



Committee: HHS
Committee Review: Completed
Staff: Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst
Purpose: To receive testimony/final action - vote expected
Keywords: #InsideNotOutside; #HousingIsHealthcare

AGENDA ITEM #9
July 28, 2020
Public Hearing/Action

SUBJECT

Special Appropriation to the Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget; Montgomery County Government; Department of Health and Human Services; Permanent Supportive Housing for Veterans and Unsheltered Adults; \$355,000 (Source of Funds: \$118,335 Federal Grant and \$236,665 General Fund Reserves); Lead Sponsor: Health and Human Services Committee

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

None

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

- This special appropriation was introduced on July 14, 2020.
- Health and Human Services met on June 25, 2020 and recommends approval. The Committee highlighted the funding partnership with Bethesda Cares and the cost effectiveness and health equity from moving people from homelessness to permanent housing.

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

Montgomery County is committed to making homelessness rare, brief, and one-time only. In addition, Housing is Healthcare, and during the COVID-19 pandemic it is more critical than ever to move people from the streets and emergency shelters into permanent safe and stable housing. Unfortunately, there are still long-time, highly vulnerable, unsheltered adults living in Montgomery County. Often, these people are Veterans, even if they are not officially identified as such. It can take time for outreach workers and others to build trust with these individuals so they will accept housing. Housing must be available when they are ready to accept it. Bethesda Cares, one of the partners in the county's Continuum of Care, has proposed a partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services to house 14 unsheltered homeless adults. A combination of private and public dollars will allow Bethesda Care to master lease apartments that will be ready for move-in. Bethesda Cares' outreach team and other outreach partners already have relationships with many unsheltered homeless individuals who can benefit from this program.

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- Montgomery County estimates that there are about 100 single adults, unsheltered or in emergency shelter, who could leave homelessness if more permanent supportive housing is available.
- Housing is Healthcare. Homeless individuals have a shorter life expectancy than those people with permanent, stable housing. In this COVID-19 pandemic it is more critical than ever to move

people from homelessness to housing to prevent them from being infected from the coronavirus, or, if they are sick, to have a place to recover and prevent the spread to others. The single adult homeless population is disproportionately Black, African American and people of color and these same people are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

- Bethesda Cares, one of the county's non-profit members of the Continuum of Care, has proposed a partnership with the county to house 14 unsheltered adults. Bethesda Cares will provide an estimated \$158,200 to support program components that include master leasing of apartments, furniture for move-in, meals and groceries, and virtual healthcare in partnership with Kaiser Permanente. The county will fund long-term permanent supportive housing for those entering through the Bethesda Cares effort.
- Bethesda Cares provides housing under a Housing First policy that meets people where they are when they are ready to move in from the street or shelter. This is critical for housing long-time, highly vulnerable, unsheltered homeless people.
- Moving people from homelessness to housing has been shown to improve health and reduce health care costs. It also prevents people being arrested for minor crimes where the root cause is homelessness and is more cost effective than housing someone in jail and moving them through the criminal justice system.

Attached:

Special Appropriation Resolution

1-3

Presentation Slides from June 25 HHS Committee Mtg

4-31

Link to June 25, 2020 HHS Committee staff report:

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2020/20200625/20200625_HHS2-5.pdf

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Resolution No.: _____
Introduced: July 14, 2020
Adopted: _____

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Lead Sponsor: Health and Human Services Committee

SUBJECT: Special Appropriation to the Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget
Montgomery County Government
Department of Health and Human Services
Permanent Supportive Housing for Veterans and Unsheltered Adults
\$355,000 (Source of Funds: \$118,335 Federal Grant and \$236,665
General Fund Reserves)

Background

1. Section 308 of the County Charter provides that a special appropriation is an appropriation which states that it is necessary to meet an unforeseen disaster or other emergency, or to act without delay in the public interest. Each special appropriation shall be approved by not less than six Councilmembers. The Council may approve a special appropriation at any time after public notice by news release. Each special appropriation shall specify the source of funds to finance it.
2. A new coronavirus disease, named COVID-19, appeared in China in December 2019 and spread extremely quickly. On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared the disease a pandemic. By July 9, 2020 there were more than 3.1 million confirmed cases and 133,000 confirmed deaths in the United States. On July 9, the State of Maryland reported 71,447 confirmed cases and 3,160 deaths statewide. In Montgomery County there were 15,503 confirmed cases and 716 confirmed deaths.
3. Montgomery County is committed making homelessness rare, brief, and one-time only. This requires many strategies to meet people where they are and to housing options that operate under a Housing First policy. Moving people out of homelessness and into safe, stable, permanent housing is even more critical during the COVID-19 pandemic. "Housing is Healthcare," and it provides the environment people need to prevent contracting COVID-19 and to receive healthcare and other services they may need. Of the 63 people that entered the homeless system between March and June 2020, 73% are Black or African Americans. Black and African American people are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

4. The county's homeless Continuum of Care includes government and non-profit partners that provide homeless outreach, shelter, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, and social services support to the homeless and formerly homeless population. The Continuum of Care has continued moving people from emergency shelter into permanent housing during the pandemic. One hundred and eighty-seven (187) people have been moved into permanent housing between April 1 and June 25. The Department of Health and Human Services estimates that about 100 people are highly vulnerable, have a disability, and need permanent supportive housing to resolve their homelessness.
5. One of the members of the Continuum of Care, Bethesda Cares, has proposed a partnership with the county to provide permanent supportive housing and support services to 14 unsheltered adults. Bethesda Cares through its homeless outreach works with long-time unsheltered homeless adults, many are Veterans, even if they have not officially been identified as such. They estimate that three-quarters of the unsheltered homeless in the central business districts are black or brown and rather than being the subject of complaints, they need housing. Bethesda Cares recognizes the need to have a home ready when longtime, unsheltered people are ready to come in from the elements and accept housing. Bethesda Cares will provide \$158,200 that will support program components including the master leasing of apartments, furniture for move-in, case management, hot lunch and groceries, and virtual healthcare in partnership with Kaiser Permanente. The county will support this partnership by funding the ongoing permanent supportive housing for the fourteen unsheltered, vulnerable adults who will be served through this partnership.
6. The Health and Human Services Committee held a worksession on June 25, 2020 and received an update on the current Point-in-Time count of the homeless population, the efforts to maintain people's health and prevent COVID-19 infections in the emergency shelter system, information on the characteristics of who is entering the homeless system, and the Continuum of Cares' work to move individuals and families out of homelessness and into permanent housing during the pandemic. The Committee was briefed on the proposal from Bethesda Cares and recommends the Council approve funding. The Committee highlights the private contributions Bethesda Cares is bringing to this effort and the known long-term cost savings and health benefits that come from housing the homeless.
7. Services to the homeless population can be funded through CARES Act funding. This appropriation will use CARES Act funds for first four months (federal funds must be spent by December 31, 2020) and General Fund Reserves after federal funds are no longer available.
8. Public notice of this special appropriation was provided and a public hearing was held.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

A special appropriation to the FY21 Operating Budget of the Montgomery County Government, in the amount of \$355,000 is approved as follows:

	<u>Personnel Expense</u>	<u>Operating Expense</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
Department of Health	\$0	\$118,335	\$118,335	Federal Grant
and Human Services	\$0	\$236,665	\$236,665	General Fund
TOTAL	\$0	\$355,000	\$355,000	

These funds must be used by the Department of Health and Human Services to fund a permanent supportive housing partnership with Bethesda Cares that is expected to house 14 unsheltered Veterans and single adults.

This appropriation is needed to act in response to a public health or safety emergency and to act without delay in the public interest.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.
Clerk of the Council



A Stronger Montgomery

Montgomery
County
Homeless
Continuum of
Care

Health and Human
Services Committee

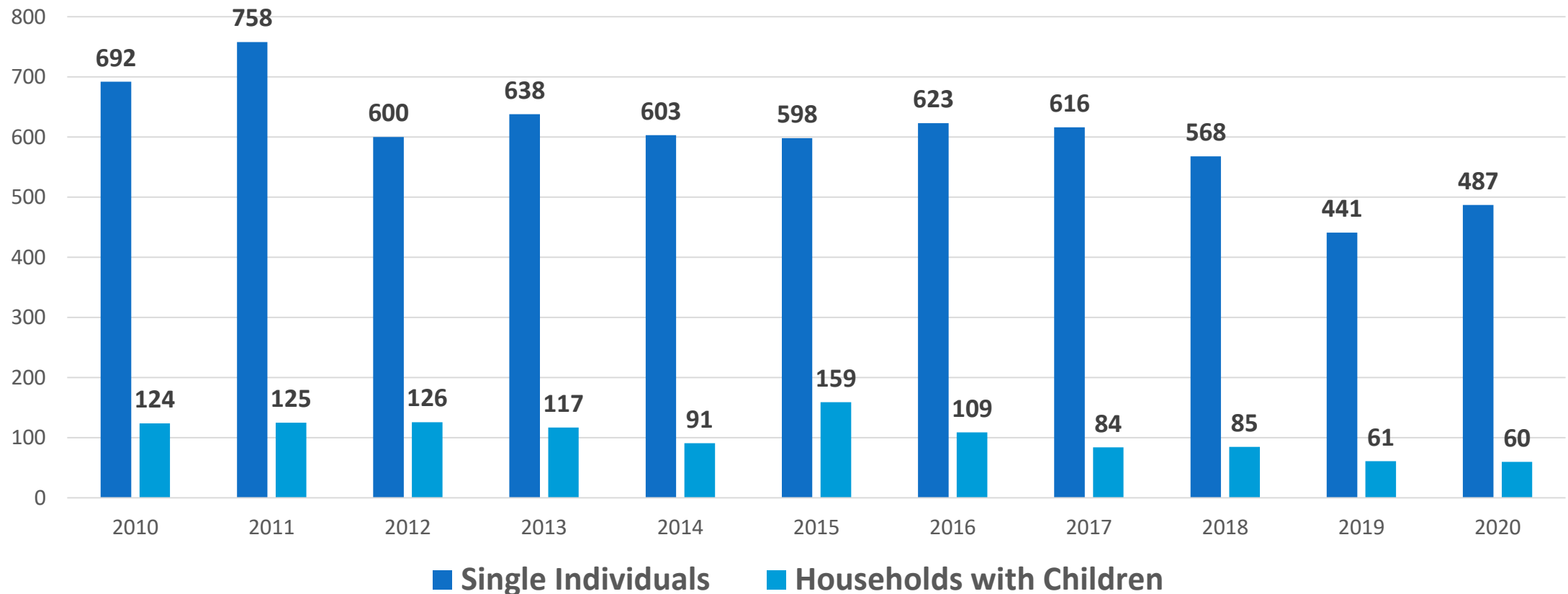
June 25, 2020

Annual Homeless Point- in-Time Count

Highlights from the 2020 Count

Ten Year Trend in Number of Households Literally Homeless

Annual Homeless Point-in-Time Count



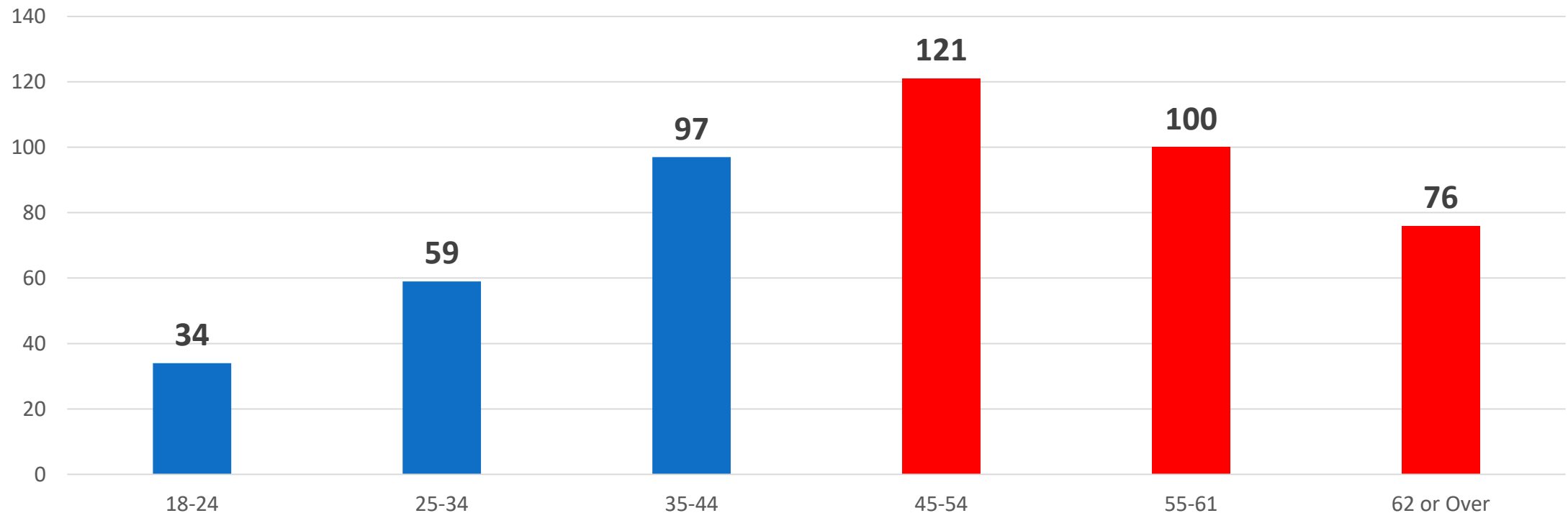
Households by Population Type

MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S HOMELESS COUNT BY CATEGORY

Category	2018	2019	2020	Percent Change 2018 to 2020
Total Number Counted	840	647	670	-20%
Total Individuals	568	441	487	-14%
Total Number of Families	86	61	60	-30%
Total Persons in Families	278	206	183	-34%
Total Adults in Families	93	76	70	-25%
Total Children in Families	185	130	113	-39%

Adult Only Age Distribution

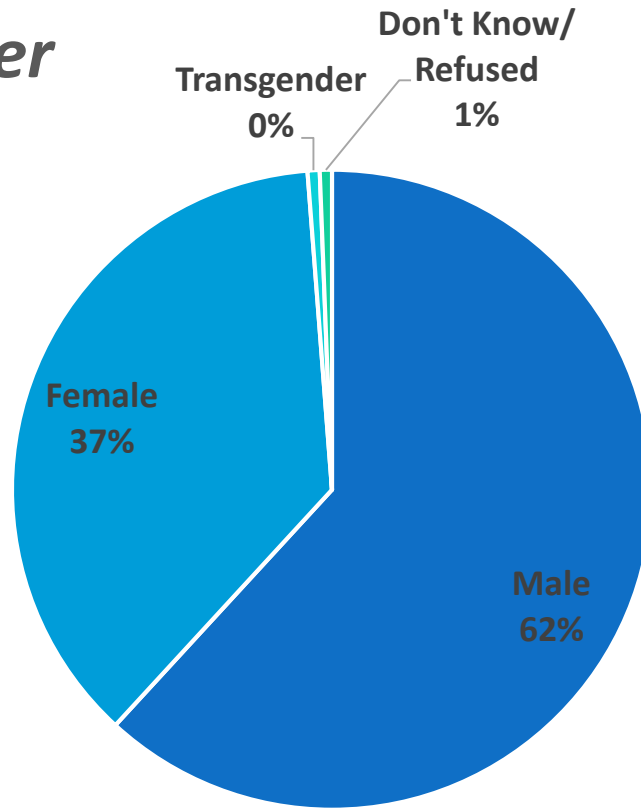
of Adults Experiencing Homelessness



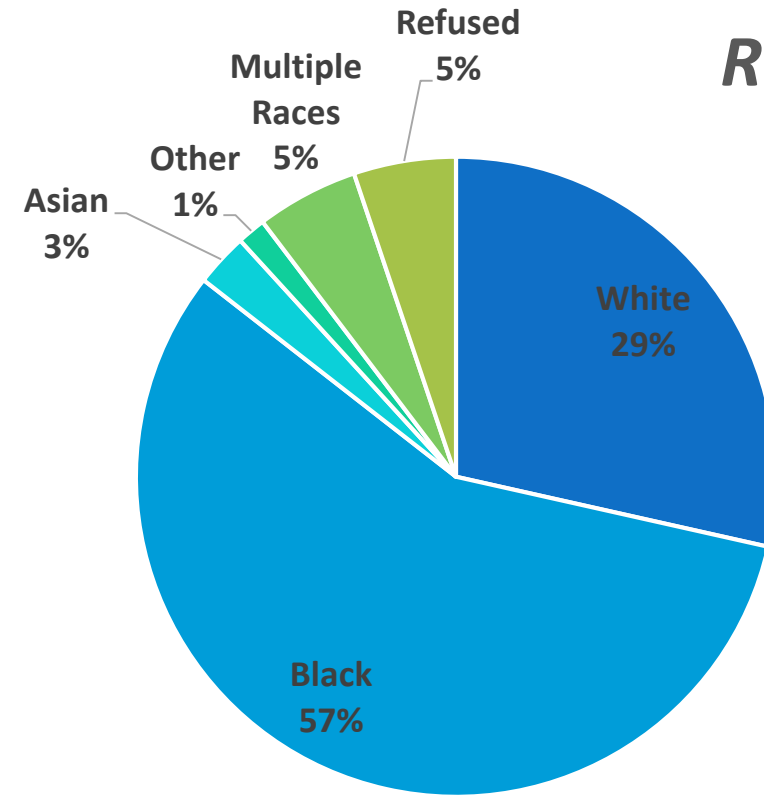
*Columns in Red highlight individuals more at risk of COVID complications and other health conditions due to age.

Demographics of Adult Only Households

Gender



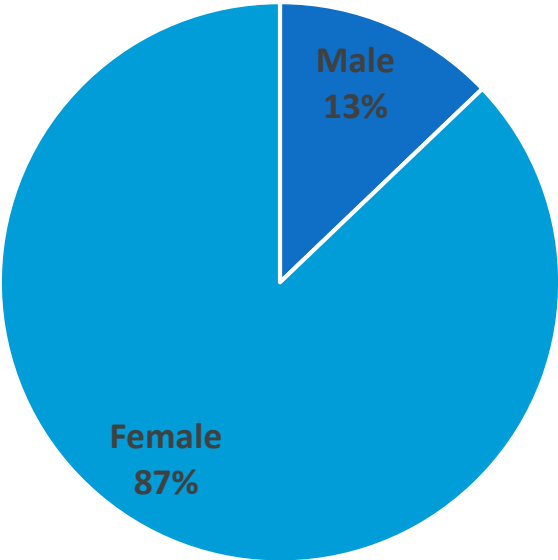
Race



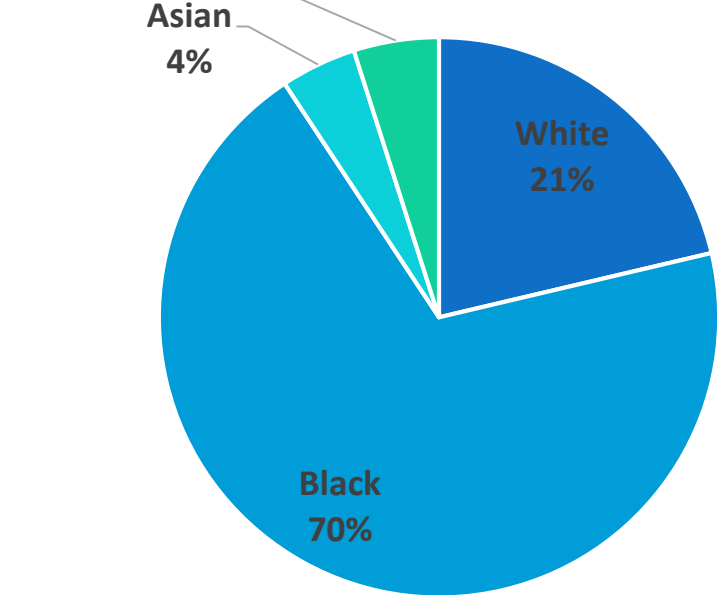
*14% identified as Latinx

Demographics of Households with Children

Gender of Adults in Household



Race of All Household Members

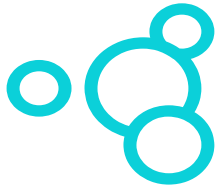


*22% identified as Latinx

Moving People to Permanent Housing in COVID-19

Continued work on ending homelessness

Continued Efforts to End Homelessness



**Since April 1, 187
people have moved
into permanent
housing!**



**Single Adults (52
people)**

40 in Permanent
Supportive Housing
11 in Rapid Rehousing
1 in Rental Assistance
Program



**Families with Children
(135 people)**

66 in Rapid Rehousing
13 in Permanent Supportive
Housing
56 in Other Permanent Housing

Homeless Initiatives



Zero: 2016 Ending Veteran Homelessness

- 9 Veterans currently experiencing homelessness

Inside (not Outside) Ending Chronic Homelessness

- 7 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness

@ Home Together

- Current Census is 29 families, several vacancies in shelter and motel
- 80-85% of families need RRH
- Average LOS in RRH: 306 days, about 10 months
- Average amount spent on Rental Subsidy: \$5800/ \$580 per month
- Average monthly intake pre-COVID is 15 households, exiting 17



Progress Toward Goal of Ending Homelessness for Families with Children



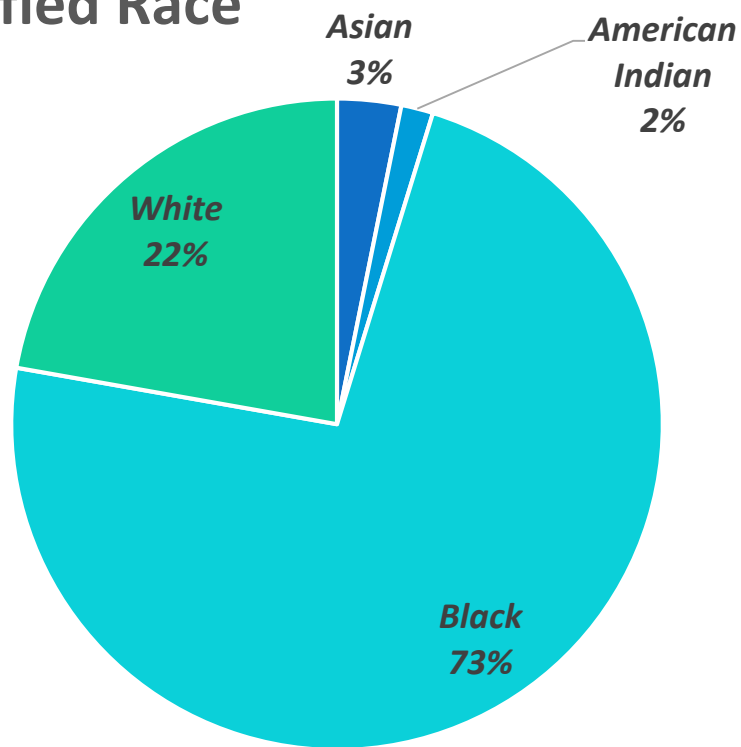
Single Adults Experiencing Homelessness

- 63 new intakes since March
- Current Census : 352
- Average LOS in RRH: 286 days/ 9.5 months
- Average amount spend on subsidy: \$5400/ \$600 per month

Age Group	Count of RRH	Count of PSH	Self - Resolve	OUTREACH clients	NO Assmt	Total
18-24	7	3	3			13
25-34	15	19	19	3		56
35-44	25	26	21	6	3	81
45-54	53	17	22	7	3	102
55-61	26	12	21	4	2	65
62+	14	6	14		1	35
Grand Total	140	83	100	20	9	352

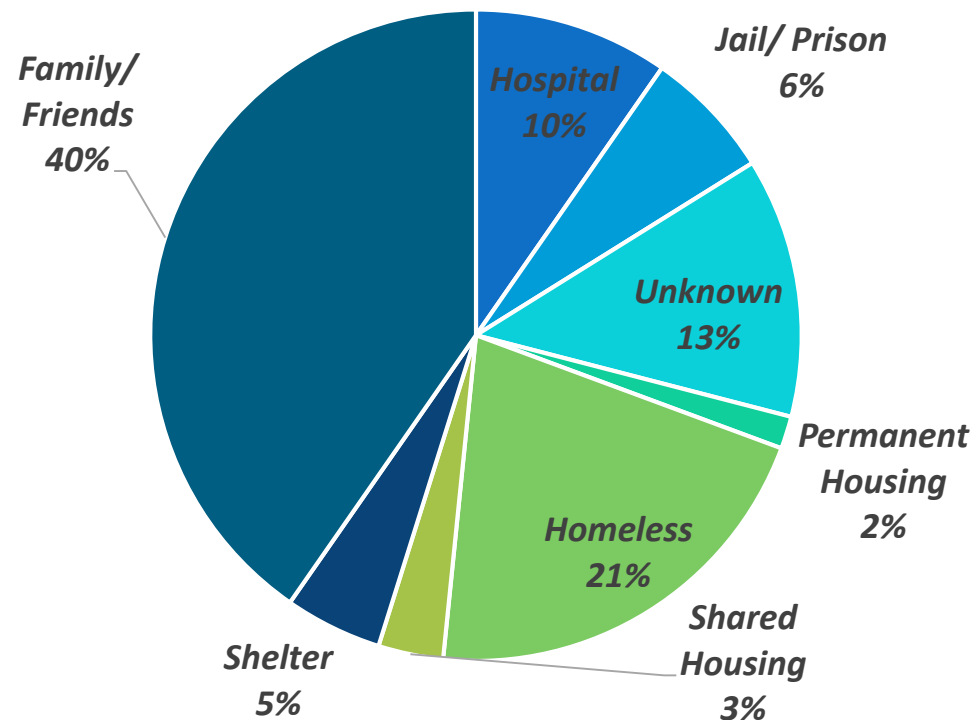
Profile of New Intakes After March 2020 (n=63)

Identified Race



* 8% Identified as Latinx

Previous Living Situation



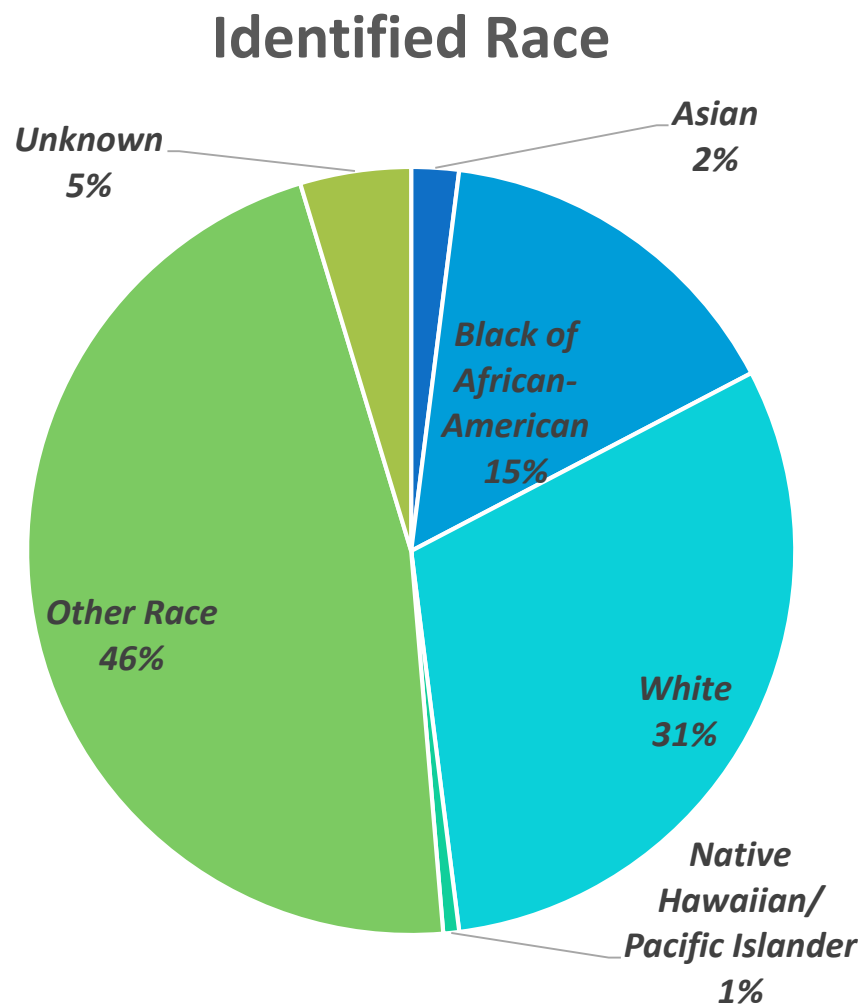
COVID Rent Relief Program

- 800 households meet initial eligibility screening
- 500 households assigned to a case worker for final eligibility determination
- 119 households have received benefits to date
- 300 awaiting initial eligibility screening
- Approximately 450 households on the waitlist for services

COVID Rent Relief Program: Breakdown of Services Provided

- Homeless Diversion: 27 Households Served
- COVID Rent Subsidy: 93 Households Served

Profile of COVID Rent Relief Recipients



74% Identified as Latinx

Small sample size so other data elements were not included

Recovery Work Groups

Housing and Homelessness

Group Composition

All recovery groups are composed of staff from:

- DHHS – Services to End and Prevent Homelessness, Behavioral Health and Crisis Services, Aging and Disability Services
- DOCR
- DHCA
- HOC
- Nonprofit partners including Bethesda Cares, Every Mind, Homeless Persons Representation Project, Interfaith Works, Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, and Pathways to Housing
- City of Gaithersburg and City of Rockville
- Council staff



Homeless Crisis Response Recovery Group

Goals and objectives

- Reducing inflow to homeless continuum through diversion, rapid exit, and centralized shelter intake
- Decreasing Length of Stay in shelter
- Identifying additional shelter facilities to maintain capacity to serve growing number of new intakes
- Protocols for COVID-19 testing at congregate facilities

Homeless Crisis Response Recovery Group: Progress to Date

- Developed protocols for COVID-19 testing at congregate facilities
- Commitment to centralized shelter intake and diversion

COVID-19 Testing

Single Adult Emergency and Transitional Shelter

- 72% of clients tested
- Less than 2% positivity rate

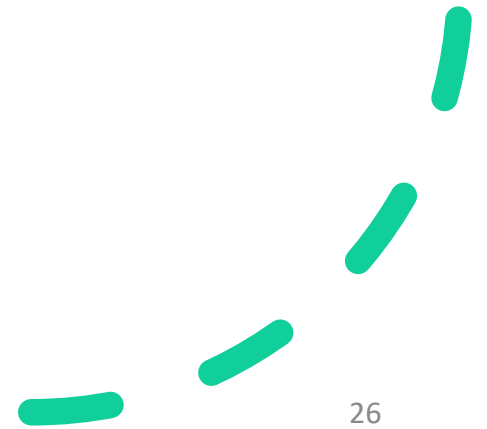
Family Emergency Shelter

- 90% of adults tested
- 0 tested positive

*Census 235 individuals in shelter, 82 in hotels, 33 families in shelter

Homeless Crisis Response Recovery Group: Challenges

- Lack of facilities to maintain social distancing and bed spacing at emergency shelter
- Increase intakes to homeless shelters and street outreach





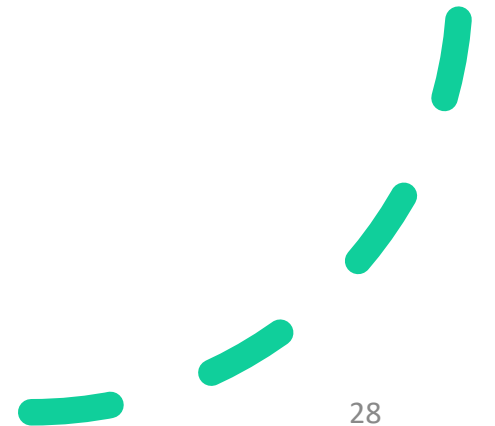
Housing Supports Recovery Group

Goals and objectives

- Scaling Rapid Rehousing
- Resuming pre-COVID level community-based services
- Addressing inequity in access to permanent housing

Housing Supports Recovery Group: Progress to Date

- Timeline for resuming pre-COVID level services
- Timeline for scaling Rapid Rehousing



Housing Supports Recovery Group: Challenges

- Childcare issues of housing support staff
- Access to housing – criminal records
- Pending evictions from PSH



Eviction and Homeless Prevention Recovery Group

Goals and Objectives

- Understand the scope of the issue
- Improved targeting for limited resources through data analysis
- Progressive Engagement Approach
 - Community Outreach and Landlord Relations
 - Legal Assistance
 - Financial Assistance

Questions?
