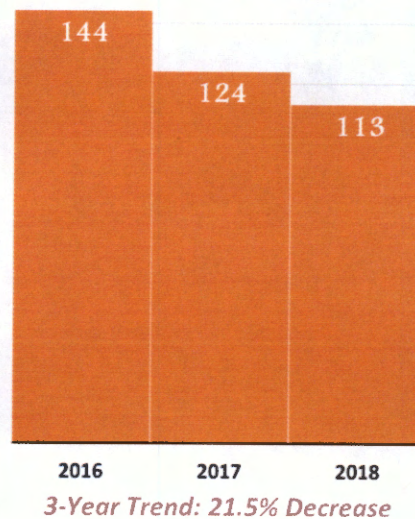
Annual Homeless Point in Time Count



MAKING HOMELESSNESS BRIEF

Reducing the length of time households experience homelessness.

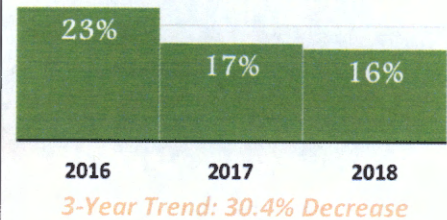
Number of Days Homeless



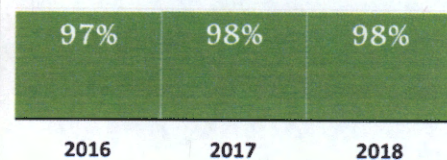
MAKING HOMELESSNESS ONE-TIME ONLY

Reducing the rate of recidivism and increasing housing retention rates.

% Returning to Homelessness



% Retaining Permanent Housing



*All years use the Federal Fiscal Year of Oct 1 - Sep 30. The year listed is the year in which that fiscal year concluded. 2018 statistics are preliminary.

** The Point in Time (PIT) Count is a nation-wide single night count aimed to identify all homelessness individuals. It typically occurs in late January.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Preventing Homelessness by providing:

- Emergency financial assistance
- Short-term prevention case management
- Energy assistance
- Homeless diversion

Rapidly connecting households to permanent housing by providing:

- Housing location services
- Short-term housing subsidy and intensive case management (RRH)
- Permanent shallow rental subsidy
- Housing focused emergency shelter and street outreach

Ensuring households get the right intervention at the right time for the right duration through:

- Coordinated entry
- Housing First permanent supportive housing
- Healthcare of the Homeless
- Connections to mainstream services (entitlements, behavioral health, child care subsidies, workforce development)

SEPH PRIORITY OUTCOME 1: SUSTAINING "FUNCTIONAL ZERO" FOR VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

Montgomery County was one of the first communities to effectively end homelessness for Veterans in December of 2015. Recognizing that Veterans will continue to experience homelessness, we want a system that quickly identifies and houses Veterans. To date 136 Veterans have been placed in permanent housing.

Outcome Measure ▶ Number of Veterans experiencing homelessness each month—Not to exceed 6

Initiative	Accelerating HUD-VASH application process with HOC
▶ Target	Reduce number of days from housing assignment to move-in

Initiative	Improving coordination with Supportive Services for Veteran Families providers
▶ Target	Reduce number of days from intake with provider to move-in

SEPH PRIORITY OUTCOME 2: ENDING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Chronic homelessness is defined as long-term homelessness for people with significant disabilities. Only three communities in the country have achieved 'functional zero' for chronic homelessness. Montgomery County is within inches of reaching this milestone. To date, nearly 400 people have been housed in 2 years.

Outcome Measure ▶ Number of Chronically Homeless Individuals unhoused—Not to exceed 3

Initiative	Accelerating housing placements
▶ Target	Reduce number of days from assessment to housing placement

Initiative	Improving care coordination and housing support services
▶ Target	Maintain at least a 95% housing retention rate

SEPH PRIORITY OUTCOME 3: ENDING AND PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The experience of homelessness and unstable housing has many adverse effects on children's education, physical health and emotional wellbeing. Out of school factors greatly influence academic outcomes as children spend more time in and around home than they do at school. If we want students to do better, they need access to safe, affordable housing.

Outcome Measure ▶ Reduce the number of days Families and/or Youth experience homelessness by 25%

Initiative	Preventing families from entering the homelessness continuum all together
▶ Target	Increase number and/or percent of families diverted from shelter

Initiative	Reducing the use of motels as overflow shelter by increasing access to Rapid Rehousing and deepening the breadth of support services offered to families
▶ Target	Reduce length of stay in motel and Increase number of exits to permanent housing

Initiative	Understanding the needs of youth experiencing homelessness in the County through development of a drop-in/re-engagement center
▶ Target	Increase number of engagements and Increase exits to permanent housing

SEPH PRIORITY OUTCOME 4: PREVENTING ALL HOUSEHOLD TYPES FROM ENTERING HOMELESSNESS

In 2016, 49.5% of renters in Montgomery County were "housing burdened", meaning they pay more than 30% of their income in rent. Access to affordable housing increases stability for vulnerable households and helps avert homelessness.

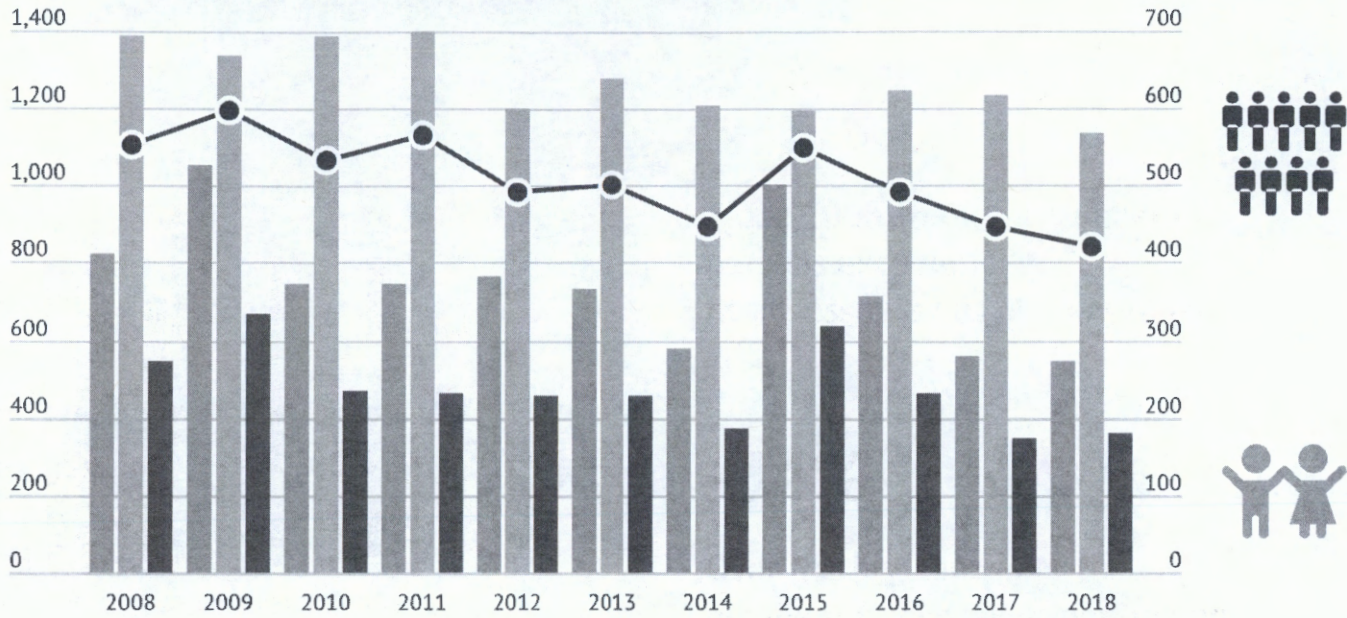
Outcome Measure ▶ Reduce the number of Households Experiencing Homelessness for the first time by 15%

Initiative	Increasing maximum subsidy for County Rental Assistance Program to better align with housing costs
▶ Target	Decrease the number of households entering the homeless continuum of care

Initiative	Implementing homeless diversion/prevention programs at emergency shelters and drop-in centers
▶ Target	Reduce number of individuals served in emergency shelter

Initiative	Reduce barriers to prevention assistance and increase maximum benefit
▶ Target	Reduce recidivism rates for prevention

Montgomery County Homeless Point in Time Count



Total
 # of Persons in Families
 # of Single Adults
 # of Children



-24%

Since 2008, the total number of persons experiencing homelessness has decreased by 24%.



-34%

Over the last ten years, the number of children experiencing homelessness has decreased by 34%.



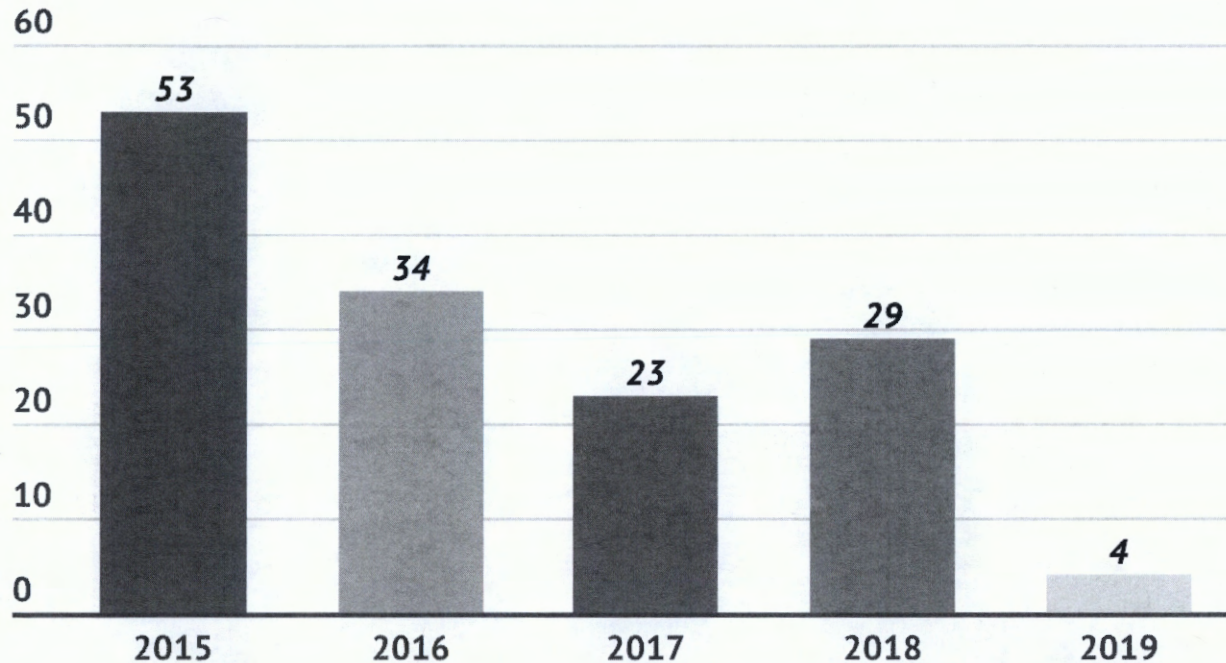
Since 2009, the number of people reporting serious mental illness decreased by 53%.



Since 2009, the number of people reporting substance use decreased by 81%.

Ending Veteran Homelessness

of Housing Placements by Year



Since January 2015, Montgomery County has permanently ended homelessness for 143 Veterans.



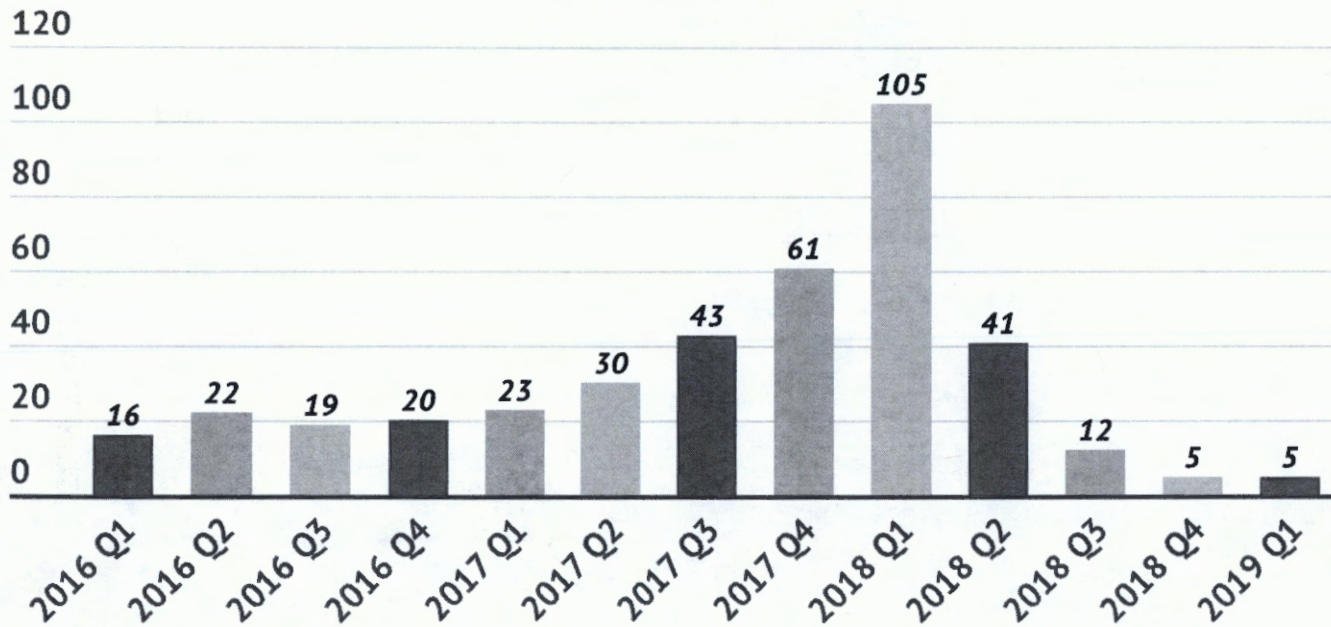
Montgomery County was one of the first communities to reach "functional zero" for Veterans homelessness in December 2015.



Nationally more than 60,000 Veterans have been housed through the Built for Zero, a national change effort.

Ending Chronic Homelessness

of Housing Placements by



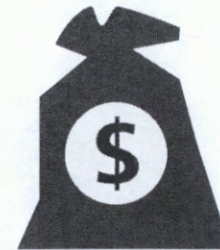
Since January 2016, Montgomery County has permanently ended homelessness for 402 chronically homeless individuals.



Engaged more than 60 new landlords



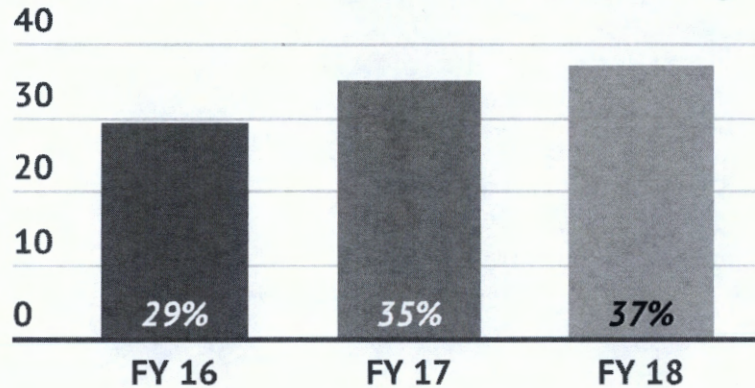
Partnered with HOC and other affordable housing providers to create a "Move-Up" strategy for households ready to graduate from PSH



Used data to secure additional resources from the County Council, Medicaid, and the reallocation of local and federal funds

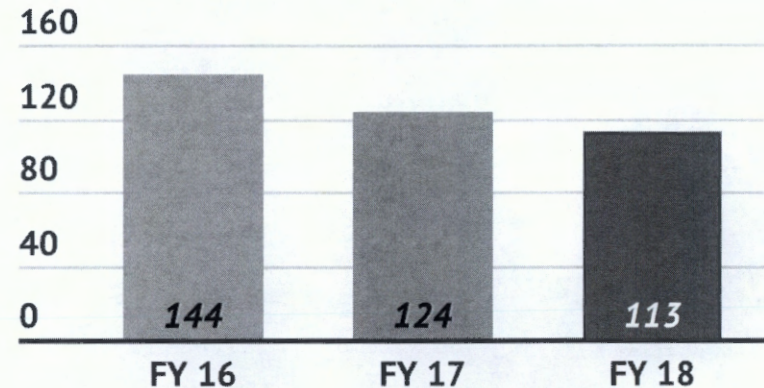
Improving Our System Performance

% of Total Exits to Permanent Housing



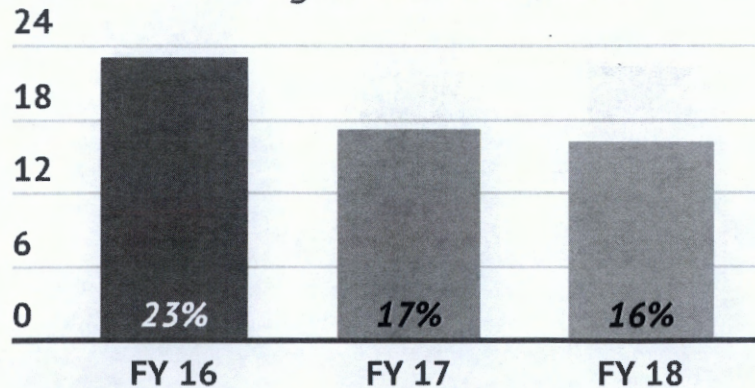
★ 3-Year Trend: 28% Increase

Average # of Days Homeless



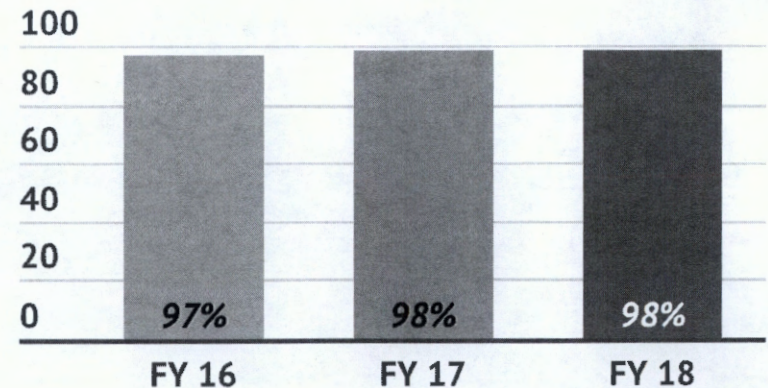
★ 3-Year Trend: 22% Decrease

% Returning to Homelessness



★ 3-Year Trend: 30% Decrease

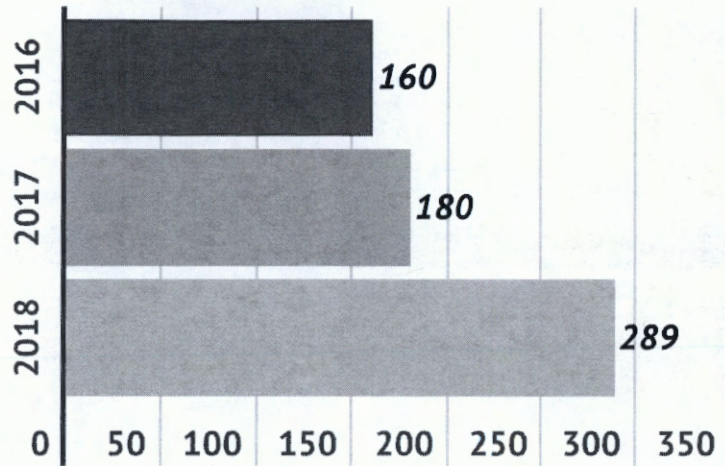
% Retaining Permanent Housing



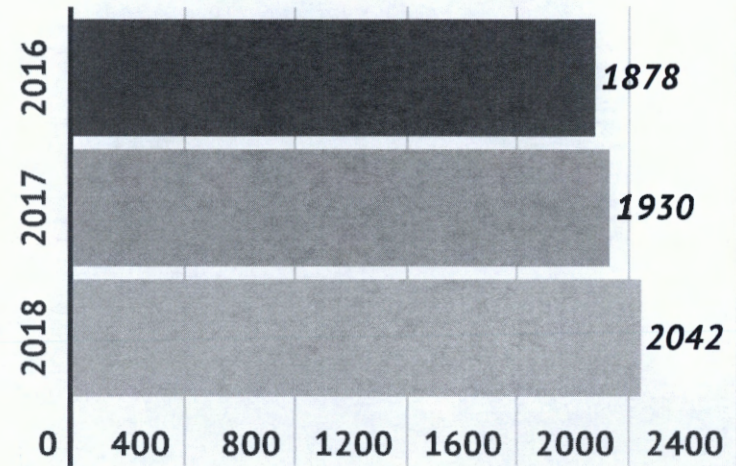
*All years use the Federal Fiscal Year of Oct 1 - Sept 30. 2018 statistics are preliminary.

Housing Inventory Count

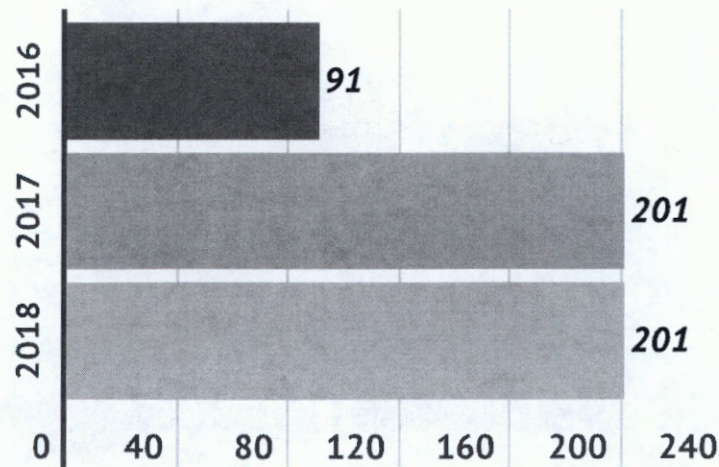
Rapid Rehousing Beds



Permanent Supportive Housing Beds



Other Permanent Housing Beds



**3 Year Trend:
81% increase in RRH**

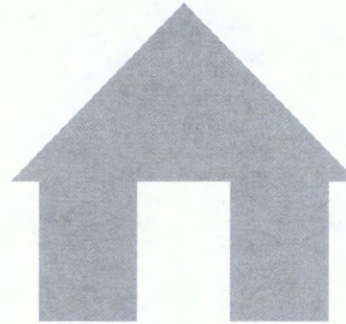


**3 Year Trend:
19% increase in all
Permanent Housing**

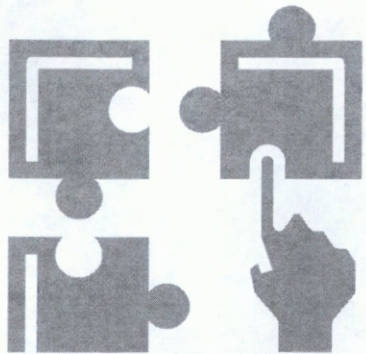
Increasing Our System Capacity



More than doubled the number of street outreach workers to engage clients around housing.



Added a Housing Coordinator to oversee the landlord recruitment and retention strategy.

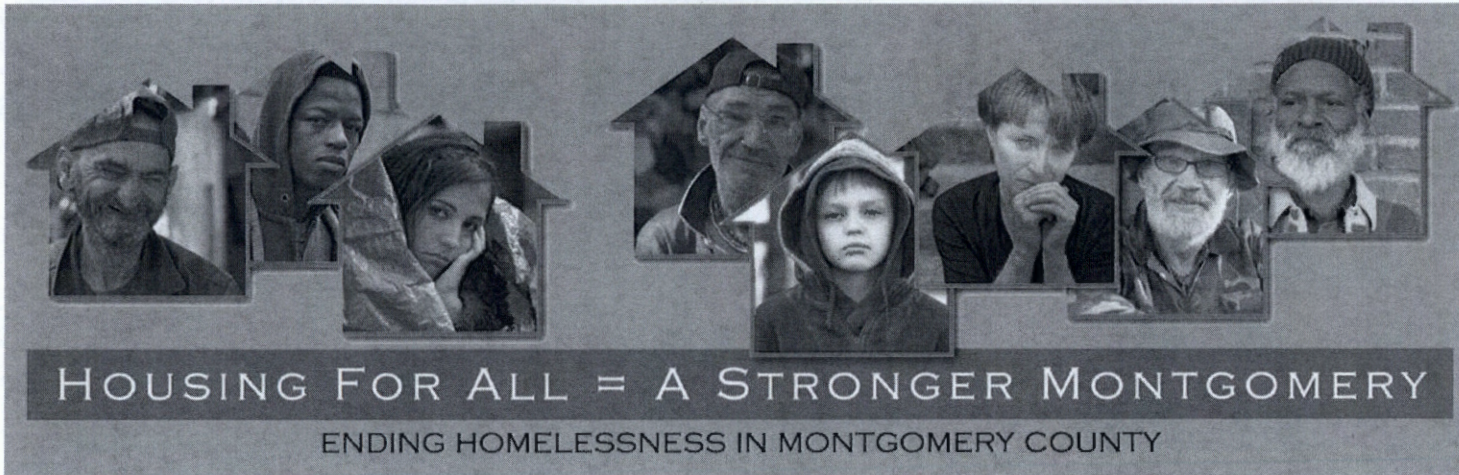


Hired a Logistics Specialist to lead the Coordinated Entry System administration.



Community-wide training on Housing First, Harm Reduction, Conflict Mediation, Person-Centered Planning and many more.

Educating and Engaging the Community



Enhanced Marketing

- New independent website for the CoC
- Logo for the Chronic Homeless Initiative

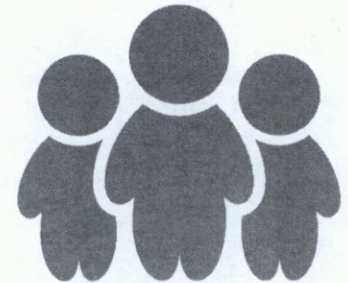


Collaboration with National Partners



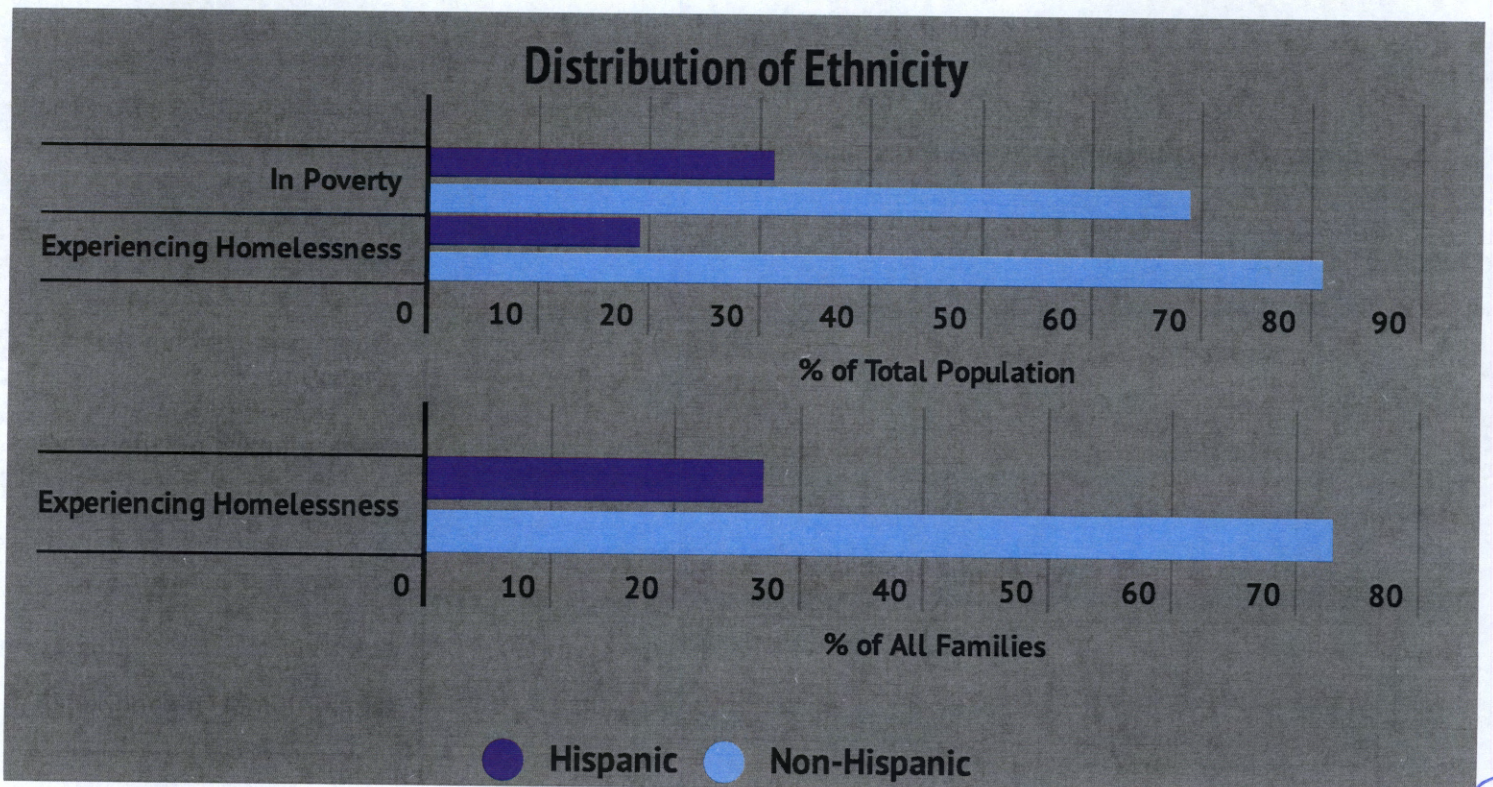
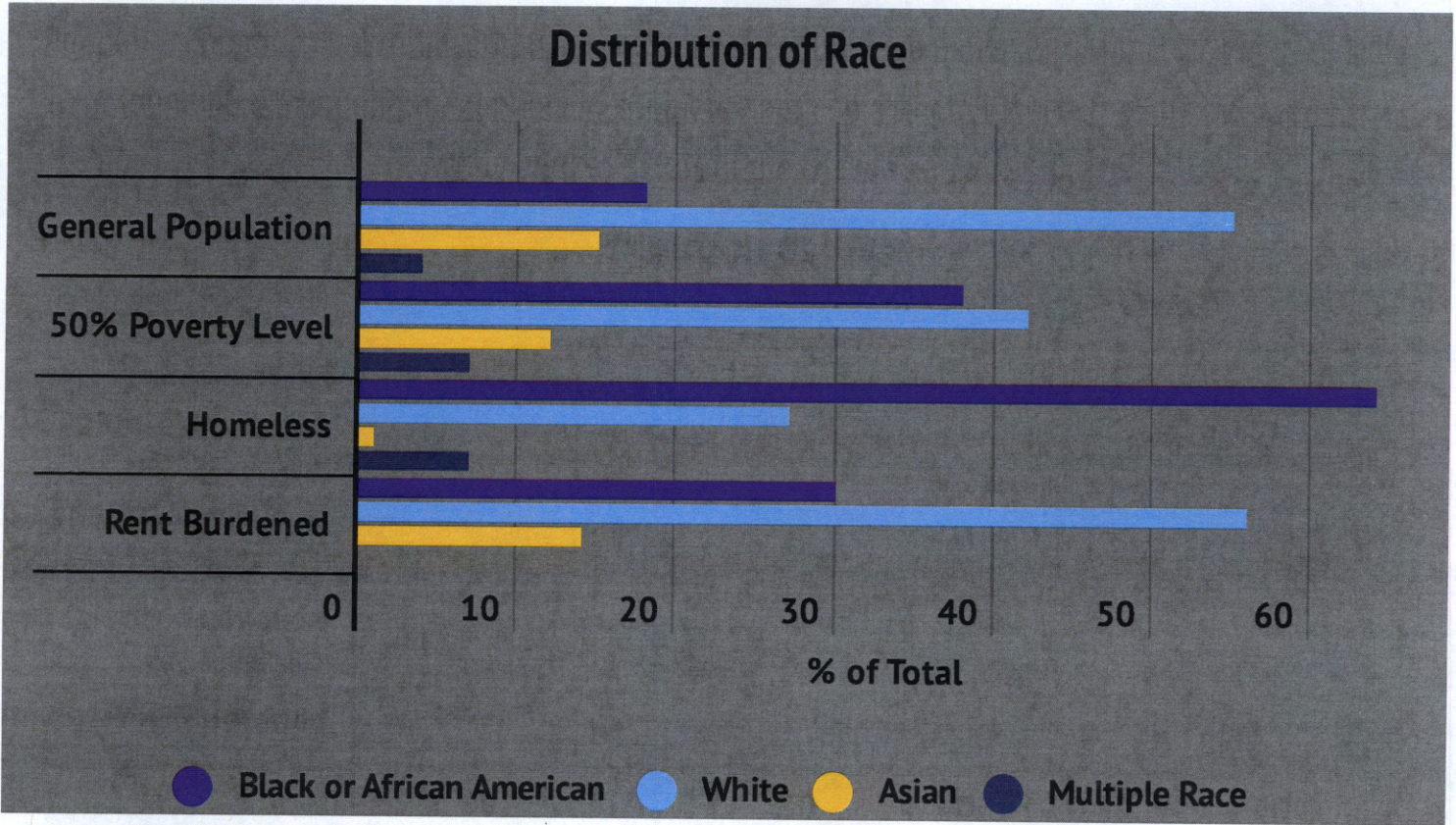
Community Engagement

- Homeless Resource Day
- Memorial Event



Racial Disparities in the Housing Continuum

People of color are over represented in the homeless population nationally. The 2017 Point-in-Time Count found 40.6% of people experiencing homelessness on a single night across the U.S. were Black, compared to 12.6% of the U.S. population.

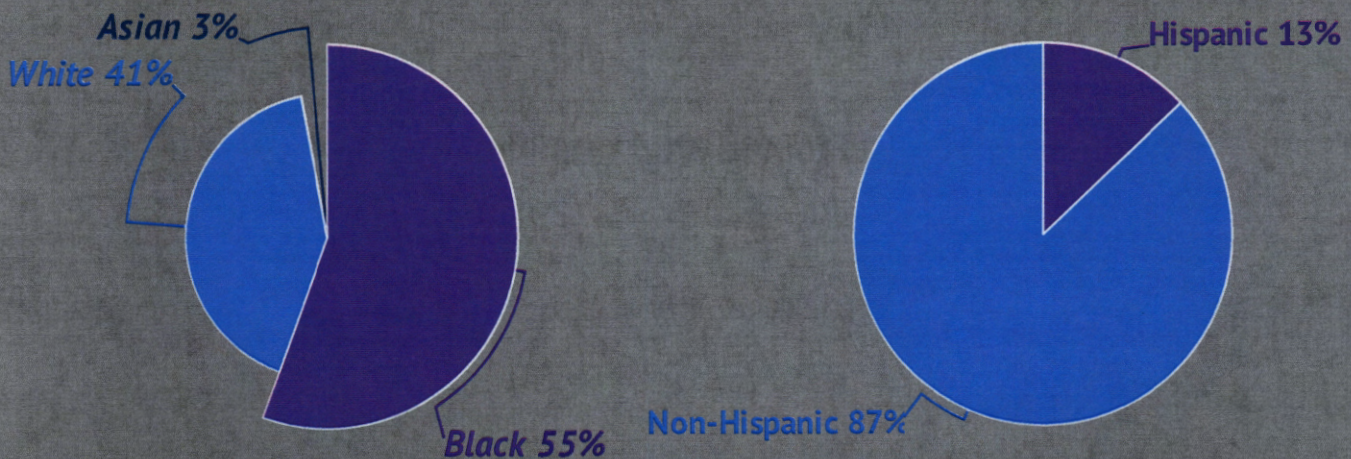


Racial Disparities in the Housing Continuum

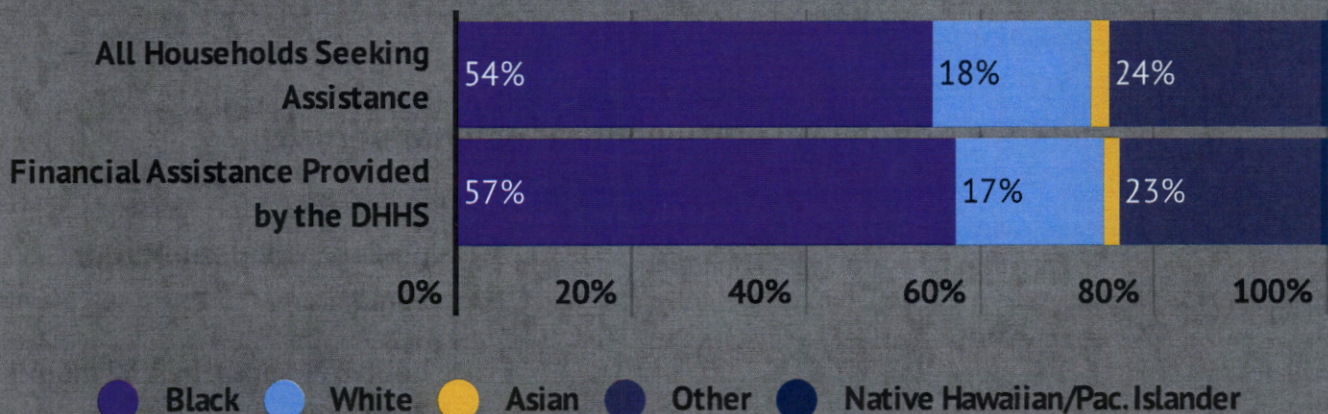
Distribution of Race for Youth



Distribution of Race/Ethnicity for Chronic Population



Distribution of Race in Eviction Prevention Services



● Black
 ● White
 ● Asian
 ● Other
 ● Native Hawaiian/Pac. Islander

Racial Disparities Among People Experiencing Homelessness in Montgomery County, Maryland

SEPTEMBER 30, 2018
BY ANNA BLASCO

Executive Summary

People of color are over represented in the homeless population nationally. Black persons compose 40.6% of people experiencing homelessness, compared to 12.6% of the U.S. population.ⁱ This paper examines whether racial disparities are present among people experiencing homelessness in Montgomery County, Maryland. It answers four key questions:

1. Are there racial disparities among people experiencing homelessness in Montgomery County?
2. Does where people stay prior to becoming homeless differ by race?
3. Does the length of time people experience homelessness?
4. How successful is the County at ending homelessness for everyone?

About the County

Demographics

The majority of people in Montgomery County are White (55.2%). Black persons compose 17.8% of the general population, and Asian persons compose (14.6%). 18.6% of people identified their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino.ⁱⁱ

Housing Costs

Renter households make up 34% of households in Montgomery County. Over half of renter households in the County are "housing cost burdened," meaning they pay more than 30% of their income towards rent. Black persons are disproportionately housing cost burdened, making up 30% of households paying more than half their income towards rent.ⁱⁱⁱ

1. Are there racial disparities among people experiencing homelessness in Montgomery County?

Racial Disparities

Black and Multi-Racial persons are overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness. Black persons compose 17.8% of the general population, but 63.5% of people experiencing homelessness. White persons are 55.2% of the population, but 26.9% of people experiencing homelessness.

Accounting for Poverty Rates

The racial disparities among people experiencing homelessness in the County is not simply a reflection of who experienced poverty in the County.

- Black persons compose a greater share of people with very low incomes in the county, those making \$12,550 a year or 50% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- While 37.8% of people with very low incomes are Black, over half of people experiencing homelessness are Black.
- White persons make up 42.7% of very low income people, but a little over a quarter of people experiencing homelessness.

Ethnicity

Hispanic or Latino persons are underrepresented among people experiencing homelessness. Montgomery County's population is 18.6% Hispanic or Latino, but 15.2% of the homeless population are Hispanic or Latino.

2. Does where people stay prior to becoming homeless differ by race?

Housed prior living situations

52.3% of people were in housing immediately prior to entering a homeless program, which includes renting an apartment or staying with family or friends.

- Black persons had the highest rates of coming from housing immediately prior to entering a homeless program. Over half (55.1%) of Black persons came from housing compared to 45.3% of White persons.
- Among people coming from housed situations, Black persons had the highest rate of having stayed with family or friends immediately prior to entering homelessness (59.1%).

Homeless Prior Living Situations

40.7% of people were homeless, which includes staying in a shelter or sleeping outside.

- White persons had the highest rate of coming from a homeless situation (44.7%). White individuals had the highest rates coming from an unsheltered homeless situation.

Institutional Prior Living Situations

6.9% of people were in institutions, which includes jail, prison, or a health or mental health care facility.

- Among people coming from institutions, White persons had higher rates of coming from a psychiatric facility (22.7%) than Black persons (15.7%).
- Black persons more frequently entered from jail or prison (26.8%) than White persons (19.2%)

3. Does the length of time people experience homelessness differ by race?

Length of Stay

The length of time people stayed in the homeless system did not vary much by race. Families and individuals of different populations had very similar lengths of stay.

Length of Time to Housing for Chronically Homeless Individuals

The length of time it takes populations to locate permanent housing does vary among the chronically homeless population.

- Over half of people experiencing chronic homelessness in the County are Black (56.2%). A higher proportion of chronically homeless people are White (39.1%) compared to the general homeless population (26.9%).

- Once a chronically homeless individual is assigned to a housing provider, they housed in an average of 76 days. It takes homeless service providers eight more days on average to locate housing for Black persons than for White persons.

4. How successful is the County at ending homelessness for everyone?

Exits to Permanent Housing

It is not clear how many people are successfully exiting to permanent housing in the County. The most common exit destination among all persons is the “Other” category (41.2%). This category is primarily composed of different classifications of missing data.

- Most populations had roughly equal rates of exits to positive destinations, between 56% and 58%.
- Black persons had high rates of positive exits, but this may not be an accurate reflection of outcomes due to unknown data.

Returns to Homelessness

Once people exit to permanent housing, very few become homeless again. Among the nearly 6,000 people who experienced homelessness in the County between July 2017 and June 2016, only 117 people had been homeless in the County in the past 24 months.

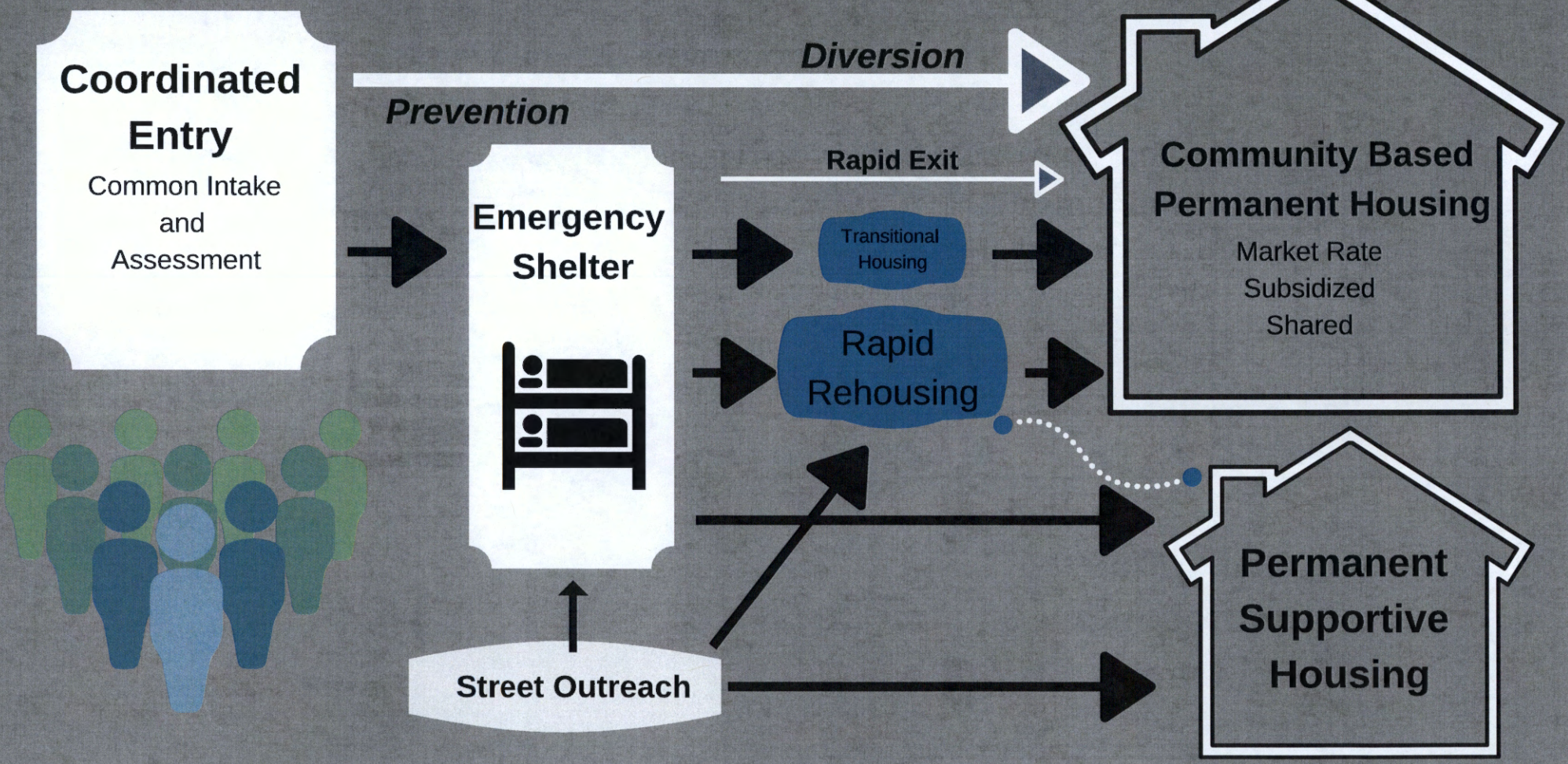
- The majority of people who do return to the Montgomery County homeless system within two years are Black.
- In the first six months after exiting the homeless system to permanent housing, 67.7% of people who returned to homelessness were Black (21 persons).
- After two years, 76.1% of people who returned were Black (89 persons).
- Black families had the highest numbers returning, composing 41.9% of all returns after 24 months.

ⁱ Henry, Meghan et al. “The 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress.” U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Dec. 2017. <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2017-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

ⁱⁱ “American FactFinder Montgomery County, Maryland.” U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>

ⁱⁱⁱ Consolidated Planning/Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) Data, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year average, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp.html>

Montgomery County Homeless Continuum



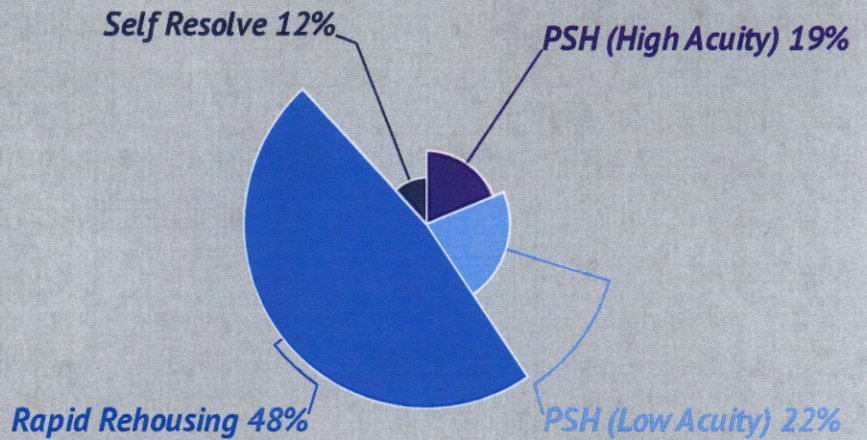
Coordinated Entry Data For Single Adults

Montgomery County's Coordinated Entry System uses a Housing First approach, provides fair and equal access to services, and uses a common intake and assessment to allocate housing resources based on vulnerability.

Distribution of Housing Needs by Intervention Type

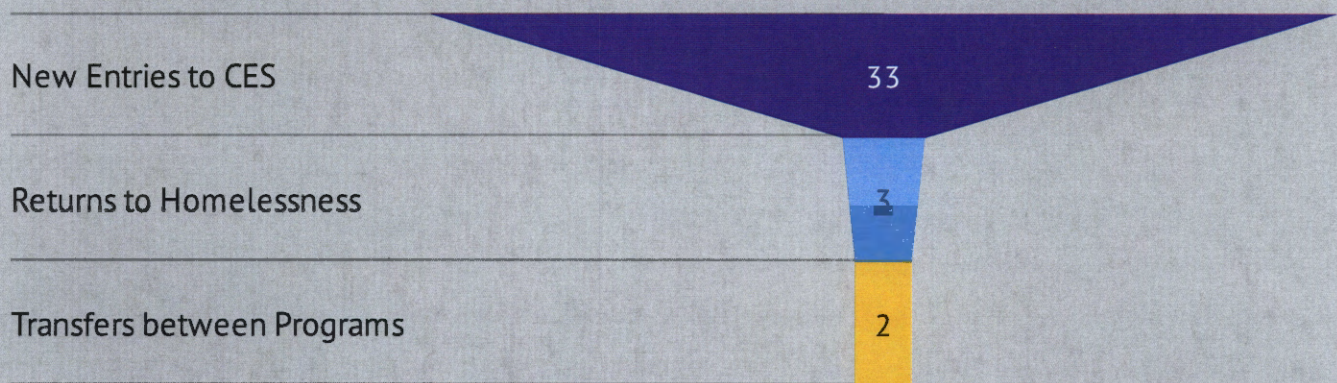
On average the Coordinated Entry System (CES) list contains the names of 410 adults without children who are currently experiencing homelessness. We use the VI-SPDAT to determine the most appropriate housing intervention. High Acuity households have greater service needs.

*PSH= Permanent Supportive Housing



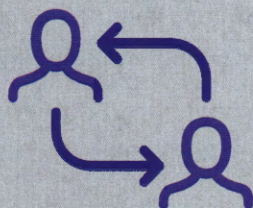
Inflow of Single Adults

Average new additions to CES per month



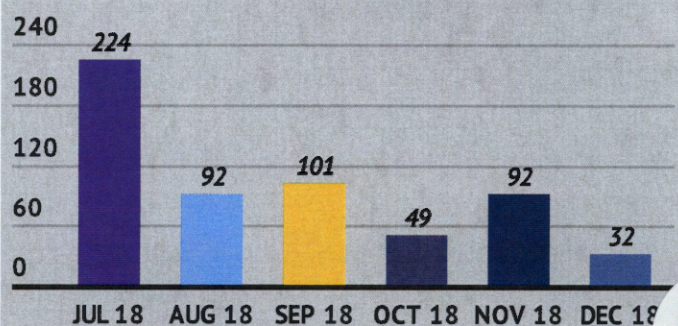
Vacancy Rate

Each month, an average of 7 Permanent Supportive Housing placements become available through turnover.



Length of Time

Number of Days from Program Assignment to Housed for Chronically Homeless Individuals

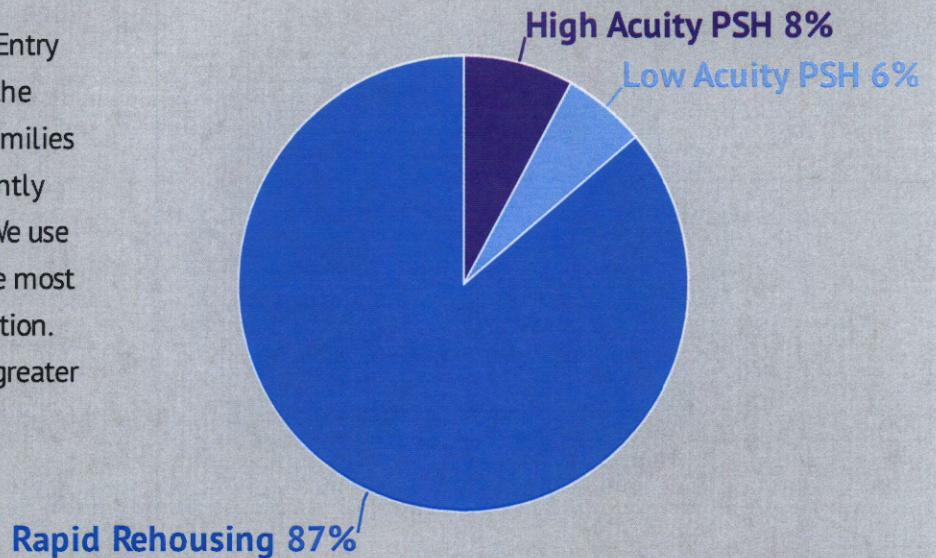


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Coordinated Entry Data For Families with Children

Distribution of Housing Needs by Intervention Type

On average the Coordinated Entry System (CES) list contains the names of approximately 50 families with children who are currently experiencing homelessness. We use the VI-SPDAT to determine the most appropriate housing intervention. High Acuity households have greater service needs.



In FY 2018, a total of 316 households were served.



2/3 of all families

requesting shelter are diverted from the homeless continuum through conflict mediation, problem solving, and partnering to resolve the current housing crisis.