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BREAKING NEWS

Viable Housing Options Pave the Way to Success

During the past six months, the **Housing Options Group**, which is co-chaired by Dean Klein, director of Office to Prevent and End Homelessness (OPEH) and Paula Sampson, director of Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development, has been working diligently and collaboratively across various county agencies, nonprofits, faith-based communities and housing developers to look at **how to reach the goal of ending homelessness in 10 years through viable housing options.**

The group's hard work has now bared fruit and the **10-year plan annual housing goals and related four-year action plan** were presented to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS) Housing and Development Committee (HDC) on Jan. 19. Both the annual housing goals and the four-year action plan were **created to allow for clarity on targets for housing types and related services that need to be achieved each year in order to end homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community.** BOS Chairman Sharon Bulova reiterated her and the BOS support for these goals during her opening remarks at the last community forum on homelessness on Jan. 21.

- **10-year Plan Annual Housing Goals and Related Four-Year Action Plan**
http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/homelessness_housing_targets.pdf.
- **Community Forum Opening Remarks**
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/forums/jan-21-forum.htm.

Housing Options – Combining Housing and Related Services

The annual housing goals are based on **five housing options**, which are differentiated by the housing program type and the intensity level of the associated services*. The five housing options are:

- **Permanent supportive housing with**
 - 24-hour care with staffing.
 - Intensive supports (4-7 visits/contacts per week).
 - Moderate supports (1-3 visits/contacts per month).
- **Permanent housing with**
 - Time-limited supports (short-term, time-limited follow-up between 3-15 months).
 - No supports beyond those typically available to any community member.

**The support services associated with each of the housing options may include, but are not limited to, case management, housing locator services, medical, mental health, substance abuse treatment, vocational and employment services, money management assistance and life skills training.*

Planned Phasing of Housing Targets – Reaching the 10-Year Goal

The 10-year plan calls for **2,650 housing units to be brought on-line over the ten-year period** in order to end homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community. To review the **complete planned phasing for the various types of housing options needed to reach this goal**, including the four-year action plan, visit http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/homelessness_housing_targets.pdf.

All of the housing **units will utilize one of the following:**

- New construction.
- Tenant based vouchers.
- Private and public affordable housing resources.

Also, **all units:**

- Are affordable to homeless households earning less than 30 percent of the area annual median income.
- Will be associated with housing assistance that is guaranteed for more than two years.
- Were not occupied or designated specifically for homeless households during the previous 12 months.
- Will be counted as meeting a fiscal year target based upon the actual date of occupancy by an eligible homeless household.

Alignment with the Countywide Housing Blueprint

The ending homelessness 10-year plan housing goals are directly aligned with the countywide Housing Blueprint, which is a comprehensive affordable housing policy developed in collaboration by county agencies, community partners and nonprofit organizations. For more information, visit <http://e-affordable.org>.

Moving Forward

The work of the Housing Options Group continues, as the planned phasing is continuously being reviewed and updated. **For more information on the housing options or the 10-year plan housing targets, contact Mike Finkle at michael.finkle@fairfaxcounty.gov.**

339 REAL PEOPLE ~ REAL RESULTS in 65 Days

In the first 65 business days, the Housing Opportunities Support Teams (HOST) have prevented 339 people – 124 unique households – from becoming homeless. These are few of their stories.

Brighter Future Thanks to Community Collaboration

Two HOST nonprofit partner agencies teamed up to house a homeless single mother and her two children. One partner agency had an affordable vacancy in one of their properties and had the flexibility to work around the client's dicey credit and rental history. The other partner agency was able to move the client into the apartment and provide some ongoing services to ensure she maintains housing stability. The road is not going to be easy as she is working and going to school, while also caring for her disabled son, but **with stable affordable housing and some one-on-one support her future is looking brighter.**

New Mom Keeps Her Home

A county resident came to New Hope Housing seeking Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) funds for rental assistance. She had delivered a baby girl two months premature and the baby was still in the hospital; no release day had been set due to medical conditions. The county resident was spending all of her time in the hospital with her baby on short-term disability from her full-time job. However, benefits running out and she would be put on family medical leave without pay. **Fortunately HPRP funds paid two months of her rent and she was able to remain in her housing and ensure that her premature daughter was receiving proper care.** A home health nurse has been working with the new mother to ensure that she knows how to feed and monitor the baby's medical conditions.

Housing Program Helps Pull a Life Back Together

A county resident's health rapidly deteriorated when she went off her medication that treats bipolar disorder. After being released from the local hospital for inpatient care, **she was admitted to a two-year**

transitional housing program for adults coping with mental illness and/or substance abuse. After her health stabilized, the resident and the housing program counselor began the process of putting her life back together, including the commitment to stay on her medications. Highly educated and trained, she began to volunteer as an interpreter at a broadcasting service. After some time, a full-time position for an interpreter became open and she applied and was accepted. She soon graduated from the housing program and is now living on her own and her health continues to be stable. She loves her job and is thriving. The housing program counselor continues to check in with her on a regular basis to follow her progress.

HOST HIGHLIGHTS

Housing Opportunities Support Teams (HOST) provide flexible and adaptive services needed to help individuals and families obtain or maintain housing. The primary function of HOST is to coordinate and manage prevention, housing placement, and supportive services for those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Members of the HOST team will serve as a liaison to his or her organization/system and will work closely with other HOST members to create a cohesive and seamless system of service delivery.

Heard from a Partner - United Community Ministries

“Despite the exertion of breaking records for services in ways none of the providers imagined, there is now a strong sense of hope that has permeated the organizations that provide housing services. **The uniqueness of the collaboration that has resulted in the HOST program has not only transformed our community's effectiveness in dramatically improving the lives for literally thousands of families, but it has set a new standard and a new model for how to solve other societal issues.** Partnerships among private and public organizations became a reality, determination to find long-term solutions to the housing crisis continue to drive us toward answers and, always, the good of the people who need these services remains the reason we will succeed.”

Regional Updates

- **Northern Region** – In North County **15 households** were prevented from becoming homeless last week. The region continues to see loss of employment or sudden loss of income as a major risk factor in homeless prevention. Patricia Lopez from Our Daily Bread is presenting credit smart classes in Reston beginning March 10 through April 14. To register for the classes please contact Patricia at financialliteracy@odbfairfax.org or visit www.our-daily-bread.org.
- **Central Region** – Shelter House has partnered with Western Fairfax Christian Ministries to provide prevention services to households through the HPRP effort. The two agencies will be sharing office space, resources and skills while addressing the needs of our community. Referrals will still go through Fairfax County Coordinated Services Planning in order to receive HPRP funds. **Newly hired community case manager and housing locator in Region 2 are prepared to join the team in processing referrals for HPRP, starting March 8.** They can be contacted via e-mail at fmukasa-kintu@voaches.org (community case manager) and pbassette@voaches.org (housing locator).
- **Southern Region** – New Hope Housing (NHH) is seeing benefits from the relationships being built between their housing specialist and various apartment communities, private landlords and the lawyers that often represent these entities in eviction proceedings. While HPRP funding certainly plays a role in preventing eviction, through these relationships and by supporting tenants at court proceedings, NHH has been able to negotiate improved resolutions for residents. Just this past week, NHH's housing specialist was able to negotiate an agreement that would allow some tenants to remain in an apartment complex by working with the lawyer at the eviction hearing.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Update

Data Quality Day –“Data quality day” has been rescheduled for March 10 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. This time has been designated to review and correct Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) data in a manner that optimizes the experience of other providers in a setting that minimizes interruptions. At least one representative from each agency is asked to be present; **confirm your attendance via e-mail to monica.foote@fairfaxcounty.gov.**

HMIS Data Streamlining – A group to review the current HMIS data elements and to recommend HMIS core data elements that support our reporting needs met this week for the first time. We anticipate that their data review work will be completed by the end of spring.

PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

Fare Well to Diana Lotito

We wish Diana Lotito well as she retires from Fairfax County after 27 years of service in several different capacities during her tenure with the county. The most recent was her role in overseeing the Hypothermia Program as well as the shelter contracts of various homeless shelters. Diana's last day will be March 24, 2010 and we look forward to Diana's continued participation and engagement in our community, but as a volunteer!!

Debbie Scaggs Joins OPEH

We are delighted to announce the addition of Debbie Scaggs to our team at the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness. **She will be joining our effort on March 15 and will be overseeing the countywide hypothermia program as well as help provide oversight to homeless shelter and housing related contracts.** Debbie brings a wide range of insight and expertise to this role with over 15 years of experience in the public, private and community-based sectors in the arena of human services and health care. She holds a masters degree in business administration and is specialized in health care administration and long-term care. Please welcome Debbie as she transitions to this new position!

Homeless System Enhancements

- **Housing Locator Program** – We are delighted to announce that the Fairfax County Housing Locator Program, currently administered through Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services as part of HOST, has recently launched its new Web site now live at www.FairfaxHousingLocators.com. This original site is full of resources for professionals whose job is to assist residents facing homelessness find affordable housing options. Stay tuned for additional features and tools to come in the near future, such as a “How-To” manual on providing successful housing location services and a forum for group discussions.
- **Motel Pilot Program** – Fairfax County Department of Family Services (DFS), OPEH and FACETS are designing a pilot project, tentatively called the **Family Emergency Housing Demonstration Project, in which five apartment units will be rented in place of five motel slots** for use as emergency family housing. The pilot is based upon a model used by Beyond Shelter of Los Angeles, Ca. **Usage of apartments for emergency housing is a more cost effective and far more normalizing approach than motel situation for families who need emergency space when the shelters are unavailable due to full occupancy.** The pilot is scheduled to begin in late March, 2010.

Currently, DFS is working with shelter providers and FACETS to authorize a limited number of motel slots for this purpose. Outreach services to families in motels are provided by FACETS and most families then enter a homeless shelter when space becomes available. In this new model, families will move into apartments, and will be served by FACETS with the goal of locating a permanent or longer term transitional program, rather than another short term shelter stay.

The units will have basic furnishings provided through FACETS network of volunteers and churches, and the initial goal is to move families into better housing options within 90 days of entry. The program will be **evaluated at the end of a full twelve-month period to see how it compared to outcomes and costs in the motel and shelter programs, and to determine if it should be expanded.**

- **Family Unification Program** – Last year, the Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and DFS were successful in acquiring 100 Housing Choice Vouchers for use in the Family Unification Program (FUP). In this program, families or former foster care youth aged 18-21, can be awarded rental assistance if found to have inadequate housing and, in the case of families, in imminent risk of having a child removed by Child Protective Services or delayed in return from care primarily because of the housing crisis.

Recently staff from DFS and OPEH has worked with FACETS, Reston Interfaith, Shelter House, and New Hope Housing to better incorporate this incredibly valuable housing resource into the new HOST structure and in particular, the community case management structure. The program referral process has been expanded to include shelter and homeless providers, and a new screening tool developed. Additionally, because of the program requirement that DFS certify the imminent risk element, a new regionally based collaboration between the shelters, emergency motels and DFS Family Preservation has been established. The FUP vouchers are now incorporated into the 10-year plan housing unit goals.

TRAINING & COMMUNICATION

Tier Training

In order to increase activity and efficiency in the Training and Change Management group, the group has been split into three tiers that each focus on training and communication at different levels. Tier 1 addresses community forums, Tier 2 addresses Regional Training and Communication and Tier 3 addresses direct service training and communication. The coordination of training and communication at each tier will be led by a designated Training and Change Management Leader.

Tier 1 – The next Community Forum on Homelessness will be held in May 2010.

Tier 2 – In order to increase communication and collaboration between all of the service providers in the community, it is important that agencies participate actively in the regional meetings in their areas. These meetings have been a long-standing source of idea sharing and coordination facilitated by the Department of Systems Management for Human Services (DSMHS). This is your opportunity to help identify and shape the needs of your area in coordination with other professionals with a similar commitment to assisting those who are most in need in our community. Please refer to the information below to attend a meeting in your region.

- **Region 1**, March 8, 10 a.m. to noon, South County Center, 8350 Richmond Hwy, Suite 505, Alexandria.
- **Region 2**, March 8, 10 a.m. to noon, 6245 Leesburg Pike, Suite 305, Falls Church.
- **Region 3**, March 22, 10 a.m. to noon, 11484 Washington Plaza West, Suite 140, Reston.
- **Region 4**, March 26, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., to be determined.

Tier 3 – Tier 3 Training & Change Management Task Group met on March 2 to discuss upcoming training opportunities for direct service staff as it pertains to HOST. If anyone in the community has specific needs or ideas, please e-mail them to Joe Meyer at joe.meyer@shelterhouse.org.

HMIS Training

All trainings are held at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 364 Fairfax, VA 22035. **Training registration is on a first-come, first served basis, with 12 seats available at each session.** Register

via e-mail at monica.foote@fairfaxcounty.gov. Refresher training topics are being solicited; please e-mail your suggestions to monica.foote@fairfaxcounty.gov.

- **April 14** – 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., New HMIS User Training.
- **April 15** – 8:30 a.m. to noon, HMIS Refresher – Shelter Point Managing Bed Lists.
- **April 15** – 1 to 4 p.m. HMIS Refresher – Creating and Maintaining Households and Household Program Entries.

March 5, 2010 - Prepared by the [Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness](#) and the [Fairfax County Office of Public Affairs](#). To request this information in an alternate format, call 703-324-9492, TTY 711. A Fairfax County, Va., publication.