



DATE: October 14, 2021
TO: Richmond City Council's Education and Human Services Committee Members
FROM: Sherrill Hampton, Director – Housing and Community Development Department 
CC: J. E. Lincoln Saunders, CAO
Sharon L. Ebert, DCAO for Economic and Community Development
Reginald E. Gordon, DCAO for Human Services
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Diane Wilmore, Homeless Services Liaison

RE: Update on Homeless Services

The Departments of Human Services (DHS) and Housing and Community Development (HCD) work collaboratively with the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care (GRCoC), which has the responsibility for homeless service delivery and with Homeward which is responsible for program and funding strategies in our region. The Commonwealth of Virginia is not a *Right to Shelter State* and while the GRCoC has over 12 service providers offering shelter, there is very limited shelter spaces within the system. The GRCoC provides shelter and services to persons about to become homeless and that are experiencing homelessness primarily located in the City of Richmond, the counties of Henrico, Chesterfield, Charles City, Hanover, New Kent, Goochland and Powhatan, and the Town of Ashland. As of the July Point in Time (PIT) count there were 699 persons unsheltered. This number is down from the January PIT count that indicated 834 persons were unsheltered in January 2021. Similar to last year, Pandemic Sheltering will be offered to persons that meet one or more of the three levels of eligibility:

- Families with children under the age of 12;
- Persons 65 years of age or older; and/or
- Persons with underlining health conditions.

Commonwealth Catholic Charities (CCC) will be operating the Non-Congregate Pandemic Sheltering system this year through March 2022 funded by a contract with Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD). The City's Inclement Weather Facility will open November 1, 2021 in the Quality Inn, located on Arthur Ashe Boulevard, where it was



located last year and will be operated this year by CCC. This location will be a temporary location while CCC renovates their facility located on Oliver Hill Way to create a 24/7 emergency shelter facility which should open in early 2022. Similar to last year, the Inclement Weather Facility will also offer showers, meals, case management and other related housing and support services to assist our citizens experiencing homelessness transition to permanent housing. Below is a summary of the number of persons served through the City’s federal funding programs in FY20-21 by program:

<i>Programs</i>	<i>Total Number of Persons Served (Unduplicated Count)/ Service Providers</i>
ESG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid Re-Housing • Emergency Shelter 	185 persons (YWCA/HomeAgain/HFF) 928 persons (HomeAgain/CARITAS/HFF)
ESG-CV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid Re-Housing • Emergency Housing • Temporary Emergency Shelter • Street Outreach • Homeless Prevention 	58 persons (DPHS/HFF/Salvation Army) 33 persons/7 new shelter beds created (SbyS) 1896 persons (HomeAgain/Homeward) 910 persons (DPHS/CCC) 86 persons (HFF/HOME, Inc./Salvation Army)
CDBG-CV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless Prevention • • Temporary Emergency Shelter • • Emergency Shelter • Rapid Re-Housing 	2004 persons (Central Virginia Legal Aid/CCC/HOME, Inc.) 2266 (Homeward-NCS/RUMI/Help Me Help You/Salvation Army) 14 persons (HomeAgain) 41 persons (Salvation Army/St. Joseph’s Villa)
CDBG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Outreach • Emergency Shelter • Rapid Re-Housing • Supportive Services 	87 persons (RBHA) 71 (RBHA/Dept. of Social Services) 67 (RBHA) 81 (RBHA)
HOPWA and HOPWA-CV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant-Based Rental Assistance • Facility-Based Assistance (Short-Term Transitional Facility) • Short-Term Rental Assistance • Permanent Housing Placement • Supportive Services 	45 households (CCC) 47 households (CCC/VSH) 119 households (CCC/Serenity) 57 households (CCC/Serenity) 307 households (CCC/VSH/Serenity)



The Homeless Connection Line:

The Homeless Connection Line (HCL) is the main coordinated entry point for homeless services provided by the GRCoC. The hours of operation have been expanded and the HCL now operates Monday through Friday from 8:00AM – 9:00PM and Saturday through Sunday from 1:00PM – 9:00PM.

Persons calling are connected to a Diversion Specialist who can assist households that are within three (3) days of losing their housing. If possible, given the caller's situation, the caller is provided with and connected to community resources outside of the GRCoC, which will divert them from entering the homeless service system and exit them to permanent affordable housing with minimal supports. If the client cannot be diverted from the homeless service system, then they are placed in a GRCoC partner organization program or waiting list depending on their needs, length of homeless crisis and the respective program's current capacity. The Homeless Connection Line is staffed by employees from HomeAgain, Housing Families First, ACTS, and Senior Connections. The Homeless Connection Line number is 804-972-0813.

Updates from the Homeless Services Liaison:

The following items are updates from Ms. Diane Wilmore, our Homeless Services Liaison:

- The City has established a Homelessness Services webpage: <https://www.rva.gov/human-services/homeless-services>
- Ms. Wilmore is serving on the Strategic Planning Team for the new Resource Center to be located at City Hall.
- Ms. Wilmore is finalizing the Draft Encampment Protocol and anticipates its completion by mid-November 2021. The purpose of the Encampment Protocol is to establish a coordinated and consistent procedure for responding to homeless encampments that recognize the vulnerability and limited options of those experiencing homelessness and the risks posed by encampments.

The Homeless Services Liaison will act as the central point of contact, coordinate with other applicable parties and establish the timeline for encampment removal. It is critical that this timeline give people advance notice whenever possible (where risks do not demand immediate removal) and is clearly and consistently communicated to all parties. If risks increase significantly, expedited removal may be required.

The Department of Human Services will serve as the lead agency responsible for overseeing, tracking and coordinating the implementation of the Protocol. The department will also maintain partnerships with other agencies and organizations to provide outreach services to individuals who are experiencing homelessness at identified sites.



Recommendations:

The following are recommendations from Ms. Wilmore and are based on her work in the field:

- Increase the Homeless Connection Line to 24-hour access.
- Increase phone charging stations in all libraries and community centers.
- Enhance protocols and coordinate with Animal Control for pet care for our residents that are in transition.
- Increase outreach team capacity and the number of hours of service by increasing the number mental health workers. (DSS currently has only one (1) after hours outreach worker.)

Homelessness Advisory Council:

See **Attachment A** for an update on the earlier recommendations from the Homelessness Advisory Council.

ATTACHMENT A

City of Richmond's Homelessness Advisory Council: Update on Recommendations

Recommendations	Policy/ Program/ Funding recommendations	Status Update
Establish a walk-in Community Resource Center	Secure location in City Hall	The City held a tour of the former Padow's site at City Hall on 8/11.
	Staffing by Human Services Navigators	We have received a design plan for the Resource Center and will be convening a design team in October
	Integrate with other services sectors	
	Develop referral partners	
Expansion of Affordable Housing Options	Support existing homeless service providers	Grants provided in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund
	Increase funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund	\$2.9 million included in the Mayor's proposed budget
	Prioritize funding for Permanent Supportive Housing and other solutions targeting incomes below 30% AMI	Significant grants for Virginia Supportive Housing from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to support Permanent Supportive Housing
	Convene or join an Affordable Housing Cabinet	
Highlight the role of the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care (GRCoC)	Continue to support community education on the GRCoC, including accountability, metrics, and funding	The GRCoC has hosted multiple webinars on public funding to address homelessness and public Coordinated Entry System training
	Develop an MOU between the City and the GRCoC to align goals and expectations	In process; initial meeting held May 10, 2021
	Provide input on the needs for emergency shelter	The GRCoC's Seasonal Shelter Task Force developed recommendations that were endorsed by the CoC Board and shared with the City's Department of Housing and Community Development
Establish a Consumer Advisory Council	Establish a Consumer Advisory Council to provide input and feedback on homeless assistance strategies and affordable housing development	The first Consumer Advisory Council was held on September 15

Recommendations	Policy/ Program/ Funding recommendations	Status Update
Establish a Mentorship Program	Develop formal and informal ways to provide support and encouragement to people currently experiencing homelessness	First mentorship sessions have been held and are continuing
Work with the faith community to share updates	Provide a printed and digital guide to assist people in accessing resources	Homeward has updated the "Street Sheet" and the most recent version can be found here: https://www.homewardva.org/help
Maintain engagement of HAC members		HAC members have been invited to participate in ongoing learning opportunities.
Continue the expanded hours of the HCL	Secure funding to maintain the expanded capacity of the HCL that allows for all calls to be answered and/or returned on the same day	Homeward amended a CARES Act grant to secure funding for 3 months of expanded HCL hours and staffing
Establish additional GRCoC workgroups to expand access to supportive services	Connections to NA/ AA and other resources for recovery	Homeward contracted a peer recovery specialist to bring recovery resources to pandemic response shelters
	Support for Families and Children	Homeward has begun preliminary planning and provider engagement on reconvening the GRCoC Child and Family Work Group. Homeward's newly-hired Special Projects Manager will focus on this initiative
	Engaging communities of faith and faith-based organizations in filling gaps in homelessness and human services	
	Supporting youth and young adults who are experiencing housing instability or are at risk for housing instability	Homeward hired a Special Projects Manager who led the CoC's application efforts for HUD's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program funding opportunity. This initiative included significant youth and young adult engagement and partnership development. Ongoing efforts will establish a Youth Action Board as a permanent standing CoC committee
Work with the local faith community to establish a mechanism to share pertinent	The information for congregations would be maintained by the Navigators in the Resource Center	

Recommendations	Policy/ Program/ Funding recommendations	Status Update
<p>updates, needs and a step by step process to help individuals who turn to them for assistance during a housing crisis</p>		