



The District's Dime

Going Beyond the Budget Book

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More Funding Needed for Homeless Individuals Despite Significant Budget Investments

By Kate Coventry

The proposed District budget includes substantial investments to help homeless individuals, but additional funding is needed to put the District on track to end long-term homelessness by 2020, the goal of the [new Interagency Council on Homelessness \(ICH\) Strategic Plan](#).

Homelessness is a problem that goes deeper than not having a place to stay. People who don't know where they're going to spend the night struggle to hold down jobs and regularly receive needed services like counseling or medical treatment.

The District budget proposed for fiscal year (FY) 2016, which starts October 1, significantly increases funding to help individuals move out of shelters and into their own homes, but falls short of the annual targets included in the recently passed ICH Strategic Plan. This means that individuals will spend more time in shelters than they need to, making it difficult for them to rebuild their lives.

With an additional investment of just over \$5 million, the DC Council can help nearly 400 additional residents move out of shelter and put the District on a path to end long-term homelessness.

The proposed budget includes funds to provide Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) to 250 chronically homeless individuals. These are residents who have been homeless for a long time and have a significant disabling condition that makes it difficult for them to stay in housing without support. PSH combines long-term affordable housing and case management, like counseling and connecting folks with community services. This is a significant expansion but falls short of the Strategic Plan target of serving 365 individuals. **An additional \$1.8 million is needed to fill this gap.**

The budget also includes funds for Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) for 455 individuals. RRH helps individuals find housing and employment and helps them pay rent for a period of time, generally up to 12 months. The Strategic Plan projects that more than 2,500 individuals will need RRH next year, but it would not be possible for the city to expand the program's capacity that much even if all the needed funding were available. **But with an additional \$1 million**, the program can expand to its highest possible capacity for FY 2016 and help an additional 100 individuals move out of shelter.

Finally, the budget combines local funds with federally funded vouchers to help 150 individuals through Targeted Affordable Housing (TAH). TAH is a new initiative that provides long-term

HOMELESS SERVICES



affordable housing with no or minimal support services. The program will serve residents who need help paying rent after their short-term RRH rental subsidy ends and PSH residents who reach a point of no longer needing the intensive services provided by PSH but still need help paying their rent. ***To meet the Strategic Plan target, an extra \$2.3 million is needed to house 188 individuals.***

Kate Coventry is a DCFPI Policy Analyst and voting member of the Interagency Council on Homelessness.