



Baltimore City Continuum of Care Action Plan Summary

Purpose

The three-year action plan is a “living document” that guides the Continuum of Care’s (CoC) collective work by setting **clear, measurable, and achievable goals** with specific strategies for policy and programmatic reform, effective analysis of need and performance, and a committed effort to realign resources. The action plan will continue to uphold the value that homelessness is solvable, as evidenced by a comprehensive crisis response system that ensures that homelessness is prevented, and when homelessness cannot be prevented, it should be a rare, brief and a nonrecurring experience. The plan is ambitious, but possible.

Background & Methodology

This action plan is the result of ongoing, collective processes led by Baltimore City’s CoC, inclusive of the original Journey Home plan, the CoC priorities established in 2017, and multiple efforts over the past two years that aimed to provide comprehensive analyses and specific recommendations. This plan has been developed and guided by key stakeholders and subject matter experts, including people with lived experience of homelessness. The process for developing the plan included:

- Review of the CoC’s Housing Committee recommendations endorsed by the Board in 2018;
- Review of the CoC’s Resource Development analysis of existing and potential resources and recommendations to diversify and increase public and private investments;
- Review of the CoC’s 2018 Journey to Jobs report, including new metrics and cross-sector data analysis to improve systems collaborations to better comprehend the intersections between homelessness, economic instability, criminal records and racial disparities;
- Review of the Lived Experience Committee’s recommendations on shelter improvements and a careful examination of our current physical sheltering conditions and review of existing policies and procedures;
- Review of the Coordinated Access Committee and Health Workgroup efforts to improve system planning and service integration;
- Review of the 2017 Mayoral Workgroup on Homelessness report;
- Initial modeling of the changes to our inventory of prevention program, emergency shelter programs, transitional housing programs and permanent housing needed over time; and
- Analysis of existing housing inventory to define current capacity and need.

Key Strategies

We must undertake programmatic and policy changes that increase our effectiveness and efficiencies. To reach our proposed goals, the action plan identifies a series of action items across five essential strategies:

Strategy 1: Increase the Supply of Affordable Housing. Increasing the supply of affordable housing is essential in our efforts to make homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring and will yield the best and most cost-effective long-term results. The six interventions within this strategy present a robust, multi-pronged approach to expand opportunities for safe, decent, and affordable housing and supportive services to promote the highest level of independence and community integration for the range of individuals and families impacted by homelessness.

Strategy 2: Create a More Effective Crisis Response System. An effective crisis response system prevents homelessness when possible, and rapidly returns households experiencing homelessness to stable housing.

Strategy 3: Transform the Shelter System. Emergency shelters play a vital role in ending homelessness. Providing temporary, safe, and supportive environment to address barriers to housing strengthens our system and encourages households experiencing homelessness to seek the assistance needed to end their homelessness.

Strategy 4: Improve Access to Employment and Economic Opportunities. A comprehensive employment and income strategy and cross-sector solutions are necessary to support the goals of



homeless jobseekers, eliminate barriers to employment and income stability, and assist families to obtain and sustain housing.

Strategy 5: Establish a Race Equity Agenda. A race equity agenda is critical to this plan and will ensure that we to identify, address, and eliminate racial disparities and create an equitable homeless service system.

Increase the Supply of Affordable Housing

- Analyze current housing inventory and need
- Create new affordable housing.
- Launch a local voucher program.
- Increase investments in rapid rehousing.
- Support and promote policies that prevent and end homelessness.
- Expand the Medicaid pilot and health system partnerships.

Create a More Effective Homeless Response System

- Enhance Coordinated Access.
- Implement a homelessness prevention and diversion program.
- Implement a system-wide outreach strategy.
- Implement standards of care and training plan.

Transform the Shelter System

- Improve physical shelter conditions.
- Improve and enhance service delivery.
- Engage partners for comprehensive discharge planning.
- Develop a city-wide transportation initiative.

Improve Access to Employment & Economic Opportunity

- Integrate employment and income resources through a two-pronged, system-wide referral process.
- Create integrated learning communities.
- Reform policies and practices to support economic opportunity.

Establish a Race Equity Agenda

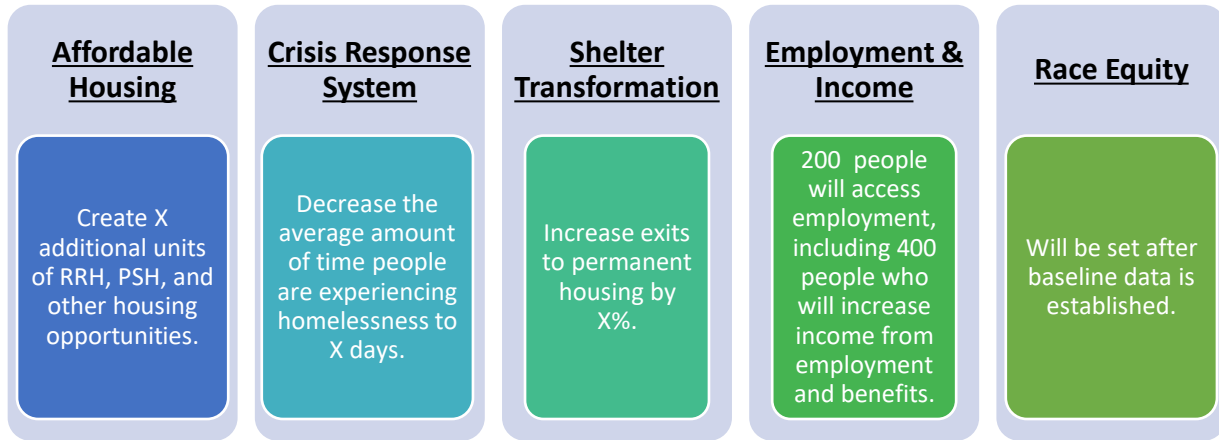
- Revise data collection strategies.
- Provide training and technical assistance on race equity.
- Reform practices and policies to address and rectify racial disparities.

Strategy-Focused Outcomes

To be successful, this action plan must set specific and quantifiable benchmarks and deadlines that will promote community-wide commitment, foster accountability, and enable us to measure the efficacy of our strategies and



their implementation. One high-level outcome will be assigned for each of the five key strategy areas, with the understanding that additional process and outcome measures will be established for each of the strategies and their corresponding interventions.



Budget and Resource Development Strategies

It is important to understand that achieving this goal of ending homelessness will only be achieved by a major, significant investment of additional funding and other resources. While many of the interventions within this Action Plan can be advanced by efficiently prioritizing our current capacity, many others will require significant new investments or realignment of existing funding streams in order to achieve measurable impact for our residents experiencing homelessness.

- 1. Realign Existing Local Public Resources.** By realigning public funding streams, our community can maximize our existing resources to target households experiencing homelessness.
- 2. Maximize the Use of Philanthropic Partnerships.** Private funding can also be realigned around a collective strategy that complements public investments, more strategically addresses gaps, and maximizes impact. Additionally, Baltimore should establish an ambitious but achievable goal for new annual private sector funding dedicated to ending homelessness.

Next Steps to Launch the Plan

The Continuum of Care and Mayor’s Office of Homeless Services will jointly launch and oversee the ongoing implementation of the Plan, to include the following steps in the next three months:

- Develop detailed action agendas for each of the key strategy areas, including specific tasks and assignments of responsibility;
- Attach baseline data and required process and outcome measures to the overall Action Plan and each key strategy in order to further assess need and track progress;
- Quantify the anticipated impact of key interventions and identified the amount of funding and resources needed to complete interventions;
- Identify and recruit key stakeholders to participate on Action Committees; and
- Finalize a schedule and structure for presenting action agendas and progress reports to the Board, Continuum, and community.

Long-Term Vision on Homelessness

Our CoC is still committed to the value that homelessness is solvable and that will continue to be our vision. This action plan serves as an incremental step towards that larger goal with the plan to increase capacity for larger, sustainable impact. The Board may design long-term planning mechanisms and activities to ensure that this action plan contributes to the vision of ensuring that homelessness is a rare, brief, and nonrecurring experience.

Please direct comments and inquiries to journey.home@baltimorecity.gov.