



www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless

618 REAL PEOPLE ~ REAL RESULTS in 120 Days

In the first 120 business days, the Housing Opportunities Support Teams (HOST) have prevented or ended the homelessness of 618 people – 272 unique households.

In April alone, 115 households including 348 individuals received the services and financial support needed to prevent or end their homelessness.

*Beginning in April, the first families began to receive the financial support and assistance they needed to prevent or end their homelessness using the **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Contingency Fund (TANF ECF)**. This application, which is a combination of federal and local dollars where every local \$1 is matched with \$4 in federal money, has recently been approved by the state.*

These are a few success stories from our outreach workers who work so diligently with the unsheltered.

A Story of Homeless Outreach

A homeless outreach worker met a client several years ago. She was distant and careful when the worker approached her at the shelters. She shared only a little about herself and always had a cautious stare when talked to. The outreach worker knew right away she had to be careful, approach her gently and not ask too much. Over time, the worker and client began to make a connection. The client began to ask for assistance thus allowing the worker to piece together a history of mental illness, medical issues and emotional instability. Homelessness only increases the trauma and stress. In particular, for women like this client, the lack of safety and stability pushes them down to a place where they cannot pull up on their own. **The homeless outreach worker's challenge was gaining full trust. The worker was making progress and was able to persuade the client to apply for the supportive housing programs.** We endured many roadblocks while attaining housing for the client — some were caused by the client's reluctance to accept assistance and some were within the system itself. She is now finally housed in a supportive program, her basic needs are met. It will take some time for her to feel secure. But for now, she is safe.

Low-Key Outreach Engagement Model True Success

A chronically homeless client in his early 40s had a history of alcohol dependence with multiple stays at correctional and drug treatment facilities. He attended homeless drop-in groups periodically over the past two years, occasionally speaking with outreach staff in a joking, superficial manner and declining any formal services. Last winter he approached staff and asked for help. He acknowledged a history of depression, irritability and unstable moods that he self-medicated with alcohol. He was started on a low dose of medication to treat his depression. **This case study validates the importance of using a low-key outreach engagement model to slowly build a relationship with homeless clients. Meeting clients "where they are," whether or not they are ready for treatment, respects client choices and leaves the door open for future interventions.**

Outreach Staff Presence Provides Engagement Opportunity

A chronically homeless woman who lived in her car for two years had psychotic symptoms. On a snowy, cold day last winter she went to the hypothermia shelter. Due to the high number of clients, the hypothermia staff asked her and others to move to a different room for the night. The client was so upset that she left the hypothermia shelter and stayed out in her car on an extremely cold night. Outreach staff began to speak with her about receiving services and provided her with clean clothing and toiletries. Although hesitant, she agreed to enter one of the New Hope Housing shelters. Both outreach and shelter mental health staff continued to work with her, and she agreed to begin taking psychiatric medication. **Her disability application was approved, and she was accepted into the Housing First program.** The client continues to participate in the Housing First program and has successfully maintained her apartment for the past two years. This success story demonstrates important principles of outreach, including visiting sites where homeless persons congregate; focusing on long-term goals, including access to housing and social services, as well as mental health services; and flexibility in service provision. **Outreach staff presence at the hypothermia shelter provided a “window of opportunity” for engagement with the client.** Proceeding at the client’s pace to develop a therapeutic relationship was the key to her continuing recovery.

HOST HIGHLIGHTS

HOST (Housing Opportunities Support Team) provides 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.

Regional Updates

As the human services regions across the county continue to move us forward with the 10-Year Plan, here are some highlights to showcase their efforts in working with clients, partner organizations and the HOST system.

- **Northern Region** – North County HOST case managers are now **servicing about 50 clients/households**. We are accepting two to three new HPRP referrals each week. The recent infusion of \$50,000 in basic assistance from TANF funds was disbursed in less than two weeks. **In the next couple of weeks, we expect to receive TANF funds for a new Youth Employment Program. Twenty youth, ages 14-23, whose families are TANF eligible, will be paired with businesses in the community to learn basic employment skills.**
- **Southern Region** – Region 1 continues to see how community case management is helping the men, women and families of our community in a significant way. **Budgeting, job search assistance, and housing location are just some of the tools New Hope Housing staff has utilized to help keep people housed and rapidly re-house others.** With those services, we have been able to successfully close some cases and are accepting referrals again.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Update

Great feedback was received during the "data quality day" held on May 3 and staff continues to benefit from the setting and the time spent reviewing the data. At the request of the HPRP staff, we are increasing the frequency and now will hold two data quality days per quarter.

HMIS Feedback – Providers are very encouraged by the progress we have made this year and the changes we are continuing to make in HMIS. Providers are now able to track community case management clients and TANF funds. Here are some of the comments we have received lately: "We are more confident in the data and our ability to run reports."; "We are light years from where we were a year ago."

We would like to welcome Family Preservation and Strengthening Services in Vienna to HMIS! Our new partner has recently added data to the system, specifically to manage data for the Family Stabilization and Self-Sufficiency program.

Data Quality Day – The next data quality day is scheduled for **June 28, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Fairfax County Government Center, Suite 364.** This time has been designated to review and correct HPRP data in a manner that ensures higher data quality while doing so in a group setting with other service providers. At least one representative from each agency is asked to be present. Please confirm your attendance via e-mail to monica.foote@fairfaxcounty.gov.

HMIS Data Streamlining – We are in the final stages of our review. We anticipate work will be completed and implemented by the end of spring, beginning of summer.

PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

PARTNER PROFILE: Reaching Ten-Year Plan Goals

Homestretch, located in Falls Church, provides transitional housing and intensive services to approximately 110 homeless families a year. Thankfully, most of the families they serve are able to take advantage of the services offered and make dramatic progress while in the program. Homestretch is now moving forward to convert at least seven of its transitional housing units to permanent supportive housing units within the next five years.

Historically, almost 85 percent of the families served by Homestretch are able to secure permanent housing and self-sufficiency within roughly two years. However, this also means that 15 out of 100 families are not able to complete the program, for a variety of reasons. Some of these families face issues so severe that two years of transitional housing and services are simply not sufficient for them to escape poverty, dependence and chronic problems such as mental illness. Some families drop out because they cannot conform to the rules of paying rent or being good tenants and neighbors. But other families simply need a greater degree of investment – a longer and more patient touch to help them build, one step at a time, the skills and resources they need to eventually achieve some semblance of stability and independence.

Homestretch hopes to help some of these families by extending their stay beyond two years, and by building individual plans that account for their challenges while also helping them practice skills and behaviors that will, over time, develop healthier family dynamics and independence. In practical terms, this means about seven out of 70 units of housing could be used for families whose needs go well beyond what can be accomplished in a mere two years.

Conversion of at least seven of the Homestretch units to permanent supportive housing would also help reach the 10-Year Plan goal of creating 75 new family permanent supportive housing units within the next five years. Currently, the Department of Family Services and its partners in the 20-unit RISE two-year transitional program — New Hope Housing, Reston Interfaith and Shelter House — also have obtained preliminary approval from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to convert this program to a permanent supportive housing program. The converted program is targeted to serve families headed by a person with disabilities that have experienced chronically unstable housing and child welfare involvement. More about this exciting new conversion will appear in an upcoming *PARTNER Update*.

Homeless System Enhancements

Housing Locator Program – The multi-agency Housing Locator Network continues to grow in size and increase its impact on the community. April was a particularly busy month as **a total of 212 households were given housing search and placement assistance. Incredibly, 58 of these**

households were moved back into affordable, stable housing. That continues the trend of nearly 30% of the clients receiving assistance in a month actually being rapidly re-housed. The Housing Locators are also searching for new housing options; 132 new property owners were contacted in the month of May.

The Housing Locator Program aims to increase the capacity and effectiveness of the Housing Locator Network in the coming months by tying new Housing Locators into the network; providing ongoing training and coordination; and facilitating new partnerships among nonprofits, county agencies and other organizations.

The www.FairfaxHousingLocators.com Web site also continues to grow as a valuable resource for housing locators and other staff in the Fairfax-Falls Church community that help homeless persons find housing. Our most recently added resource is a link to the National Alliance to End Homelessness "Virtual Learning Center," which includes "Strategies for Working with Landlords and Finding Housing for Clients." Visit us at <http://locators.fairfaxhousinglocators.com/tips> for links and other helpful information.

You also may send an e-mail to staff@fairfaxhousinglocators.com to be added to the Housing Locator listserv and discussion group.

SIDEBAR

Homeless Youth Initiative Program

Fairfax County Public Schools has identified 1,750 homeless children this school year, with 180 identified as homeless unaccompanied youth. We are very excited to announce that 16 of these unaccompanied youth are graduating and college bound! Transportation support has been provided for 396 children through gas assistance, bus re-routing, public transportation vouchers and taxis.

The number of homeless children identified by schools is based on the homeless definition defined in the Mc Kinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This definition includes those families that are doubled and tripled up with friends or family members due to loss of housing or similar hardship. The McKinney-Vento definition is different than the homeless definition used by HUD, thus giving our county different reporting numbers of homeless families!

TRAINING & COMMUNICATIONS

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. A designated Training and Change Management Leader will lead the coordination of training and communication at each tier.

Tier 2 – [Fairfax County Department of Systems Management for Human Services](#) (DSMHS) regional offices serve as localized entities focused on strengthening our neighborhoods by **connecting individuals and organizations with information and resources, fostering and creating opportunities for collaboration and facilitating communitywide efforts, such as the 10-Year Plan to prevent and end homelessness.**

The regional meetings hosted by DSMHS provide a regional framework for planning activities, active problem solving, capture of feedback and identification of emerging trends. **These meetings feature regular updates on the 10-year Plan** to Prevent and End Homelessness, as well as updates on a multitude of related human services initiatives and projects. In order to increase communication and collaboration between all service providers involved in the 10-Year Plan, **it is important that the**

providers participate in these regional planning efforts. To get linked to the appropriate meeting, project or initiative in your region, please refer to the information below.

Region 1 – Meetings are the second Monday of every other month from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at South County Center, 8350 Richmond Hwy, Suite 505, Alexandria. **For more information**, contact Maria.Franco-Nativi@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-704-6354, TTY 711.

Region 2 – Meetings are the second Monday of each month from 10 a.m. to noon at the DSM offices, 6245 Leesburg Pike, Suite 300, Falls Church. **For more information**, contact Jackeline.FernandezReyes@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-533-5701, TTY 711.

Region 3 – Meeting on Monday, Aug. 23 from 10 a.m. to noon at 11484 Washington Plaza West, Suite 140, Reston. **For more information**, contact Denise Taramasco Isabel.Taramasco@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-787-4962, TTY 711.

Region 4 – Meeting are the last Friday of each month from 9 to 11a.m. The meeting locations vary. **For more information**, contact Paulette.Whiteside@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-324-5285, TTY 711.

Tier 3 – Service Delivery Training – The Training and Change Management task group is working with the National Alliance to End Homelessness to arrange training for service delivery staff at each of the shelters and transitional housing programs. The first of the two-part training sessions was held on May 27 at the Tysons Corner Marriott. The Housing Stability and Case Management Skills Training focused on the shift from traditional service planning to the housing stability mindset. **Andrea White, the co-founder of Housing Innovations, LLC, facilitated on this day.** The second segment of this training will take place in June. This will give case managers the opportunity to discuss current, real life cases with colleagues and experts using the Housing First model.

HMIS Training

All trainings are held at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 364 Fairfax. **Training registration is on a first-come, first-served basis, with 12 seats available at each session.** Register via e-mail with monica.foote@fairfaxcounty.gov. Refresher training topics are being solicited; please e-mail your suggestions to monica.foote@fairfaxcounty.gov.

- **June 2** – 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. ✧ New HMIS User Training (4 seats remaining).
- **June 3** – 8:30 a.m. to noon ✧ HMIS Refresher for System Administrators. User passwords and standard ServicePoint Reports (9 seats remaining).
- **June 9** – 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. ✧ Understanding Data Quality Reports. Agency Administrators should attend (5 seats remaining).
- **June 10** – 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. ✧ Understanding Data Quality Reports. Agency Administrators should attend (7 seats remaining).

June 1, 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.