

# **Implementation Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community**

## **Executive Summary**

### ***A Goal to End Homelessness***

The Fairfax-Falls Church community has committed to ending homelessness in 10 years. This commitment requires that no later than December 31, 2018, every person who is homeless or at risk of being homeless in the Fairfax-Falls Church community is able to access appropriate affordable housing and the services needed to keep them in their homes.

### ***A Community-Created Plan***

Throughout 2005-2006, a broad-based community-wide collaborative came together to develop a blueprint of strategies to prevent and end homelessness. This collaborative culminated in a planning framework entitled “*Strategic Directions for the Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community*”. On February 26, 2007, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors endorsed this blueprint and its Housing First approach and called for the establishment of an implementation committee. This implementation plan is a result of the work of that implementation committee.

### ***Strong Guiding Principles***

Ending homelessness will require a high level of commitment and cooperation and active participation from throughout the Fairfax-Falls Church community. The implementation committee identified the following principles as critical to success:

- Community acceptance and support of the Housing First approach,
- Strong political will to provide leadership, commitment, resources, support, and government flexibility,
- Strong participation from the business community,
- Cooperative leadership and management from throughout the community,
- Collaboration across all agencies to make the necessary organizational, policy, practices, and process changes needed to implement the plan,
- Meaningful opportunities for input from persons who are or have been homeless,
- Diverse funding and resources from throughout the community,
- Accountability of all participating organizations.

### ***The Housing First Approach***

To meet the goal of ending homelessness, a Housing First approach has been adopted to focus on both preventing homelessness and rapidly moving people

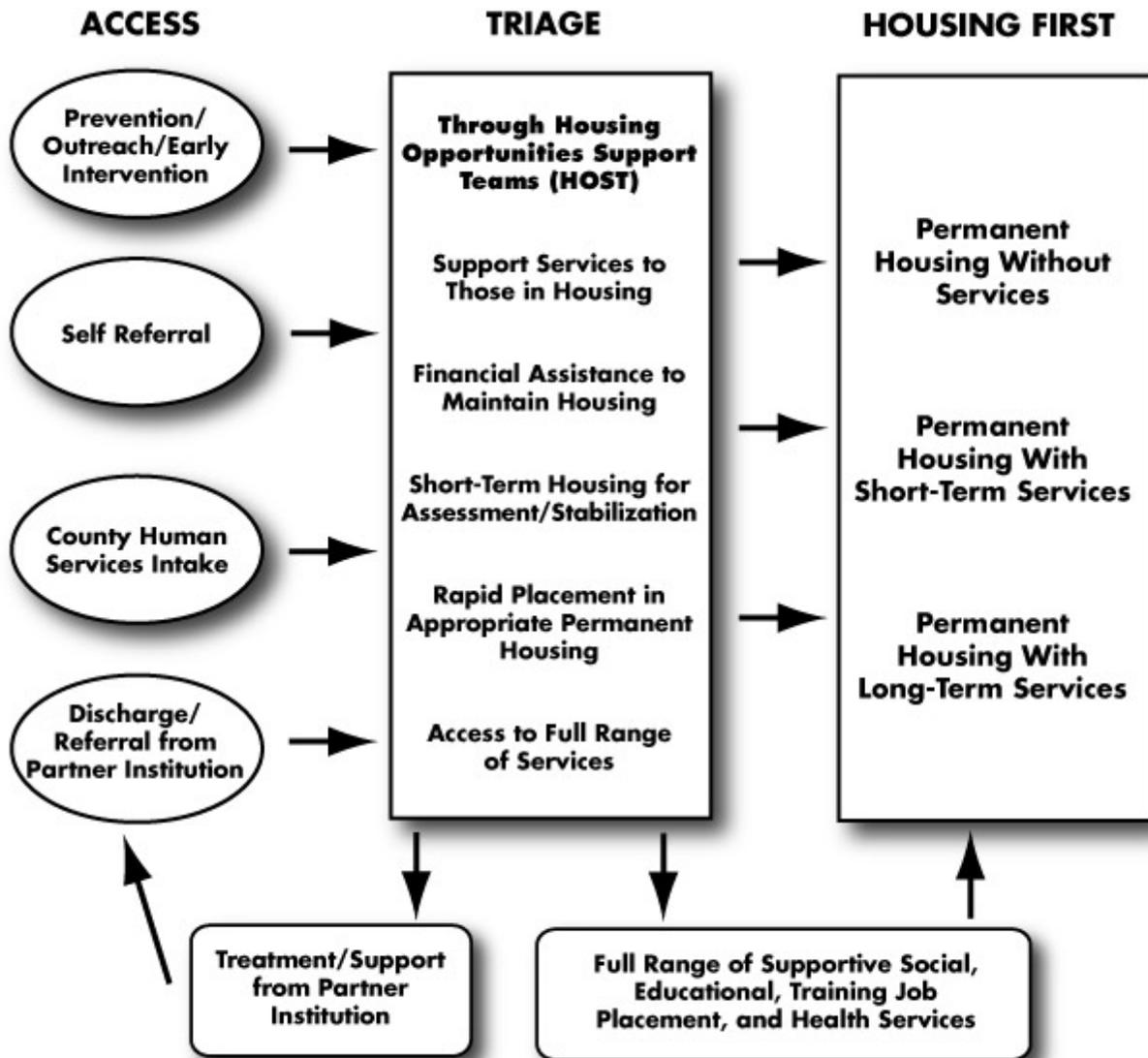
from homelessness to permanent housing. Four key strategic actions are required to move to a Housing First approach:

- Place a strong focus on preventing homelessness,
- Provide a single access point to provide integrated services in the community,
- Increase the availability and choices of permanent housing,
- Create a community-wide partnership to implement the plan.

### ***Providing Needed Services***

The Fairfax-Falls Church approach to Housing First is centered on regional integrated community-based Housing Opportunities Support Teams (HOST) to provide and/or coordinate all pertinent housing and support services where persons who are homeless and those at risk are located. Persons who are homeless will access the system from a number of routes. Those at risk of becoming homeless will be prevented from entering homelessness through aggressive outreach and support of the HOST teams. Once in the system, persons who are homeless are able to access all needed services through the HOST teams and associated centers located throughout the community. The goal is to eliminate the time that people spend in interim or temporary housing and to quickly coordinate services and locate suitable permanent housing. Once in housing, people will receive services according to their need.

### **The Fairfax-Falls Church Housing First System**



### ***Expanding Available Housing***

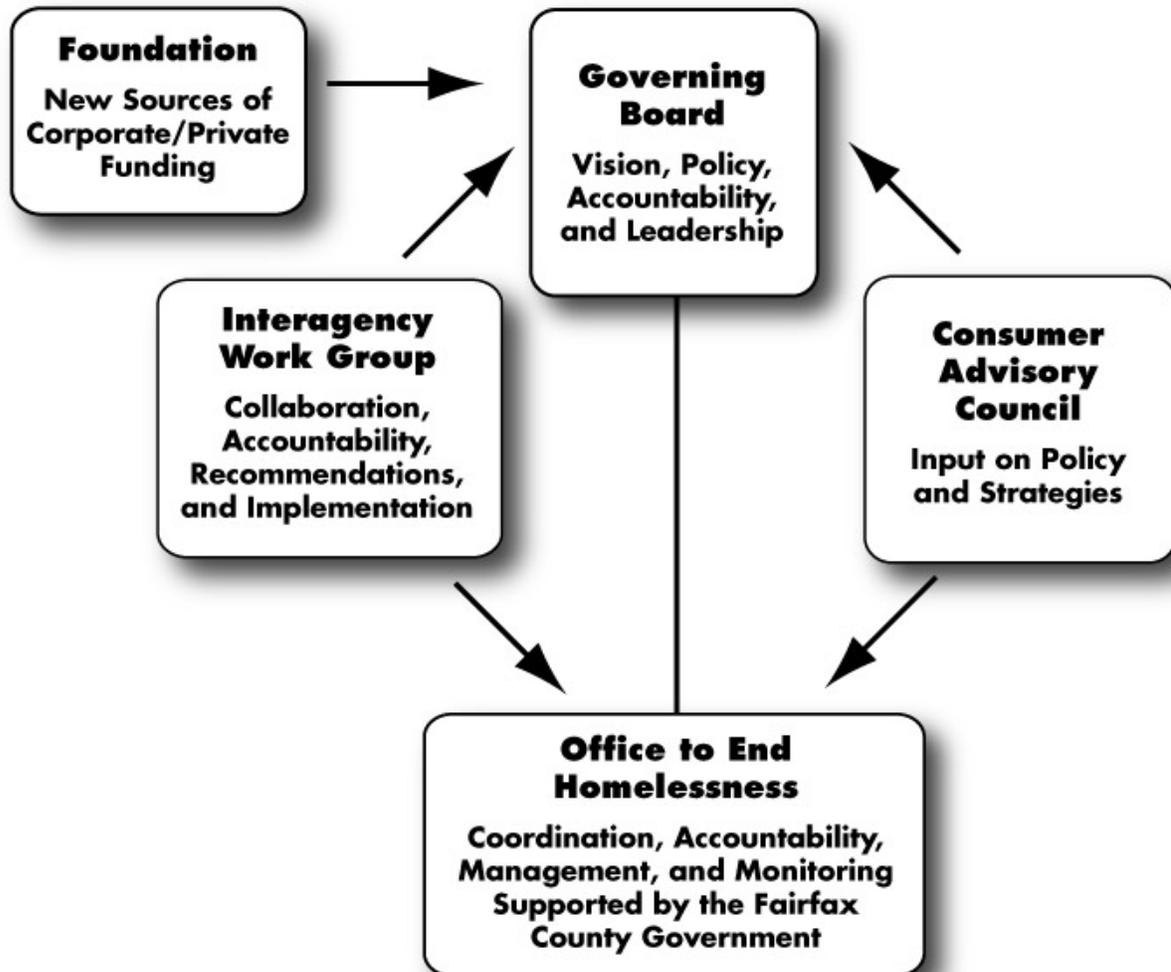
One of the key elements to success for the Housing First approach is the availability of housing, whether it is housing that currently exists or housing that will have to be newly created. Key elements of this effort include:

- Preserve existing and identify new sources of funding,
- Direct resources based on the needs of the homeless population,
- Explore alternative and non-traditional housing sites,
- Provide additional permanent housing to provide a range of housing needs,
- Identify key policy actions and decisions required.

### **Creating the Community Partnership**

Realizing the goal will require a true partnership of the government, business, faith and nonprofit communities to provide the essential coordinated and collaborative political, community, and managerial leadership, policy direction, resource development and stewardship. The proposed structure has five organizational elements led by an independent governing board of leaders from throughout the community, and a central Office to End Homelessness that is supported by Fairfax County government. An Interagency Work Group ensures coordination across all service providers, while a Consumer Advisory Council provides high-level input from people who are or have been homeless. Ultimately a new nonprofit foundation will be created to expand fundraising.

## The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership



### ***Transition Underway, Full Implementation by End of 2008***

The transition to a Housing First approach has already begun with many organizations exploring the activities and policy changes needed. The implementation plan calls for the Governing Board and the Office to End Homelessness to be in place by August 2008, and transition to full operation of the Housing First system complete by the end of 2008.