

CHARLES COUNTY'S LOCAL PLAN TO PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS

AUGUST 2016

DEVELOPED BY THE CHARLES COUNTY HOMELESS AND EMERGENCY SHELTER COMMITTEE (CCHESC)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Charles County, Maryland is one of the fastest growing counties in the Southern Maryland region, which is comprised of Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties. Its population rate has an estimate of 156,118 individuals in year 2015, a growth from year 2010 of 6.5 percent (146,551). In 2014, the median household income has grown significantly, with a median of \$91,910, twenty-four percent more than the state's average of \$74,149, and second highest in Southern Maryland.¹

While there is a growing expansion on economic development initiatives, there is also a growing divide of those households who are unable to afford the luxury of living in the same county in which they work. Based upon the U.S. Census, there are 7.2 percent of individuals that live at or below the poverty rate in the County in year 2010. These households may already be those that are homeless, or at imminent risk of homelessness.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as part of its federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, has focused on the Housing First philosophy. Based upon the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), Housing First is "a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing people experiencing homelessness with permanent housing as quickly as possible – and then providing voluntary supportive services as needed. This approach prioritizes client choice in both housing selection and in service participation. Housing First programs share critical elements:

- A focus on helping individuals and families access and sustain permanent rental housing as quickly as possible;
- A variety of services delivered to promote housing stability and individual well-being on an as-needed and entirely voluntary basis; and
- A standard lease agreement to housing – as opposed to mandated therapy or services compliance.

While all Housing First programs share these elements, program models vary significantly depending upon the population served. For people who have experienced chronic

¹ 2014 American Fact Finder, Selected Economic Characteristics, <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/IPE120214/24,24017,00>

homelessness, long-term services and support may be needed. For most people experiencing homelessness, however, such long-term services are not necessary. The vast majority of homeless individuals and families fall into homelessness after a housing or personal crisis. For these households, the Housing First approach provides them with short-term assistance to find permanent housing quickly and without conditions. In turn, such households often require only brief, if any, support or assistance to achieve housing stability and individual well-being.”²

Charles County is part of the Southern Maryland region’s Point-in-Time (PIT) annual count of the homeless population. This count is mandated by HUD, and occurs every last Wednesday of the month in January. It provides a snapshot of the number of homeless individuals in our community, to include those that are in emergency shelters, transitional homes, and domestic violence safe houses. This snapshot will be the primary basis for our needs analysis of the services currently offered and what housing services needs to be fulfilled. This year’s PIT shows that Charles County has the highest number of homeless individuals in the region, and the least amount of beds available to support those persons, based upon HUD’s definition of homelessness. This plan will share how we can work in a collaborative manner over the next three years to address this gap in resources and to increase the resources needed to support this vulnerable population. The CCHESC’s goals for this plan aligns with the Calvert-Charles-St. Mary’s Continuum of Care’s plan, which includes the following:

- 1. Provide and promote collaborative leadership at all levels of government and across all sectors to inspire and energize**
- 2. Promote a coordinated assessment and service delivery system that will ensure anyone in need can effectively and efficiently connect to services that meet basic needs and support housing stability.**
- 3. Fully implement homeless management information system (HMIS).**
- 4. Develop sustainable resources to support our plan to prevent and end homelessness and minimize the trauma and dislocation that homelessness causes to individuals, families, and communities.**
- 5. Increase and maintain the supply of access to permanent, accessible and affordable housing.**

Our plan is to provide relevant data regarding those that are homeless in our community, and to also provide best practice solutions to assist in ending homelessness, and also to support those households who may not be at the affordability rate to successfully sustain to maintain their ability to reside in the county in which they choose.

² National Alliance to End Homelessness, http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/housing_first.

OVERVIEW OF HOMELESS AND HOUSING SERVICES IN CHARLES COUNTY

Charles County is known for its tight-knit community of agencies that work collaboratively to serve those in need. Multiple community agencies provide an array of holistic services to serve this population, including food, clothing, laundry, transportation, housing, and case management services, on a 24/7 basis. There are a few agencies whose primary mission focuses on this population.

Charles County Department of Social Services (CCDSS): This state agency serves as a conduit of federal, state, and local resources in the community. They are the single point of access, connecting persons who request services for housing to community partners. CCDSS provides the following services: benefit enrollment for SNAP food stamps, medical assistance, and Temporary Cash Assistance for families with dependents; Foster Care and Adoption programs; In-Home Services to avoid foster care services. While CCDSS does not provide direct shelter beds, they do however assist in emergency situations with hotel stays and homeless prevention and re-housing activities, to include first month's rent, eviction prevention, and other gap-filling needs, many times in partnership with community agencies. They also serve as a referral source to other resources. CCDSS also operates an emergency on-call hotline in collaboration with the Charles County Sheriff's Office to assist those that are deemed homeless during non-business hours. CCDSS can also provide homeless certification, by assisting persons with obtaining vital records documentation in partnership with LifeStyles. Total emergency walk-ins seen between July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016 was 1,673. Of those, 931 people were seeking housing services including homeless services or homeless prevention. The remaining walk-in customers sought emergency services such as: utility cut-off prevention, burial assistance, life-saving prescription assistance, domestic violence assistance, CPS or APS reports.

Charles County Government: Department of Community Services' Housing Authority (Housing Authority): The Housing Authority provides direct and referral housing programs to assist low- to moderate-income families. Programs include

- Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8): provides monthly assistance to families that ensure the rental housing is affordable based upon their income. There are 750 vouchers available and 4,200 households on the waiting list.
- Rental Allowance Program (RAP): this program provides fixed monthly rental subsidies for no more than 12 months for persons residing in local emergency shelter or transitional homes.
- State Special Loans: This program assists low-income homeowners in obtaining indoor plumbing and potable water for their principal residence.
- Homeownership Programs: The Settlement Expense Loan Program (SELP) provides up to \$6,000 in settlement assistance to eligible county residents purchasing a home in Charles County. The Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development also

has programs supporting homeownership and information about DHCD programs can be found at dhcd.maryland.gov

LifeStyles of Maryland Foundation, Inc. (LifeStyles): This nonprofit organization has been in existence for 19 years focusing on the homeless and at-risk population. They operate the emergency hypothermia shelter program, Safe Nights, which provides shelter for individuals and families by rotating to various church host sites throughout the county on a weekly basis from October 1st through April 15th of each year. Safe Nights typically serves 30 individuals per night, but has gone as high as 52 individuals because of the need due to the severe weather.

There are also three transitional homes:

- Robert J. Fuller Transitional House for Men: This 20-bed facility provides shelter for Charles County homeless male residents, which is comprised of 4 emergency and 16 transitional beds. In calendar year 2015, we served 43 participants. This property is owned by Charles County Government/Housing Authority, and is contracted out to LifeStyles for a five-year period.
- Martha's Place: This 5-bed facility provides emergency and transitional housing for women and children, of which 1 is an emergency bed and the other 5 are transitional beds. This house is a partnership with the Charles County Housing Authority. In 2015, it served 10 households, comprised of 14 individuals.
- Gayle's House: This 8-bed facility is designated as a safe house for domestic violence survivors from Charles and St. Mary's Counties. This 2-bed emergency, and 6-bed transitional bed home is for women and children. In 2015, it served 21 households, comprised of 24 individuals.

LifeStyles also provides a homeless services center, providing a one-stop-shop for phone and mail access, laundry, showers, lunches, case management and other supportive services. Persons can come in on a daily weekday to receive services. Those that are staying in encampments can also receive supplies that they may need during that time, i.e., propane, tent, air mattress, etc. In 2015, LifeStyles assisted 1,222 homeless households comprised of 2,718 individuals with 4,994 services, of which 850 included children. Those that were deemed homeless includes those that are without permanent residence, to include "couch surfers," persons transferring between family and friends on a consistent basis. The organization also provides financial assistance for homeless prevention and rapid re-housing services to assist those that are about to be homeless to help maintain their housing, and to assist those that are homeless that are either participating in an emergency shelter, transitional home, safe house, or those that are literally homeless with security deposits, first month's rent, moving costs and furniture expenses. Staff are available to assist with housing search and placement, to include "matching" private landlords with potential tenants. Follow-up is conducted to ensure persons maintain the ability to sustain in their housing. Staff conduct street outreach on a weekly basis,

encountering those who are staying in tent encampments, vehicles, parking lots, and providing them with resources and information to assist them in gaining more permanent housing.

Catholic Charities: This nonprofit organization operates the regional 41-bed women's and children's shelter, Angel's Watch, which also provides shelter for domestic violence victims. All referrals must come through the local Departments of Social Services. This facility holds a capacity of 41 beds. This facility is Tri-County, and due to insufficient number of beds, is oftentimes at capacity. In calendar year 2015, they turned away 52 referrals for shelter which comprised 25 single-member households and 27 families (27 adults with a total of 43 children). They served 95 individuals in 2015, to include 43 adults and 52 children. They also offer two additional programs:

- Fortitude Housing: Provides permanent supportive housing (PSH) for individuals with disabilities. This program is funded by HUD and serves a maximum of 11 individuals.
- St. Sebastian's Housing: Also provides PSH for 10 families consisting of 15 adults and 20 children.

Charles County Health Department's Core Services Agency (CSA): This government agency provides Continuum of Care housing, which is PSH for persons who are chronically homeless with a severe disability. This program provides housing for 79 individuals. In addition, they also oversee the PATH vendor contract, which was formerly Catholic Charities and now is Southern Maryland Community Network (SMCN). They are contracted by CSA to provide homeless outreach to assist persons in receiving behavioral health services and targeted case management (TCM). SMCN's TCM program served 223 individuals in year 2015. Of those, 41 (18%) were homeless at some point during the year, ranging from living in encampments to couch surfing. Their current caseload is 23% homeless and also had 33 households being served in subsidized housing programs.

Charles County Public Schools: This entity is a vital partner in providing homeless services to school-age children. At the end of the 2015 – 2016 school year, there were 521 homeless children. Because of the McKinney-Vento Act, the school system is required to assist homeless students in receiving a quality education as close to their home school as possible. This includes providing students that are homeless with transportation services, clothing, school supplies, tutoring and educational enrichment services.

In 2014, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was executed between the Charles County Commissioners, Department of Emergency Service, CCDSS, Health Department, LifeStyles, and the Charles County Sheriff's Office on an emergency plan to assist the vulnerable

population with shelter during severe weather year-round, to include extreme cold, heat, or excessive rainfall. This plan discusses such processes for warming/cooling stations when temperatures fall below 32 degrees or above 100 degrees and extreme weather sheltering. A warming/cooling center is a public building where the public may attend that allow vulnerable populations to stay warm or cool during normal business hours. This plan also outlines the coordination that is to occur amongst partner agencies to provide adequate shelter for persons during the cases of extreme weather.

In 2016, Charles County service providers established an Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) that reviews individual cases of households that were homeless or at-risk of homelessness to ensure that all resources available were provided to those families to assist with their household sustainability. These meetings are held on a monthly basis and are hosted by CCDSS. All partners listed are active members of the IDT. All organizations are active members of the regional Continuum of Care. There are other programs that provide emergency and transitional housing on a smaller scale, either as a community or faith-based entity.

DATA ANALYSIS

The Point-in-Time (PIT) is one of the most accepted methods of capturing the number of homeless individuals in a community. The PIT entails counting all persons on that day who are participating in any of the housing programs, along with conducting street outreach. The count is based upon HUD's definition of homelessness, which states there are four categories of homelessness:

1. People who are living in a place not meant for human habitation, in emergency shelter, in transitional housing, or are exiting an institution where they temporarily resided. The only significant change from existing practice is that people will be considered homeless if they are exiting an institution where they resided for up to 90 days (it was previously 30 days), and were in shelter or a place not meant for human habitation immediately prior to entering that institution.
2. People who are losing their primary nighttime residence, which may include a motel or hotel or a doubled up situation, within 14 days and lack resources or support networks to remain in housing.
3. Families with children or unaccompanied youth who are unstably housed and likely to continue in that state. This is a new category of homelessness, and it applies to families with children or unaccompanied youth who have not had a lease or ownership interest in a housing unit in the last 60 or more days, have had two or more moves in the last 60 days, and who are likely to continue to be unstably housed because of disability or multiple barriers to employment.

4. People who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, have no other residence, and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

In Charles County, we strive to conduct street outreach for a 12-hour period, from 12 noon to midnight. It entails involving more than 100 trained volunteers and staff who canvass the county in teams, connecting with persons that may be homeless. It can include visiting tent encampments, parking lots where homeless persons may be staying, visiting local bookstores, libraries, and convenience stores where homeless may frequent. While one of the goals is to conduct a survey with each of them to gain their demographic information, we also distribute much-needed items to them, i.e., grocery or gas gift cards, food, winter clothing items, toiletry items, etc. We also make persons aware of programs that exist to help, and for those that want additional support, we ensure they receive shelter that night and connect them with resources.

Here is a synopsis of the PIT results for year 2016, that is based upon persons that fit into one of the above categories. It does not include persons that are “couch surfers,” those that are precariously housed by traveling between various houses to maintain some shelter.

CATEGORY	SHELTERED INDIVIDUALS			UNSHELTERED INDIVIDUALS	CHARLES TOTAL	SOUTHERN MARYLAND TOTAL	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Safe Haven				
Total Number of Individuals	94	42	0	216	352	464	75.8%
Total Number of Households	78	30	0	155	263	330	79.6%
Total Number of Children (under age 18)	20	12	0	66	98	107	91.6%
Total Number of Unaccompanied Youth (up to age 24)	6	1	0	21	28	34	82.3%
Total Number of Veterans	3	2	0	10	15	26	57.7%
Total Number of Chronically Homeless Individuals	14	0	0	21	35	73	47.9%

STRATEGIC GOALS 2016 – 2018

Below are goals that have been outlined that align with the federal and regional plans on ending and preventing homelessness.

Goal #1: Provide and promote collaborative leadership at all levels of government and across all sectors to inspire and energize.

Our Objectives:

1. *Align with the federal homelessness prevention plan*

Rationale: The federal plan's emphasis on prevention is one that we too would like to adopt. The solution to homelessness will only come if we can stop it from happening before people end up alone with nowhere to go. The emphasis on relationships and connections would also allow for agencies and nonprofits to work in a way to collaboratively be in communication with government officials so that best practices can be shared and implemented effectively and in a manner that serves to better reach the members in the community in need.

Proposed course of action: Perhaps work to re-word the language of this particular Goal. For example: "Foster a community with collaborative leadership that inspires a commitment to employ best practices to work towards the prevention and ending of homelessness."

2. *Best practices need to be implemented in the areas of housing, education, and Behavioral Health.*

Rationale: In order to best address the various needs of our community, it is imperative that we address the ways that these areas interact in the lives of those we strive to serve.

Proposed Course of Action: Collaboration between the Public Schools, behavioral health clinics and professionals, and the various government and private organizations that seek to provide shelter for our community persons.

3. *Re-introduce CCHESC to commissioners; end of year report of local agency achievements; needs analysis.*

Rationale: Having a Committee to speak on behalf of those who actively serve and are working to provide care and housing in our community would allow for visibility of the pressing issues concerning housing in this area. Having a local end of year report would show not only our county commissioners but also the state and federal governments the scale and the amount of work that is done in this county to provide the needs for our homeless and at risk persons. Having a needs analysis to follow that would allow for an increase in conversation and theoretically legislation so that progress can be made to address the true needs of the community.

Proposed course of action: Propose and re-instate the Housing & Emergency Shelter Committee. Compile an end of year analysis from Organizations such as United Way, Core, Lifestyles, Inc., and Charles County Public Schools for Homeless students. This would provide both our county and state governments a clear picture of what is being done in this COC but also in this County

specifically. A needs analysis would be done in addition to the report to create an accurate and easy to understand picture of what gaps are still present in this community.

4. *Media Campaign “Faces of homelessness”*

Rationale: The average person in our community has no idea what factors actually contribute to a person or a family becoming or staying homeless. In an effort to educate our community about the true needs and circumstances of our at risk and homeless community members, a media campaign would make sure that the truth would spark the conversation rather than stigma, stereotypes, and unintentionally ignorant assumptions. Putting true stories behind assumptions could transform the way the community approaches and interacts with those homeless and at risk persons.

Course of Action: The current CCHESC Co-chair will create this campaign. We would also try and put our annual reports on County Websites, and make as much information not only available but also accessible for the average Charles county citizen. Information would be provided by homeless service providers.

5. *Encourage continued non-traditional involvement*

Rationale: The University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center and Detention Center sees and work to serve a number of our homeless citizens. Because they work directly with them, collaboration would be invaluable so we can figure out how to best serve and address the needs of those who are in need.

Course of Action: Reach out to agency Officials and workers, attend meetings, and actively seek collaboration. This would include their continuous involvement on the CCHESC, Continuum of Care, Interdisciplinary Team meetings, and other activities that support homeless and housing services.

6. *Review and compile current needs assessments*

Rationale: A number of agencies have done needs assessments at different times for different purposes; these reports should be gathered and gleaned to determine current status this will allow us to move forward. We cannot know how to move forward until we know where we need to go.

Course of Action: Compile said needs assessments, update them, and work to create a comprehensive look at the needs of this community. This will provide guidance for future steps and future progress.

Goal #2 Promote a coordinated assessment and service delivery system that will ensure anyone in need can effectively and efficiently connect to services that meet basic needs and support housing stability.

Our Objectives:

1. Behavioral Health

Rationale: A number of members in our homeless and at risk community battle mental health issues. Culturally, our community is still uncomfortable with discussions regarding mental health. However, that doesn't mean that people still do not need or want treatment.

Course of Action: Greater Baden, currently the only Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in Southern Maryland, now has a part time social worker to provide therapy. Southern Maryland Community Network now contracts to implement Pathways to Assist Persons Transitioning from Homelessness (PATH), particularly those persons that have been diagnosed with a mental illness. This program links homeless individuals to available behavioral health services and conducting street outreach. LifeStyles has two therapists on Tuesdays 9:30-4pm and Wednesdays 9:30-2pm. The CCHESC will encourage conversations around mental health to reassure people to seek treatment and health.

2. Develop better coordination of resource sharing

Rationale: Some organizations are developing new tools for specific needs, and other organizations could benefit from said changes and developments. If we can coordinate a way to communicate the developments and new resources to one another, the increase in needs that can be met would be exponential.

Course of Action: Potentially create a portal between HMIS to Charity Tracker. Create a means of updates and regular communication between agencies and organizations (Like a newsletter or use of social media). This will include gaining the appropriate approvals from agency official to maintain HIPAA compliance for all agencies involved.

Goal #3 Fully implement homeless management information system (HMIS).

Our Objectives:

1. Identify local Users and ensure understanding of usage

Rationale: Currently not everyone is using HMIS or if they are, they are not all using in the same way or fully and effectively. If a comprehensive list of all users could be created, then users would better be able to communicate and collaborate with each other indirectly and directly. If users are not using HMIS correctly or fully, then the usefulness of the program as a whole is lessened. The more effectively it is used, the better it can be used.

Course of Action: Create a list of all the agencies and organizations in Southern Maryland that are currently and actively using HMIS. Create and organize instruction sessions or easily distributed

instructions so that everyone can be on the same page with how to effectively use HMIS.

2. Charles County Public Schools' (CCPS) Incorporation

Rationale: Clients and children who are not in HMIS because they were taken in through the school system may not be on the radar of other agencies that can provide aid and assistance. By everyone using the same system tracking aid becomes a lot more precise, and it benefits the children.

Course of Action: Appeal to CCPS or find out if their system feeds HMIS so that everyone can all be in the same system in the same place.

3. Review MOU to Develop "No Wrong Door" Process

Rationale: Having a no wrong door process would allow for people to end up in the system no matter how they come to it so that they might receive the care they need more immediately than if they needed a referral from DSS. Transportation limitations create situations where individuals may not be able to jump through all the hoops in the right order. People are embarrassed at their situations, and sometimes circumstances change in a moment. The flexibility of having a "no wrong door" process would still get everyone in the system, only their needs would be served much more immediately. Information would still be provided to DSS to ensure proper documentation into HMIS.

Course of Action: Draft and propose a No Wrong Door Process.

Goal #4 Develop sustainable resources to support our plan to end homelessness and minimize the trauma and dislocation that homelessness causes to individuals, families, and communities.

Our Objectives

1. Increase homeless prevention programs

Rationale: A key to ending homelessness is to stop it before it starts. If we as a community are really going to commit ourselves to ending homelessness then it is imperative that we emphasize and work on prevention.

Course of Action: Increase systems in place to identify at risk persons to provide for them as they need. Creating more affordable housing opportunities, and informing the county commissioners as well as the state of Maryland about the desperate need for said housing opportunities.

2. CoC incorporation

Rationale: The needs of the CoC are varied. If we can incorporate our resources on local levels on a broader spectrum, then we can also gain and contribute to each other. In other words, working as an entity or as a whole region will allow for adequate care to be provided across Southern Maryland.

Course of Action: Seek and create opportunities for collaboration between the three counties and their governments so that resources may be developed and distributed in a way the benefits the

most people in need.

3. *Seek non-government Funding:*

Rationale: Not having government funding allows for more freedom and innovation in creating solutions to homelessness. The “Not in my backyard” mentality is lessened when people do not feel like their tax dollars are going to projects that they may be hesitant about. Community funding usually leads to community support. When people willingly financially support something they are more inclined to learn about the impacts and be supportive of progress and change.

Course of Action: Continue to fundraise, and accept donations as a means to fund services, particularly experimental and developing projects.

4. *Find out the cost to increase shelter opportunities*

Rationale: There is a very real and a very clear need for a variety of housing programs in our CoC. We need emergency housing shelters, we need domestic violence safe housing, and we need to increase our permanent supportive housing. We also need to consider housing for sex offenders and returning citizens (those recently released from incarceration). Not providing them with sufficient housing makes it more challenging for those sub-populations to become successful in society.

Course of Action: Investigate costs, create plans and proposals to create new shelters and places for people in a variety of different circumstances that require immediate assistance.

Goal #5 Increase and maintain the supply of access to permanent, accessible and affordable housing.

Our Objectives

1. *Fill in the Gaps: family shelter. Drop-in shelter, DV safe housing beds, transitional housing.*

Rationale: Our community has a great variety of different needs. If we cannot get people into safe houses, shelters, or even transitional housing, then they won't be able to get into affordable housing. There is a process that must occur to get everyone to where they want to be. In order to do this most effectively we must create and increase the temporary housing situations first so that then we can move to more permanent solutions.

Course of Action: Draft plans and fund raise to implore the County to help address these serious gaps in the care offered in this region.

2. *Address needs of different populations (Specifically needs of those in encampments)*

Rationale: The needs of people living in encampments, or living on someone's sofa are very different from the needs of the individual sleeping under the overhang and lifestyles. There is no one-size fits all when it comes to addressing homelessness. If we continue to blanket treat an issue that is so idiosyncratic, solutions will continue to evade us.

Course of Action: Create more comprehensive plans for addressing the individual needs of our sub

communities. Draft, propose, and create policies that allow for continuous review and evolution, as opposed to a blanket policy that will leave people behind or out altogether.

3. Increase PSH beds (*Permanent Supportive Housing*)

Rationale: If we are going to live into our housing centric ideology, we must create environments for people to thrive. Permanent supportive housing creates such environments. This critical need is one that can transform the lives of our citizens as well as transform our approach to housing all of our community members.

Course of Action: Draft plans and raise funds to create more opportunities for PSH and other innovative projects.

There is a strong presence of the homeless population in Charles County compared to the rest of the region. There is an average shelter bed utilization rate of 86.3 percent with the programs available to Charles County's homeless population that was available on the day of Point in Time. (Note that those programs who serve domestic violence survivors may not be at capacity due to the beds being designated for that subpopulation and will remain empty until an eligible household is in need of shelter). Currently, the Housing Inventory Chart that maintains the list of beds that are available to Charles County residents include approximately 199 beds (not to include the Core Service Agencies' Continuum of Care 79 beds).

SERVICE GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

It is evident that the County does not have enough affordable housing options for low- and moderate-income families. Unfortunately, the rising housing costs have priced families out of being able to live in the same county in which they work. This is an essential opportunity for growth, to work with the elected officials and policymakers, and potential private funders to assist in the development of alternative and innovative housing options. Although we understand HUD's focus on the Housing First philosophy, Charles County still has invested in emergency and transitional shelter programs as part of its housing continuum of resources. We believe that these programs are still vital to the success of homeless individuals, providing them with intensive supportive services and life skills in a structured environment, to encourage their transition to more permanent housing.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Charles County Homeless and Emergency Shelter Committee is a collaborative of agencies and individuals who provide and/or support programs that assist those that are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness. This committee developed this plan based upon recent data and also in support of the regional Continuum of Care's plan. The agencies comprised of this committee include the following:

- Catherine Foundation
- Catholic Charities
- Charles County Children's Aid Society
- Charles County Department of Community Services
- Charles County Department of Social Services
- Charles County Health Department
- Charles County Public Library
- Charles County Public Schools
- Charles County Sheriff's Office
- Freedom Landing
- Health Partners
- Legal Aid Bureau
- LifeStyles of Maryland Foundation, Inc.
- Ministers Alliance of Charles County and Vicinity, Inc.
- Ms. V's Place
- Southern Maryland Community Network
- United Way of Charles County
- University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center
- Previously Homeless Resident

This Committee meets on a bi-monthly basis on the 2nd Thursday of those months to discuss the services and challenges in serving those that are in this vulnerable state. Meetings are held at United Way of Charles County at 9:30am. This meeting is open to the public.