



Response to Questions on the 2016 LOBs

Request By: Supervisor Gross

Relevant LOB(s): LOB #116

Question: What is the strategy to add more beds for those experiencing domestic violence?

Response:

In Fairfax County the demand for 24-hour emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence remains high, but the County lingers behind national standards for an adequate number of domestic violence shelter beds. The County's 24-hour domestic violence shelter, Artemis House, currently has 42 beds, which equates to only one bed for every 27,000 residents in the County. This compares to the national standard of one bed for every 14,000 residents, which would require approximately 80 beds for a community of this size. It should be noted that the current capacity is a combination of both County funded and grant funded beds.

Currently Artemis House is located in an area that has been identified for revitalization and mixed-use development. The current leased space is planned for demolition as part of the redevelopment and as a result, Artemis House will need to be relocated. Over the past five years, the Office for Women and Domestic and Sexual Violence Services (OFWDSVS) has focused efforts on identifying a more central location for Artemis House and securing increased bed space for victims of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking. The department has investigated repurposing group homes, purchasing units, and utilizing County and Housing and Community Development (HCD) housing units. However, each of these attempts was unsuccessful due to a variety of barriers and issues. OFWDSVS is continuing to work with HCD and the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) to identify strategies to mitigate the barriers.

In the short term, because the current location has been identified for redevelopment, OFWDSVS is partnering with HCD to temporarily move Artemis House to another location in North County; however, the number of beds will remain the same. OFWDSVS and HCD are pursuing a longer-term strategy to permanently relocate Artemis House to the central part of the County with the intent to increase capacity to 84 beds, which exceeds the national standard, but takes into account future population growth and increased need. Several possibilities are being explored including the purchase of a new property, repurposing an existing property, or the co-location of shelter beds with other County services as part of new construction.