

## Interagency Council on Homeless

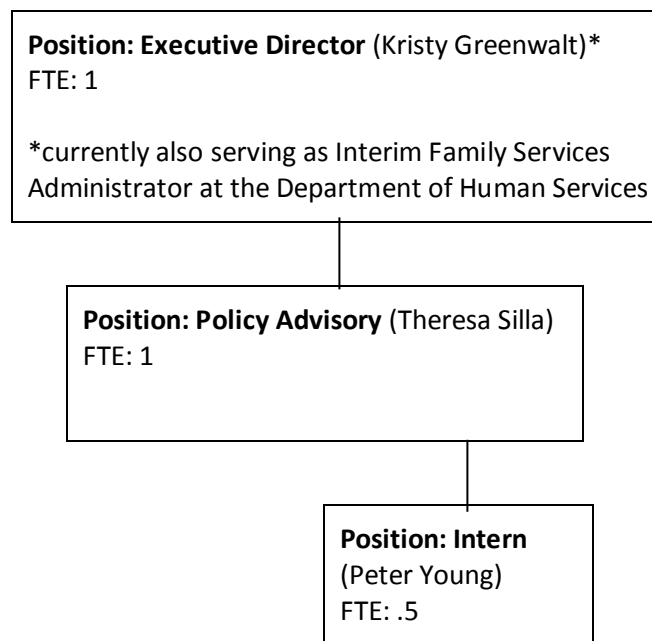
### Performance Oversight Hearing by the Committee of the Whole –Responses to Questions

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**Q1. Please provide, as an attachment to your answer, a current organizational chart for your agency with the number of vacant and filled FTEs marked in each box. Include the names of all senior personnel, if applicable.**

There are two full time positions that support the District’s Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH), as shown below. At the beginning of 2015, the ICH staff were moved to the Office of the Deputy Mayor of Health and Human Services (DMHHS).<sup>1</sup>

Below is the organizational chart for ICH as of February 10, 2016:



To the extent possible, the work of the ICH is accomplished by leveraging the effort of District agencies and community partners. Agencies and community partners play the following critical roles:

- Implementing designated action items as outlined in [Homeward DC](#) (see Chapter 5 on Getting from Here to There: Key Strategies & Transition Planning for additional details);
- Co-chairing the standing committees that are charged with strategy development and coordination regarding the various strategies and action items outlined in Homeward DC;
- Supporting work groups and mini-teams charged by the standing committees to accomplish specific tasks, produce specific deliverables, and address identified challenges related to plan implementation.

**Q2. What are the top five priorities for the agency? Please provide a detailed explanation for how the agency expects to achieve or work toward these priorities in fiscal years 2016 and 2017.**

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<sup>1</sup> DMHHS organizational chart attached.

The top five priorities for the ICH in FY16 and FY17 are as followed:

1. Finish the work of ending Veteran homelessness and leverage the lessons learned to develop system-wide policy and protocol and expedite housing placements for all single individuals experiencing homelessness;
2. Develop written policy, protocol, and tools to support our transition to year round access to shelter for families, prepare for the closing of DC General, and support our overall family system redesign.
3. Implement a system of comprehensive and coordinated outreach to unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness;
4. Develop and release a youth specific strategic plan and begin designing the new program models envisioned under that plan to prepare for any new resources;
5. Develop a robust housing search/landlord outreach system, capitalizing on technology to streamline the business process and expedite housing placement.

The details related to each priority are described in detail below.

**Priority 1: Finish the work of ending Veteran homelessness and leverage the lessons learned to develop system-wide policy and protocol and expedite housing placements for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.**

Over the past year, through our work to end homelessness among Veterans, our community has learned a tremendous amount about what it takes to transform a number of standalone programs (administered by multiple agencies and funded by multiple sources – Federal, local, and private) that fund a number of independent functions (including client engagement and assessment, determination and documentation of program eligibility, landlord recruitment and unit identification, completion of housing inspections, and lease-up and move-in) into a truly coordinated, efficient, and effective system of care.

Using data to drive our efforts, the *Veterans Now!* leadership team came together biweekly in FY15 to monitor progress, identify challenges and roadblocks, and brainstorm new approaches. Based on careful analysis of our data, we had determined that we would need to house 68 Veterans per month to achieve the Federal metric of “functional zero.” Throughout the year, we averaged 64 Veterans per month, just shy of our goal. However, as one of only a handful of cities around the country currently using a “byname list” to track our progress, we are able to see trends in our data that would otherwise be masked if we relied solely on aggregate numbers. Our Federal partners have been watching our progress closely as they believe there are important lessons to be learned in efforts to end homelessness from the work happening in the District.

While we are very proud of the systems-change that has happened within our Veteran subsystem, we know that the final mile is always the toughest. We have some very entrenched individuals that have been homeless for years and have been unable or unwilling – for a variety of reasons – to engage with our service providers and accept an offer of housing. However, we anticipate that the additional street outreach teams coming online this month (funded via a Federal grant to the Department of Behavior Health) will support our efforts with these individuals. Further, we have a new project-based facility delivering in early 2016, and we think the ability to house a number of Veterans in a single location where they will have greater access to a sense of community will also help with our final push.

As we work to reach functional zero for Veterans, we also need to begin scaling these efforts for our broader work around all single individuals (and particularly those individuals experiencing chronic homelessness). Our Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement (CAHP) system for single individuals is in place and functioning well, and the new resources allocated in FY16 will allow us to begin to begin testing it at a much larger scale than we have been able to do to date. This work will be an important focus for us in the year ahead.

**Priority 2: Develop written policy, protocol, and tools to support our transition to year round access to shelter, prepare for the closing of DC General, and support our overall family system redesign.**

As we began implementation of Homeward DC in FY15, significant changes were made in the family system, including a move to year round access to shelter and adoption of an “interim eligibility” process. And, of course, FY15 also included a major planning effort to develop a concrete strategy to close DC General and move to smaller, neighborhood-based emergency housing facilities as envisioned in Homeward DC.

In order for the family system to work effectively, and to achieve the targets around reducing length of stay in shelter (which will be needed in order to reduce our dependence on overflow motels in the coming years), we must have a clear and seamless business process, with clarity around roles and responsibilities at each step (from intake and eligibility determination all the way to stabilization back into permanent housing). We need tools to support this work, including written policy statements that help our front-line staff, clients, and community stakeholders interpret policy in light of District and Federal law, scripts so front line staff are delivering clear and consistent messaging, and tools that support our frontline staff to do their work (assessment tools, forms, checklists, etc.). We also need clear metrics that help us understand where we are making progress, where we are experiencing challenges, and how to improve.

Towards this end, the ICH has been working with consultants (funded through Federal technical assistance resources) to host a family systems boot camp in mid-February. The objectives of this day-long strategic planning session are to clarify and document an improved business process and develop a detailed work plan to get us to this new future state. The consultants will convene teams for regular check-in calls to help promote accountability and to help team members to navigate around barriers. In late FY16 or early FY17, we will reconvene stakeholders for a sustainability review and strategy session on additional changes and improvements needed.

**Priority 3: Implement comprehensive and coordinated outreach services to individuals experiencing homelessness that:**

- **Provides adequate breadth and depth of outreach services in all 8 wards;**
- **Minimizes duplication of effort between providers; and**
- **Focuses on ending homelessness in alignment with the Housing First model.**

The ICH Outreach Work Group has begun developing a citywide infrastructure to engage and connect the target population (homeless veterans and chronically homeless individuals experiencing substance use disorders, serious mental illnesses, or co-occurring disorders) with evidence-based housing interventions, treatment and recovery support services, and eligible benefits. The new framework will leverage existing activities and partners, including DBH and DHS outreach staff, privately-funded outreach services (through churches and the business improvement districts), the DBH Mobile Crisis Hotline, the United Planning Organization Shelter Hotline, MPD, and FEMS to name a few. It will also

allow the District to deploy new resources strategically. Specifically, the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) received a 3-year, \$9 million grant under the Cooperative Agreements to Benefit Homeless Individuals (CABHI) program from the US Department of Health and Human Services and is operationalizing that program this fiscal year (FY16). In addition to expanding outreach services across the District, the grant will provide the staffing support needed to develop written policy and procedures to coordinate services across providers working in different catchment areas to ensure that all providers are working within the City's Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement (CAHP) System to assist with client assessment, documentation collection, housing search, and stabilization.

**Priority 4: Develop and release a youth specific strategic plan and begin designing the new program models envisioned under that plan so prepared when resources become available**

Building on the accomplishments in FY15, youth serving agencies are working to develop a youth specific strategic plan and to begin designing new program models envisioned under that plan.

During FY15, youth serving agencies in the District forged new paths by designing and developing a coordinated entry system for youth. Only a handful of other communities in the country have tackled coordinated entry for youth, which means the DC team has had to blaze new trails. The team selected a common assessment tool and tested system-wide protocol to match youth with available beds throughout the City before launching the new coordinated entry system for youth. As the District transitions from standalone programs, each with its own waitlist, to a central registry, we are improving our data on the number and needs of the youth in the City experiencing homelessness.

In addition to the youth coordinated entry work, the District government also completed its first-ever comprehensive youth census from August 17-25, 2015. The data analyses include an estimate of unaccompanied persons who were either homeless or housing insecure, with survey results aggregated according to age group, housing status, and household configuration. Estimates from the count were reviewed by community partners in the ICH youth workgroup, and the data has since served as an important building block to develop a strategic plan to end youth homelessness. In early FY16, the ICH began working with the same set of consultants that assisted with the Homeward DC plan to develop a modeling framework and identify the investments needed over a five year period. The modeling and costing are nearly complete; during the next half of FY16, we will be working with ICH stakeholders to identify actionable strategies, draft the plan narrative, solicit public comments, and release the plan. Concurrently, and moving forward into FY17, we will undertake the work to expand/enhance existing program models for youth, as well as begin the work to stand up new programs envisioned under the plan.

**Priority 5: Develop a robust housing search/landlord outreach system, capitalizing on technology to streamline the business process and expedite housing placement.**

To increase the participation of landlords, a multifaceted approach is being developed. Strategies include creating a centralized messaging packet that streamlines requirements for landlord participation, a consolidated calendar of events across all participating agencies and programs, a unified PR campaign that takes advantage of existing network and proven marketing strategies to create high profile political and community support, and a robust IT solution that can match landlords and prospective residents in line with the coordinated assessment and housing placement tools.

To that end, in FY16, and ICH workgroup was charged with developing a long-term housing location network where housing providers across populations (families, singles, and veterans) and housing models (RRH, TAH, PSH) can coordinate outreach and interaction with landlords to increase the number

of landlords and units participating in housing programs and to increase the number of landlords who are willing to use alternative screening criteria for tenants who sometimes have barriers to housing like poor credit or poor rental history.

Additionally, in FY16, our partners at DHS will be building out their STEP tool (a system for tracking clients through the housing lease-up process) so that it can be used to coordinate person-centered unit searches, housing inspections, and paperwork processes to expedite housing placement. As the capabilities of the tool are expanded, the agencies and community partners using the tool will also be expanded so that the technological infrastructure can be leveraged to share leads on available units, across all housing providers, target populations and housing models.

In addition to these five priorities, there are many other important projects that are necessary components of our systems change work, ranging from our work with DCHF to leverage Medicaid to pay for more of the services needed among individuals in Permanent Support Housing, to our efforts to reduce barriers to obtain identification (DMV cards and birth certificates), and our work to build capacity among affordable housing developers to successfully compete for Housing Production Trust Fund resources. All of our partners – public and private – play a critical role in implementing Homeward DC.