



# STRATEGIC PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

City of Richmond, VA

January 9, 2020

## Who are the homeless?

The homeless are people in a housing crisis.

- They may be a mother with children who had to leave her home due to domestic violence, or a veteran who suffers from depression and PTSD.
- It might be a teen who ran away from home, or who has aged out of the foster care system and has nowhere to go.
- It may be an elderly man or woman that can no longer afford to live on the small fixed income they receive.
- It may be a person leaving the criminal justice system and is re-entering society but cannot find housing – not even public housing – that will accept them as a tenant.
- The chronically homeless often have addictions and/or mental health problems that make it difficult to a live “normal” life.
- Many homeless people do not consider themselves homeless just because they live an alternative life style from you and me.
- For some, camping out and living “off the grid” is how they want to live.
- Some homeless people have jobs, receive a monthly disability check and own a home.
- Sometimes a homeless person is someone who is just down on their luck.



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## During the first two years of the Stoney Administration the following results were achieved:

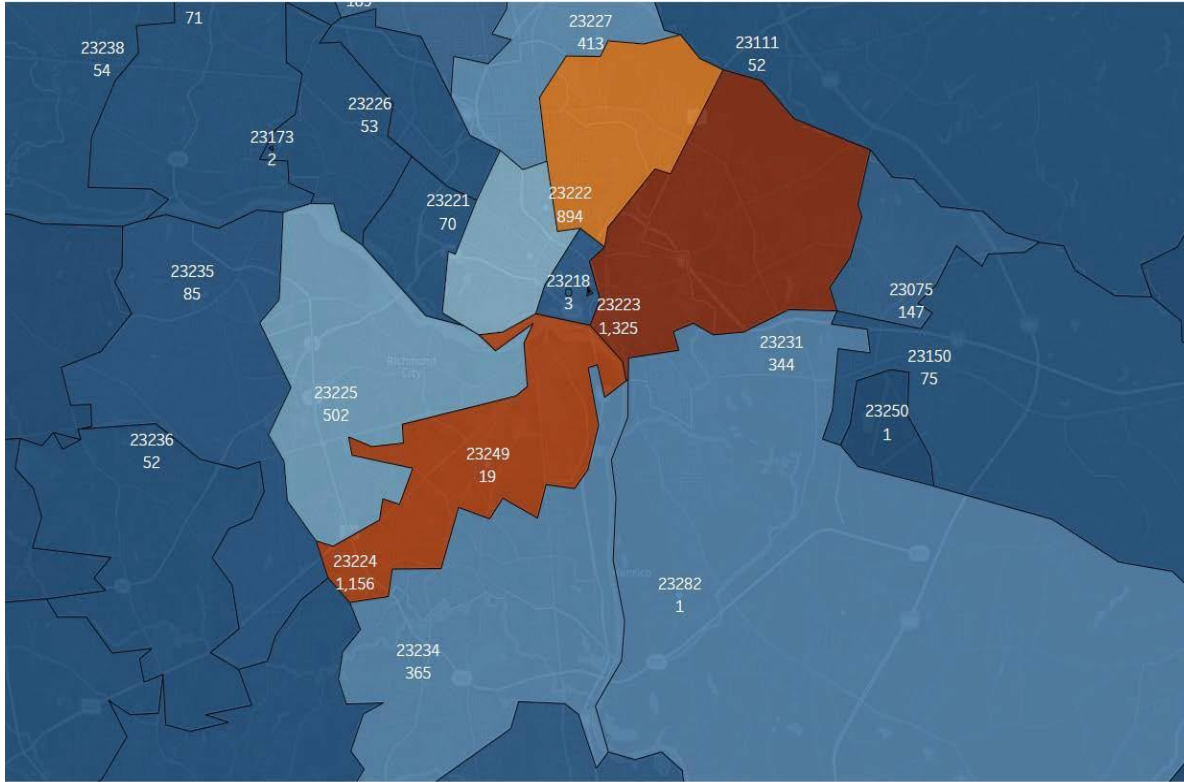
- A twenty-five percent (25%) decrease in the single day count of single adults living in shelters and sleeping outdoors;
- More than 60% of the 2,108 Homeless Hotline callers in 2018, who were within 3 days of losing their housing, were able to be diverted to a safe alternative to entering emergency shelter;
- Year-round emergency shelters are serving more adults who had previously been living outdoors; and
- In the last two years, approximately 115 units of permanent supportive housing for those with the highest barriers to housing stability and the longest histories of homelessness were developed.



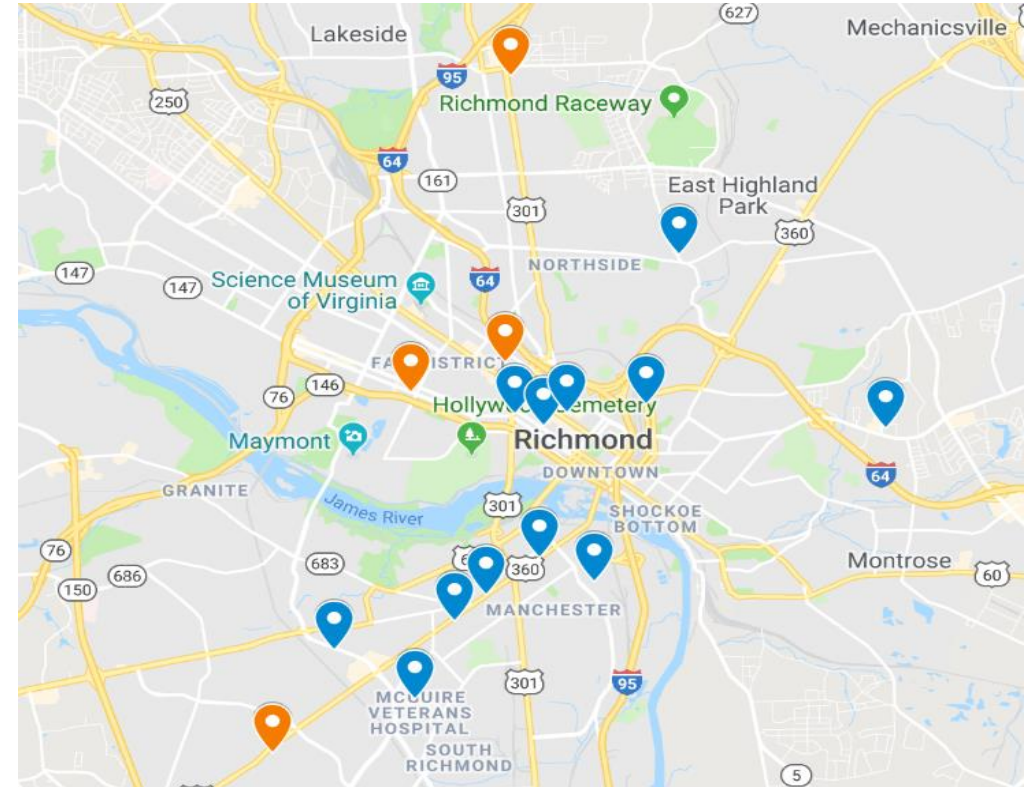
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More than 50% of the people experiencing homelessness report the City of Richmond as their last stable place of residence.



The 12 shelter sites that serve persons experiencing homelessness are shown in blue on the map below: the four permanent housing sites appear in orange.



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# Specific Data on Individual and Families Experiencing Homelessness in the City of Richmond

- 63.2% of adults are males, and 36.8% are females. Most are single, never married adults (70.2%). 29.8% have been in families, including those who are married, as well as those who are widowed, separated, or divorced.
- 13.8% have children living with them.
- The largest percentage report that they are African-American (64.8%), followed by White (22.2%). 16.1% indicated that they are Hispanic.
- The average age for adults now homeless who experienced homelessness as children or were in foster care is 42.1 years.
- 41.1% have just a high school education or GED. 26.8% attended some college or have a college degree.
- 15.8% are veterans.



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## Specific Data on Individual and Families Experiencing Homelessness in the City of Richmond

- 71.9% have been to jail and/or prison. Of those serving time in jail and/or prison, 58.1% reported having felony convictions, and 38.7% reported being homeless before incarceration.
- 36.2% have experienced domestic violence in their lifetime. Of those experiencing domestic violence, 50.0% had experienced it in the past year.
- 34.1% report having a problem with alcohol sometime in their lifetime, and 39.5% report having a problem with drugs sometime in their lifetime.
- 54.5% report having received counseling or treatment for a mental health problem sometime in their lifetime. Of these, 66.7% are currently being treated, and 66.7% are taking medication for mental health problems.
- 32.8% report having a long-term disability: 55.6% indicated that their disability was drug or alcohol abuse; 72.2% indicated that their disability was a mental illness; and 47.4% indicated that their disability was a physical disability.



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## Specific Data on Individual and Families Experiencing Homelessness in the City of Richmond

- 24.6% are employed. Of those who are employed, 28.6% do day labor or temporary work, 35.7% work part-time, and 35.7% work full-time.
- The median length of time respondents have lived in Greater Richmond is 2.1 years, and 27.5% have lived in the area for 10 or more years.
- The largest percentage of respondents (51.8%) reported having their last housing in Richmond. 7.1% last lived in Henrico, and 7.1% last lived in Chesterfield. 10.7% of respondents last lived elsewhere in Virginia, and 23.3% lived in other states.
- In the past three years, 35.1% had been homeless three or more times during this time period.
- More than half (56.0%) have been homeless for four months or less.



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## Today's Challenges:

- The City's CWOS does not provide food or supportive services.
- The City's CWOS does not accept persons under the age of 18, families with children or adults with pets, therefore these homeless people often go unsheltered.
- The City has several homeless supportive service and shelter providers however, some shelter providers have barriers to entry.
- Some persons who are homeless have mental health issues and choose not to live in a building, but would choose to live in a tent if one was provided.
- The number of homeless children in the City often go unreported because the PIT count only includes adults.



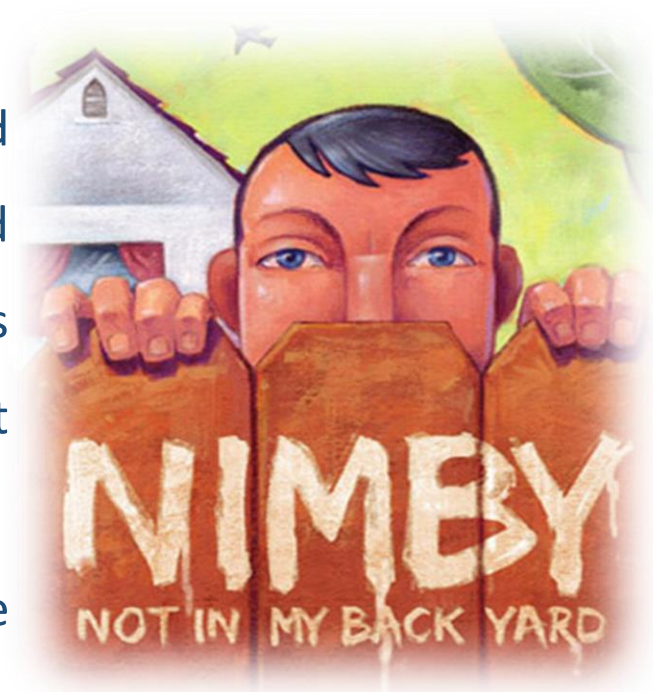
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## Today's Challenges:

- Locations for a single emergency shelter is an ongoing challenge due to the City's zoning requirements.
- NIMBYISM is everywhere. We cannot allow FEAR to stymie or derail needed housing solutions for people who are in a housing crisis. We need our elected leaders to help educate our community about the complexities of homelessness and how providing shelter and services is often the first step to permanent housing.
- There are not enough supportive housing units in the City to house the homeless. It is estimated that the City needs to provide at least 300 more supportive housing units and thousands of affordable housing units.



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## How We Can Help ?

The Departments of Housing and Community Development and Social Services staffs working with the City's local homeless organizations have identified **Seven Strategies** to reduce the number of individuals experiencing homelessness:

- **Provide greater financial support** to prevent individuals and families from being evicted from rental units or from losing their homes;
- **Create 150 emergency shelter beds** by partnering with existing nonprofit and faith-based organizations to offer short-term shelter with supportive services with low or no barriers to entry 365 days a year for anyone experiencing homelessness and eliminate the City-sponsored, seasonal CWOS;
- **Increase the number of supportive housing by 300 units** by providing financial assistance to the City's homeless service and housing providers;



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## How We Can Help ?

- **Increase financial support to the City's homeless providers** to ensure supportive services are available to every homeless person;
- **Provide additional supportive services** and housing for populations that are experiencing homelessness that are currently under served;
- **Promote connections to comprehensive services** including employment resources and behavioral health services for persons experiencing or at risk of becoming homeless; and
- **Educate our citizens on homelessness** and provide collaborative leadership to all City homeless service and housing providers to ensure homeless programs are coordinated and effective.



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# QUESTIONS?

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