



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

Overview

The 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.

For more information, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless. To request this information in an alternate format, contact Fairfax County Office of Public Affairs, at 703-324-3187, TTY 711.

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 collaboration 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. The Implementation Plan is a result of the work of that implementation committee, and was approved by the Board on March 31, 2008.

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, practice, 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

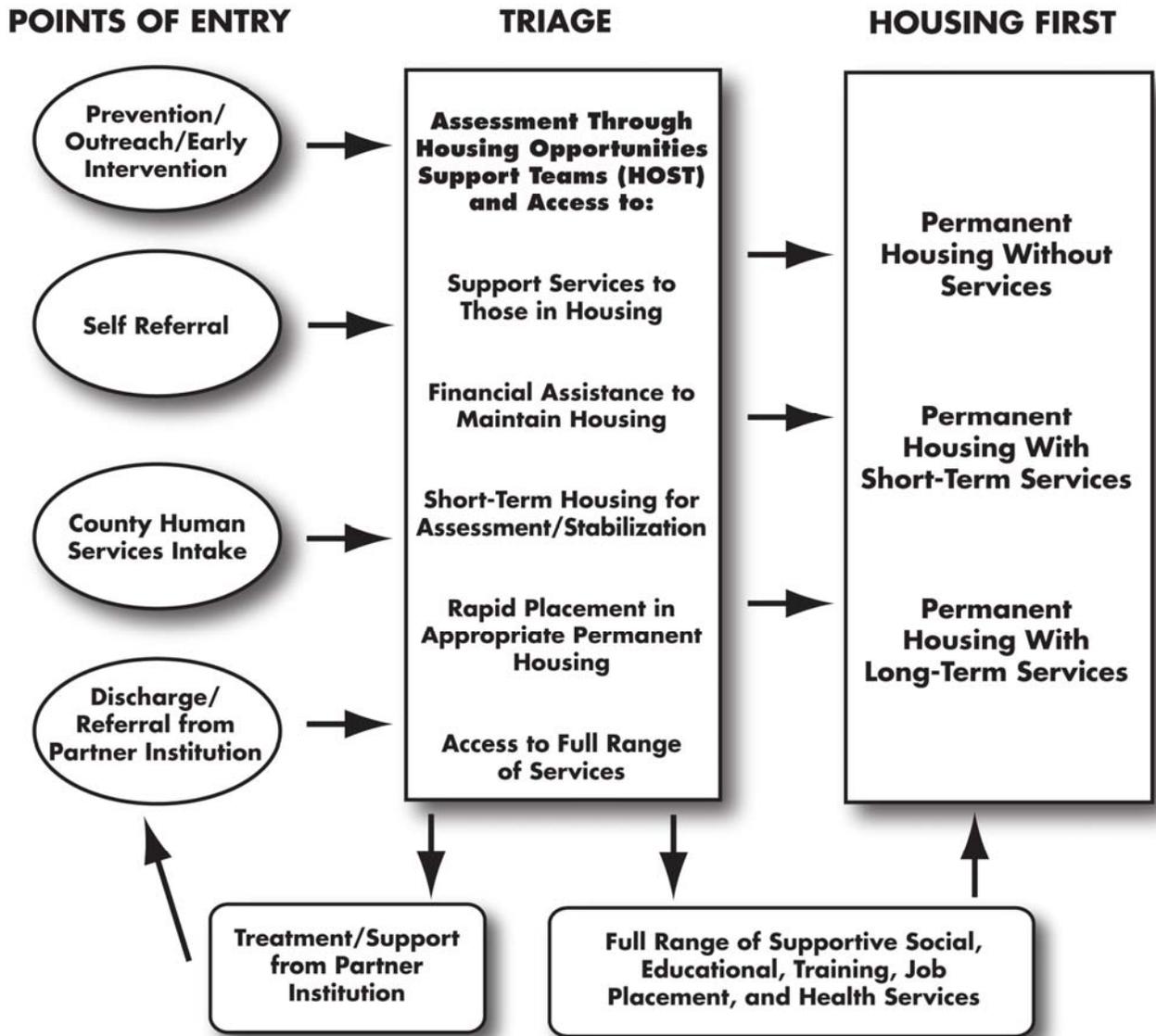
To meet the goal of ending homelessness, a Housing First approach has been adopted to focus on both preventing homelessness and rapidly moving people from homelessness to permanent housing. Four key strategic actions are required to move to a Housing First approach:

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

Integrate Prevention and Support Services

The Fairfax-Falls Church approach to Housing First is centered on regional integrated community-based Housing Opportunities Support Teams (HOSTs) to provide and/or coordinate all pertinent housing and support services for persons who are homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless. Persons access the system from a number of routes, and those at risk are prevented from entering homelessness through aggressive outreach and support of the HOST teams. Persons who have become homeless are able to access all needed services through the HOST teams in the community. The goal is to eliminate the time that people spend in interim or

temporary housing, and to use triage services to quickly coordinate services and to locate suitable permanent housing. Once in housing, HOSTs coordinate services according to need.



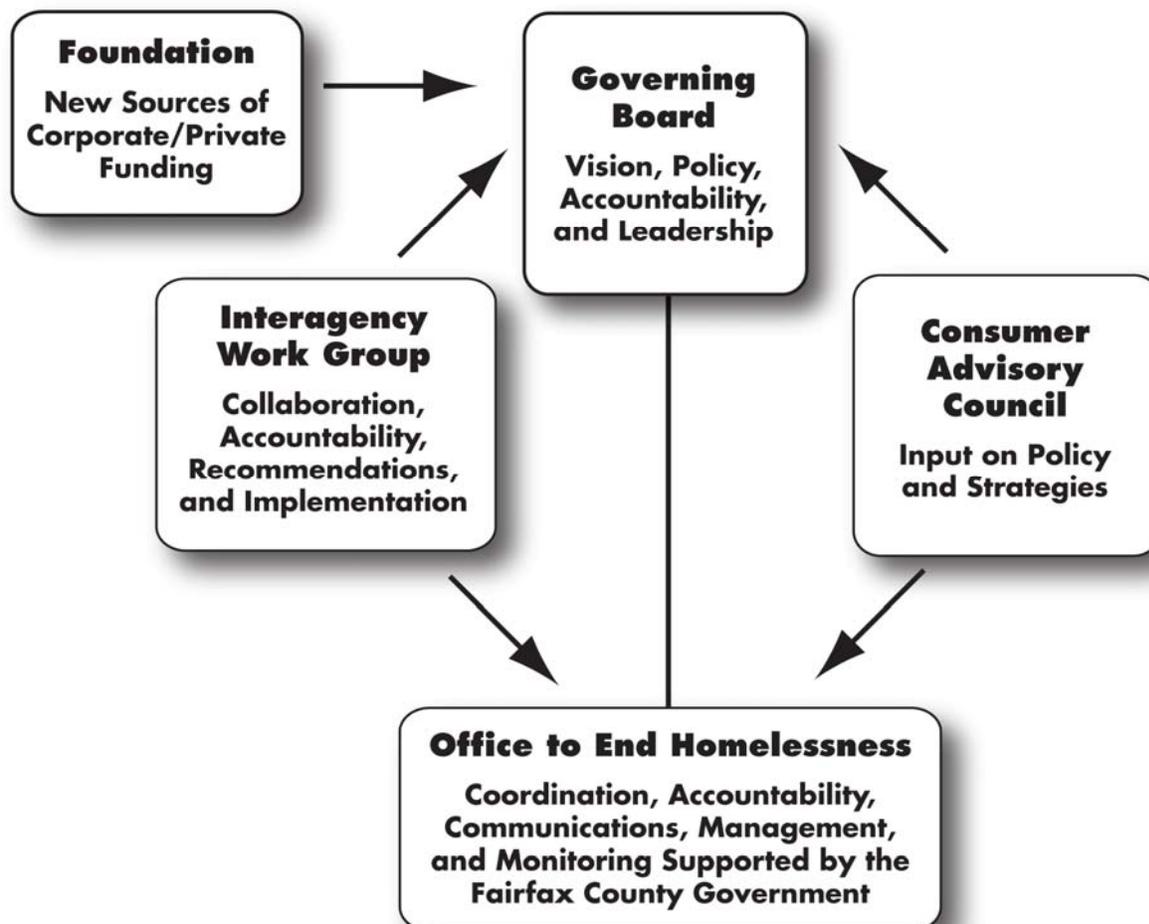
Expand Available Housing

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 meet a range of housing needs,
- Identify key policy actions and decisions required.

Create 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. These elements reflect the collaborative leadership, management, and implementation resources necessary to successfully end homelessness.



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.