

FAIRFAX-FALLS CHURCH COMMUNITY

# Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness

10-YEAR PLAN RETROSPECTIVE (2008-2018)

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<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless>

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A Fairfax County, Va., publication  
December 2018



# Thanks to Our Partners

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## Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

- Sharon Bulova, Chairman, At-Large
- Penelope A. Gross, Vice Chair, Mason District
- John C. Cook, Braddock District
- John W. Foust, Dranesville District
- Catherine M. Hudgins, Hunter Mill District
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- Daniel G. Storck, Mount Vernon District
- Linda Q. Smyth, Providence District
- Pat Herrity, Springfield District
- Kathy L. Smith, Sully District

Special thanks to Congressman Gerald E. Connolly who was instrumental in establishing the 10-Year Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness during his tenure as chairman of the Board of Supervisors.

## Office of the County Executive

- Bryan J. Hill, County Executive
- Tisha Deeghan, Deputy County Executive
- Dave M. Rohrer, Deputy County Executive
- Robert A. Stalzer, Deputy County Executive

## Fairfax County Agencies

Every county agency and countless employees have assisted in working to end homelessness in our community. A special thanks to the following agencies for their partnership and commitment of resources:

- Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority
- Office of Public Affairs
- Department of Housing and Community Development
- Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board
- Department of Family Services
- Neighborhood and Community Services
- Health Department
- Department of Public Works and Environmental Services
- Fire and Rescue Department
- Police Department
- Sheriff's Office
- Fairfax County Public Schools Homeless Liaison Office

## Nonprofit Organizations

- Beth El House
- Bethany House of Northern Virginia, Inc.
- Christian Relief Services
- Cornerstones
- FACETS
- Family PASS
- Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services
- Homestretch
- The Lamb Center
- New Hope Housing
- Northern Virginia Family Service
- Pathway Homes
- Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services
- Second Story
- Shelter House
- United Community Ministries
- Volunteers of America-Chesapeake

# Introduction

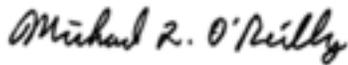
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It is with great pleasure that I share this 10-year retrospective highlighting the work achieved in our community over the past decade. With a strong understanding that homelessness impacts every person in our community and each of us has a role in ending it, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved our community plan to prevent and end homelessness in 10 years. The plan, and the commitment that our community has rallied around since March 2008, states that: “By no later than Dec. 31, 2018, every person who is homeless and/or at risk of homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church community is able to access appropriate, affordable housing and the services needed to keep them in their homes.”

The community support has never been stronger, and through the collective work of our Governing Board and so many nonprofits, faith communities, businesses, and government agencies, we have been able to reduce homelessness in our community. We have positively impacted the lives of homeless single adults, families, youth, veterans, and also those who are at risk of homelessness.

This retrospective highlights both the successes and challenges we have experienced, while also looking forward to continuing our important work on behalf of those who are the most vulnerable in our community.

Sincerely,



Michael L. O'Reilly  
Chairman  
Governing Board of the Fairfax-Falls Church  
Community Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness

## Governing Board of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness

Sharon Bulova, Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Catherine M. Hudgins, Supervisor, Hunter Mill District, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Verdia L. Haywood, Former Deputy County Executive, Fairfax County Government

Willard Jasper, Commissioner, Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority

Mary Kimm, Editor and Publisher, Local Media Connection LLC

Stacey Kincaid, Sheriff, Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax

Keary Kincannon, Founder and Lead Pastor, Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church

Jeff Lisanick, Chairman, Consumer Advisory Council

Rodney Lusk, Senior Business Development Manager, Fairfax County Economic Development Authority

Ted C. Lutz, Former Vice President, The Washington Post

Bruce McNamer, President and CEO, The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region

David Meyer, Mayor, City of Fairfax

Don Owens, Co-Founder and President, The Griffin-Owens Agency

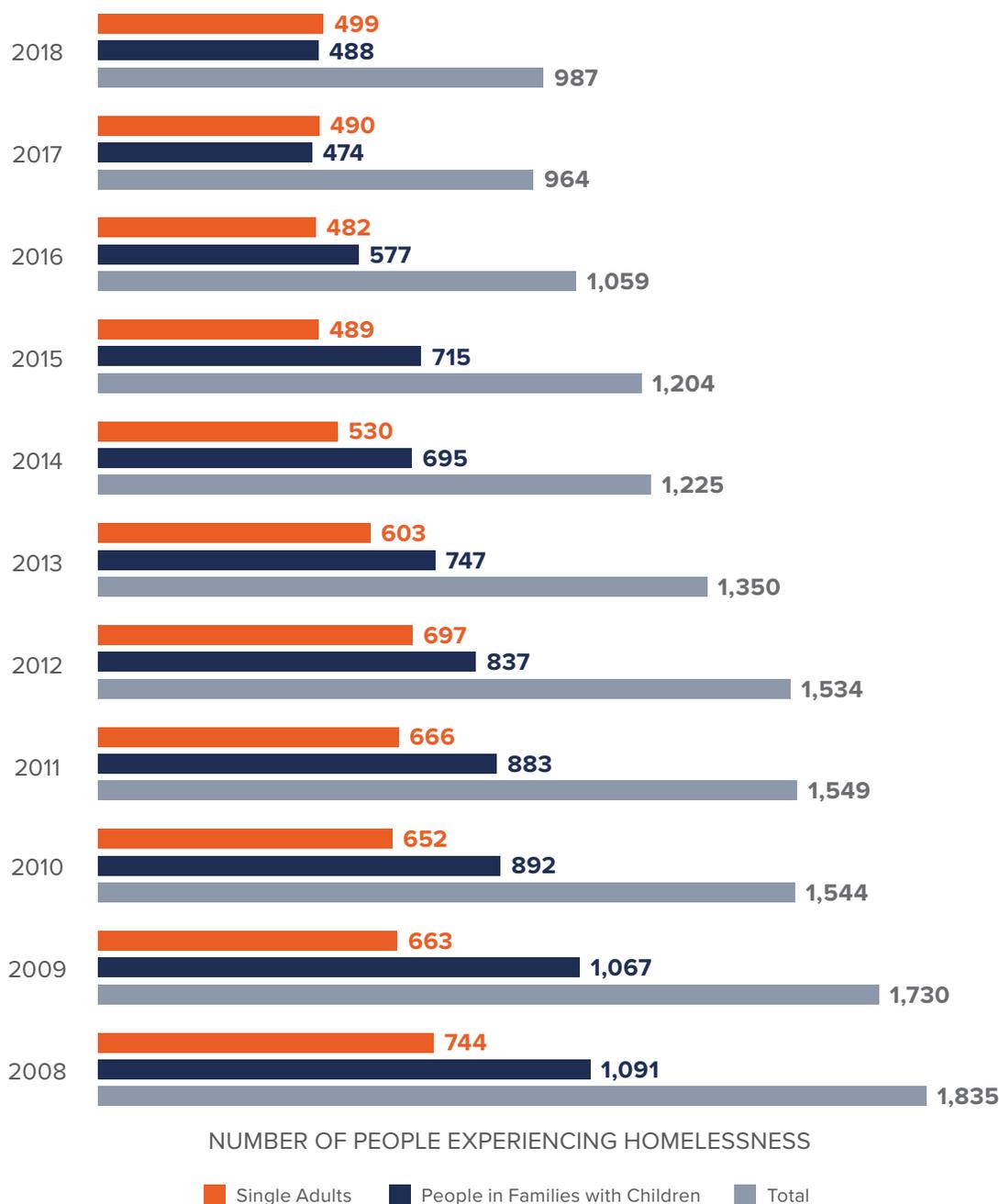
Pamela V. Rothenberg, Esquire, Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice, LLP

Todd Rowley, Senior Vice President, Cardinal Bank

# A Nearly 50 Percent Reduction in Homelessness

Since 2008, the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness has experienced a nearly 50 percent reduction in the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. This achievement is the result of a 10-year coordinated and creative effort by public, private, and faith-based organizations across the region.

### Point-in-Time Data 2008-2018



2008-2018:

## Our 10-Year Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in Fairfax County

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- In February 2007, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors endorsed the “Blueprint for Success: Strategic Directions for the Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community.” It was the product of a broad-based community planning effort spurred to action not only by the growing national movement to develop 10-year plans to end homelessness, but by the lack of affordable housing in our region.
- The Board of Supervisors adopted a 10-Year Implementation Plan in March 2008.
- The 10-Year Plan was developed by committees and work groups with representatives from nonprofits, faith communities, businesses, and those who have experienced homelessness, as well as government agencies in Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, and the City of Falls Church.
- The Partnership committed that in 10 years – by the end of 2018 – every person who is homeless, or at risk of being homeless, in the community would be able to access appropriate, affordable housing and the services needed to remain stably housed.
- The goal of the 10-Year Plan was to prevent and end homelessness, not just manage it.



# THE POWER OF COLLABORATION:

## Our Successes

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- Over the past 10 years, the Partnership has worked collaboratively and effectively to prevent and end homelessness for individuals and families across the community.
- The Partnership has been a leader at the national, state, and regional levels in its pursuit to end homelessness and has been modeled around the country.
- Since 2008, there has been a significant decrease in the annual point-in-time count of people who were literally homeless, though there was a slight increase in 2018 over the previous year.
- On the night of **Jan. 24, 2018, there were 987 people** who were literally homeless in the Fairfax-Falls Church community. This represents a **total reduction of 46 percent (848 fewer people)** in the homeless population from **2008 to 2018**.
- Over 10 years, there was a decline in **various populations** throughout the homeless system, including:
  - Families
  - Children in families
  - Adults in families
  - Single adults
  - People experiencing chronic homelessness
  - People experiencing domestic violence
- Utilizing a “housing first” approach, services staff first focused their efforts on helping families and individuals find and secure permanent housing as quickly as possible, without preconditions and barriers to entry, and then worked on connecting them to the services needed to help maintain that housing.
- The family emergency shelter intake system was totally redesigned to eliminate waitlists and ensure all families with minor children in need of shelter receive it.
- **The result of these changes is a more effective and efficient system of preventing and ending homelessness.**
  - The number of people exiting emergency shelters to permanent housing destinations increased from 599 people in FY 2012 to 978 people in FY 2018.
  - The average length of stay in shelters for families with children dropped from 96 days in FY 2012 to 68 days in FY 2018.
  - The average length of stay in shelters for single adults decreased from 51 days in FY 2012 to 33 days in FY 2018.
- Part of the Partnership’s success is also due to the way that resources are now allocated. A significant number of transitional housing units were converted to permanent housing, specifically rapid-rehousing and permanent supportive housing, allowing more individuals and families to end their homelessness.
- Fairfax County is now more competitive for federal resources due to an alignment of federal, state, and local outcomes that focus on decreasing numbers of households experiencing homelessness, shortening the average length of homelessness, and decreasing returns to homelessness.
- In November 2016, a Human Services Bond Referendum was approved by voters, which provided \$48 million for the renovation and/or rebuilding of four of our shelters.

HOW WE GOT HERE:

## Four Key Strategies

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### **PREVENTION:**

Keep people from becoming homeless in the first place.

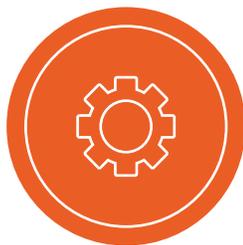
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### **PRESERVATION:**

Increase and preserve affordable housing.

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### **INTEGRATION:**

Deliver integrated social services to those who need it.

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### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

Create a community partnership to ensure accountability and funding.



## STRATEGY 1:

# Make Prevention a Priority

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**Collaborate to provide outreach and coordinated resources to prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless.**

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- Homelessness prevention is an important part of the Partnership’s efforts. This includes not only providing emergency financial assistance when people are in crisis, but also proactively supporting property owners and their tenants in order to maintain stable housing conditions.
- The Department of Neighborhood and Community Services’ Office of Coordinated Services Planning (CSP) is the central point of entry for most people seeking homeless assistance and has an important role in triaging services and making the first effort to resolve housing crises.
- Households who show up in the homeless services system are generally either facing a formal eviction or are being asked to leave their residence by family and friends with whom they are staying.
- To assist households facing homelessness, federal, state, and local funding is provided to the county’s contracted nonprofits and faith partners, who also raise additional funds to prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless in the first place.
- The Emergency Solutions Grant and Homelessness Prevention Rapid Rehousing programs at the federal level have provided assistance to clients for prevention activities over the course of the 10-Year Plan, providing financial assistance that allowed households to stabilize in housing. The Virginia Homeless Solutions Program has also provided similar funding.





## STRATEGY 2:

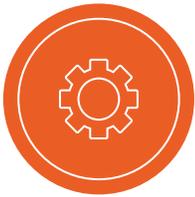
# Increase the Availability and Choice of Permanent Housing

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**Build, purchase, or acquire by other means the housing units throughout the community that meet the needs of the diverse persons who are homeless.**

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- The Partnership has increased the number of permanent housing options for people experiencing homelessness by reallocating public funds and garnering new federal, state, and local funds to create permanent housing options (i.e., rapid-rehousing subsidies and permanent supportive housing).
- Bridging Affordability is a local housing subsidy program that has provided additional permanent housing for homeless households.
- The Partnership was successful in obtaining new funds from the Continuum of Care (CoC) program from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and now receives close to \$9 million annually for rapid-rehousing and permanent supportive housing.
- **Over the past 10 years, a total of 1,563 new permanent housing opportunities were created through new resources and the turnover of existing opportunities when people move.** The Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) continue to be essential partners in the creation of these new housing units. Over the past three years, the FCRHA/DHCD contributed nearly 60 percent of all new housing units to the system.
- Many units of transitional housing previously funded through the CoC became permanent supportive housing and rapid-rehousing programs.
- The Housing Opportunities Collaborative increases the number of private landlords who are willing to rent to prospective tenants. The Collaborative offers an incentive program and other supports to landlords and tenants to help make this partnership effective.
- Utilizing the county's \$48 million bond that was approved in 2016, four of the county's emergency shelters will be redeveloped, allowing the Partnership to not only have new and accessible emergency shelters, but also add new permanent housing units for people experiencing homelessness.
  - The new Bailey's Crossroads Community Shelter and Supportive Housing project, which is scheduled to open in late 2019, will be the first of the new facilities. In addition to the emergency shelter component, it will also include on-site permanent supportive housing for formerly homeless individuals with disabilities. The shelter rooms will be designed so that they can be converted to additional permanent supportive housing units with minimal costs as the need for shelter beds decreases.



## STRATEGY 3:

# Provide a Single Point of Service

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**Proposed regional integrated community-based Housing Opportunities Support Teams (HOSTs) will provide and/or coordinate all pertinent housing and support services where persons who are homeless and those at risk are located. HOSTs will provide a single access point throughout the community.**

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- The Partnership has worked extensively to craft and implement a new model – the Coordinated Entry System – over the past several years, evolving from the HOST model to the current model. The original structure of HOSTs is not currently in use by the Partnership.
- Coordinated Entry is a system of care ensuring clear access points, in a timely manner, for those who need homeless services/assistance the most.
  - Assistance is allocated as effectively as possible and should be easily accessible for all potential individuals and families.
  - There is consistency in eligibility, prioritization, access, and assessment.
  - Policies and procedures are streamlined across all programs.
  - This system utilizes a low-barrier approach that is housing first, person-centered, and provides fair and equal access to housing and services.
- This strategy has been implemented across the community for all program types, including emergency shelter, street outreach, homelessness prevention, rapid-rehousing, permanent supportive housing, and other permanent housing programs.
  - For families, Coordinated Services Planning (CSP) continues to be the centralized point through which all referrals are made for prevention and emergency shelter. Clients call the main CSP phone number to get referrals to the nonprofit partners that provide prevention assistance and emergency shelter.
  - For single adults, CSP is used as the entry point for homelessness prevention services, while a new centralized database system has also been created to assess and prioritize individuals for access to emergency shelter.
  - Permanent supportive housing, other permanent housing programs, transitional housing, and rapid-rehousing for youth are accessed through a centralized prioritization pool that is available to all providers who serve those experiencing homelessness.
- **The Partnership’s street outreach strategies to those who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness have also improved dramatically.** There is now a comprehensive by-name list of everyone experiencing unsheltered homelessness, which allows providers to better engage with and provide services to this very vulnerable population. Continued partnerships with the Community Services Board’s PATH team, the Health Department’s Homeless Healthcare Program, the Fairfax County Police Department, and others have made the Partnership more successful in identifying and serving those experiencing unsheltered homelessness.



## STRATEGY 4:

# Create a Community Partnership

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**An integrated community effort with the government, business, nonprofit, and faith communities all working together will align existing resources, manage the plan, and accept responsibility for its implementation. All organizations will make the necessary policy and structural changes to work in the proposed Housing First approach.**

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- There is a history of collaboration among public and private nonprofit organizations and faith communities to address homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church community predating the start of the 10-Year Plan that has grown more robust over the last 10 years.
- The Governing Board of the Partnership oversees the implementation of the 10-Year Plan and the work being done by the Partnership.
- The Office to Prevent and End Homelessness (OPEH) was established in 2009 to provide strategic leadership. Today, OPEH has experienced staff who, together with the nonprofit partners, manage the county's homeless service programs and continue to drive the decline of homelessness in the community.
- The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is used to count all persons experiencing homelessness in the county. Since it was first implemented, it has become more robust in terms of its content and features, with nearly all homeless service providers in the Partnership contributing to the data. We currently have 16 organizations and more than 170 projects participating in HMIS. The Partnership has made timely and accurate data collection a priority so that the data can be used to have greater impact on those being served and for system performance monitoring, evaluation, and improvement.
- The voices of those who have previously experienced or are currently experiencing homelessness are an important component of the Partnership through consumer representation on planning committees, the Governing Board, and the Consumer Advisory Council.
- There are long-standing public-private partnerships supporting efforts related to street outreach, homelessness prevention, rapid-rehousing, emergency shelters, hypothermia prevention programming, and providing transitional and permanent housing programs.
- The Partnership collaborates closely with Fairfax County Public Schools Homeless Liaison Office and Second Story, a youth-dedicated provider, to assist children, youth, and their families who are experiencing homelessness.

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- The Partnership has worked together and as individual stakeholders to secure significant amounts of federal, state, and local funding for programs serving those experiencing homelessness. Additionally, the Partnership has participated extensively and collaboratively in the planning and operation of services addressing the needs of those experiencing homelessness and, more recently, has come together in the development of strategies to permanently prevent and end homelessness.
    - The Governing Board did not create a separate financial foundation for the Partnership due to a number of factors, including potential competition with partner nonprofits for limited philanthropic resources, insufficient administrative support for a foundation, and an inherently challenging model of fundraising in a government office.
    - During the 100,000 Homes Campaign, the collective impact model brought together the commitment of a group of people from different sectors to a common agenda for ending homelessness, using a structured form of collaboration.
    - Efforts such as Jeans Day and Build a Village have enabled the Partnership to work with public and private sectors, all eight chambers of commerce, and hundreds of companies to raise greater awareness about the many faces of homelessness – and concrete ways the community can be involved and contribute new resources.



# MOVING FORWARD:

## Challenges

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- The Partnership has faced multiple challenges in fully ending homelessness during the implementation of the 10-Year Plan. Preventing and ending homelessness is a complex, multi-faceted, systems change effort that has required the Partnership to engage on many levels, aligning public and private resources, changing policies and procedures, and responding to issues in the external environment that are often out of our control. Outlined below are many of these challenges, which we are reviewing to determine our next steps forward.
- Due to reductions in federal and local public funding for affordable housing, the Partnership has not been able to reach the ambitious goal of 2,650 new units due to several resource constraints.
  - Beginning in 2007, the U.S. faced a subprime mortgage crisis and subsequent financial recession, which led to a greater number of people experiencing housing instability with fewer local resources available to respond.
  - In FY 2010, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors reduced annual funding to Fund 30300 – the Penny for Affordable Housing – by 50 percent in order to balance the budget.
  - The 2013 federal budget sequestration led to fewer federal resources, especially those related to affordable housing. Reductions in the federal Housing Choice Voucher, Community Development Block Grant, and HOME Investment Partnerships programs have resulted in fewer housing opportunities for residents with extremely low incomes who are experiencing homelessness.
  - The level of funding raised through the Partnership’s fundraising efforts has also been limited.
- In addition to insufficient affordable housing, local homeless assistance programs have limited capacity to serve a challenging client population. Many local housing programs changed their policies to lower the barriers to entry and not make tenancy based on unnecessary conditions, such as sobriety. Providing homelessness prevention to every household that is at risk of homelessness would require far more resources and greater collaboration with mainstream systems of care in the county than what currently exists. Identifying who is most likely to become homeless and then preventing those households from entering homelessness is challenging. Communities across the country continue to struggle to identify and target these households in an effective way.
- More work is needed to integrate mainstream health and human services with homeless assistance to be more effective and efficient (e.g., employment resources).
- New data about racial equity indicates that there are troubling disparities and disproportionality. African Americans represent 9 percent of the general Fairfax-Falls Church population, but they represent 49 percent of the single adults and 64 percent of families residing in homeless shelters. The Partnership must explore what is creating the current situation and what can be done in the future to address the problem.
- Community perceptions of homelessness continue to be a challenge. Based on the results of a recent local survey, there is a general lack of understanding of homelessness – what causes it and what will solve it. Homelessness means not having a home, and without affordable housing we can’t end homelessness. The invisibility of persons experiencing homelessness causes some of the challenges – people are living in the woods, and families and youth are living overcrowded in apartments in some of our lowest income neighborhoods. Political will from the community is essential if future progress is to be made in preventing and ending homelessness.

## MOVING FORWARD:

# Next Steps

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Going forward, the Partnership will continue to work collaboratively to end homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church community. We will prioritize the challenges identified within this report to continue to find creative solutions to further the impact of our work.

Through our work during the past 10 years in the Partnership, we have seen the importance of focusing on various homeless subpopulations (e.g., those with mental health disorders, older adults, those experiencing domestic violence, and youth) in new and more effective ways. We are broadening our mission to encompass critical housing needs.

The Governing Board and our partners are focusing on key areas that will improve our efforts to reduce the numbers of households entering the homeless system and to increase the number of households going to permanent housing. These areas include housing, employment, advocacy/outreach, business engagement, Fairfax County policies, transportation, and equity. Increased funding from federal, state, and local governments is also necessary to continue our momentum. Private philanthropic resources also will be essential.

Affordable housing is crucial to our success in preventing and ending homelessness. This is evident both in the successes and challenges listed in this document. It is critical that safe and affordable housing for those who are homeless and are at risk of homelessness be included and prioritized in our Communitywide Housing Strategic Plan.

Advocacy on behalf of those who are homeless and so often forgotten is critical each and every day. Through our renewed effort and existing and new partners, we will continue to prevent and end homelessness in our community.



*Bailey's Crossroads Community Shelter and Supportive Housing at 5914 Seminary Road is scheduled to be completed at the end of 2019.*



<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless>  
<https://www.facebook.com/fairfaxhomeless>



To request this information in an alternate format, call the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness at 703-324-9492, TTY 711 or email [OPEHGeneralMail@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:OPEHGeneralMail@fairfaxcounty.gov).



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