

Homelessness: Prevent and End Homelessness, and Improve Conditions

By Kate Coventry

Tackle Chronic Homelessness

Many DC residents have been homeless for years and suffer from life-threatening health conditions and/or severe mental illness. It is difficult to manage these conditions while homeless—residents often die from diseases that could be managed or prevented if they had homes. **The District should invest \$30.8 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 to make significant progress towards the goal of ending chronic homelessness.**

- **\$ 19.6 million for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for 820 individuals:** Providing affordable housing coupled with intensive case management services, PSH helps people stay in housing and improves their health, and saves a substantial amount of money as a result.
- **\$6.9 million to provide Targeted Affordable Housing (TAH) for 400 residents:** TAH serves individuals who no longer need PSH services but still need affordable housing. This would open up expensive PSH slots for other homeless individuals. TAH also serves individuals in Rapid Re-Housing who still need help affording housing when the short-term RRH aid ends.
- **\$4.3 million in Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) for 400 residents:** Some chronically homeless residents could be successful in Rapid Re-Housing, which provides four to twelve months of rental assistance and case management.

Improve Conditions in Shelters for Individuals

As reported in the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) Strategic Plan, the District's very large shelters are "unacceptable" and "simply too large to provide appropriate programming in a safe, healthy environment for clients." The Plan calls for smaller replacement shelters that serve between 80 and 100 adults. These shelters will offer programming that can be tailored to meet clients' needs and clients will be able to more readily access services and support networks in the community." **The District should invest \$8 million to build the first replacement shelter, and \$1 million for conditions improvements at existing shelters.**

Prevent Individuals from Becoming Homeless

DC's current homelessness prevention program is limited to families. **DCFPI and partners propose investing \$2 million to expand this homelessness prevention program to individuals at imminent risk of becoming homeless, because they are either facing eviction or are doubled up with friends and family.** This program will provide mediation, flexible financial assistance, case management and connection to community resources like Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) employment services, and food/clothing banks. The family program has prevented homelessness for 92 percent of participating families.

Help Survivors of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness and domestic violence service providers frequently must turn survivors away because of lack of capacity. **With \$5.5 million, 132 families fleeing domestic violence can access emergency shelter and 67 survivors can access transitional housing, with supportive services.**

Tackle Family Homelessness

Many DC families are struggling with homelessness. The District should increase funding for **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** and **Targeted Affordable Housing (TAH)** to help families who need long term affordable housing to avoid a return to homelessness. Additionally, DC needs to invest in more [affordable housing](#) for families to reduce the number of families experiencing homelessness and housing instability.

Fully Fund Year Two of *Solid Foundations DC*, the Comprehensive Plan to End Youth Homelessness

Funding will provide more youth with emergency shelter, transitional housing, Rapid Re-Housing, and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). It will also provide services for youth and their family, or other significant adults who are willing to provide a home for the youth. Finally, it will allow the District to create a homelessness prevention program targeted to youth. Approximately 167 additional youth will be served by this funding.

Fund Two Public Restrooms and Launch Business Incentive Program

DC has only three public restrooms that are open 24 hours. This leaves many residents, particularly residents experiencing homelessness, with no place to go. **The District should invest \$600,000 to ensure that public restrooms are available to residents.** With \$400,000 the District can support two 24-hour standalone public restrooms in high traffic neighborhoods that currently lack them. With \$200,000 the District can offer incentives to businesses to open their bathrooms to the public.