



January 1, 2013

The Honorable Edward J. Kasemeyer  
Chairman, Senate Budget & Taxation Committee  
3 West, Miller Senate Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

The Honorable Norman H. Conway  
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee  
131 Lowe House Office Building, Room 121  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

**RE: Report in accordance with Executive Order 01.1.2002.14—2012 Annual Report of the Governor's Interagency Council on Homelessness / MSAR# 2016**

Dear Honorable Kasemeyer and Conway:

In accordance with Executive Order 01.01.2002.14, please find enclosed the 2012 Annual Report of the Governor's Interagency Council on Homelessness.

As noted in the report, the face of homelessness has changed: it includes more and more everyday people struggling to recover from a job loss or divorce, as well as those who lack access to affordable housing and health care. In an effort to consolidate and streamline services provided to these vulnerable individuals and families, included in this report are seven key strategies developed this year for the Council to explore as part of its effort to update the 2005 10-year Plan to End Homelessness.

If you should have any further questions or require additional information, please contact me at 410-767-7109 or Allyson Black, Executive Director of Government, Corporate and Community Affairs at 410-767-6586.

Sincerely,

Theodore Dallas  
Secretary

Enclosure

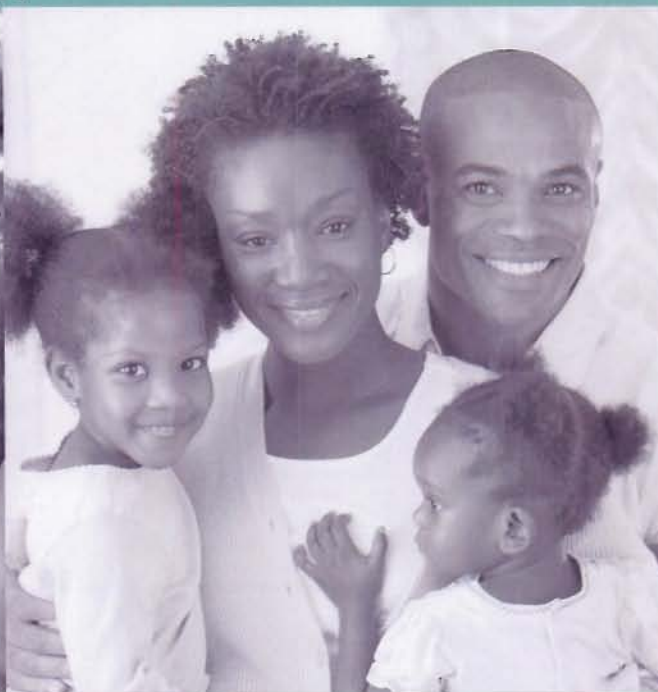
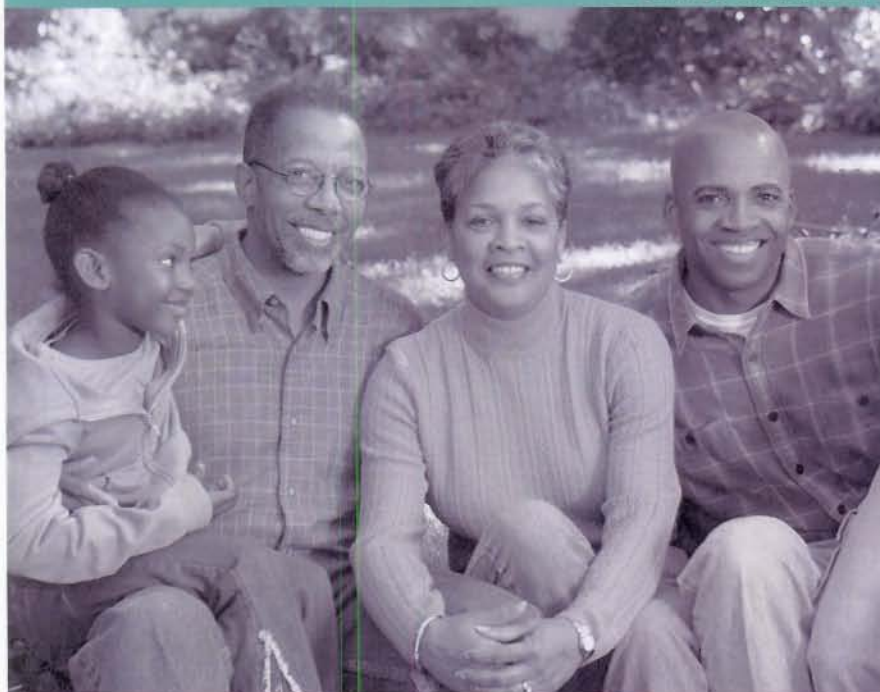
cc: Thomasina Hiers, Deputy Secretary for Programs  
Allyson Black, Executive Director, Office of Government, Corporate and Community  
Affair



Governor's Interagency Council on Homelessness

## Annual Report 2012

(MSAR#2016)



Martin O'Malley, Governor

Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor

Theodore Dallas, Secretary



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## REPORT REQUIREMENT – BY EXECUTIVE ORDER

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The Department of Human Resources (DHR) submits this report in response to the following excerpt from Executive Order 01.01.2002.14E, effective since June 20, 2002:

*“The Council shall report annually to the Governor and, as provided in §2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the General Assembly on **progress in preventing and alleviating the incidence of homelessness in Maryland and on recommendations for executive and legislative action.**” (emphasis added)*

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## BACKGROUND

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Homelessness is a complex social and public health crisis. For agencies who serve individuals experiencing homelessness, this population is often very difficult to count and track. According to the 2011 Maryland Point-in-Time Survey, 10,148 Marylanders experienced homelessness at some point during the year. Four factors are primarily responsible for homelessness: lack of affordable housing, lack of affordable health care, low income, and the lack of comprehensive services. Securing and maintaining affordable, safe housing is a challenge for many. For example, the 2012 Fair Market Rent (FMR, a monthly rental rate that does not exceed 30 percent of an individual's monthly income) for a two-bedroom apartment in central Maryland is \$1,231/month. An individual earning Maryland's minimum wage (\$7.25/hour) would have to work 3.3 full-time jobs to afford FMR in central Maryland. Individuals and families in central Maryland are struggling to remain in their homes.

Created by Executive Order 01.01.2002.14 in 2002, the Governor's Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) coordinates State policy regarding the homeless. The ICH is staffed by DHR and composed of representatives from all state agencies whose resources/programming impacts the ability of Maryland residents to live in a safe, stable environment and minimize their risk of becoming homeless, including: the Governor's Office, DHR, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Housing and Community Development, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Department of Business and Economic Development, Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Aging, Department of Labor Licensing and Regulation, Governor's Office for Children, Department of Transportation, Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Disabilities. Each plays a vital role in the establishment of economic, emotional and physical stability and should be included in the process of developing an effective cross-agency working group to implement new approaches and initiatives.

A comprehensive 10-year Plan to End Homelessness was developed and submitted by the ICH in December 2005. The Plan identified a series of recommendations with timelines aimed at making homelessness a “rare and brief occurrence.” The ICH focused on four areas in the development of the Plan: housing, income, health and cross-cutting issues, defined as efforts that crossed agencies, jurisdictions, public/private partnerships and resources such as emergency food programs. Recommendations were made in each of these four areas and requirements to achieve the recommended initiatives included a comprehensive, cross-agency approach to preventing homelessness through the development and utilization of a uniform application for all benefits; a streamlined eligibility criteria and processes; and technology and consistent data collection systems through inter-agency cross-training. The Plan also included a recommendation that the



State engage in enhancing its outreach efforts to assist potentially eligible individuals who have not applied for assistance programs.

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## 2012 COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

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The face of homelessness has changed due to the onset of the global financial crisis. The current economic downturn, unlike others in the past, is hurting not just the already-poor but also people who were once considered financially secure. What used to disproportionately impact chronically homeless individuals (typically single males) is now impacting families, women and children, and people struggling to recover from a job loss, divorce or domestic violence – or by jobs that paid too little and mounting medical bills or housing costs.

Those who serve the homeless are also reporting more and more incidences of people who have jobs that pay minimum wage or less and cannot afford housing. Shelters across Maryland are populated by veterans and teenagers, people struggling with mental illness and substance abuse, people who have been homeless for years and new arrivals, who never imagined they would be homeless.

Service providers and those involved in public policy efforts to make homelessness rare and brief must be more nimble in their response to the unique needs within this changing population. During the 2012 calendar year, DHR revised the application form and application process by developing a scoring metric for Emergency and Transitional Homeless Shelter funding. DHR also recognized that in order to meet this new challenge, the State of Maryland's 10-year Plan must be updated to become not only reactive to address the needs of those experiencing homelessness, but also proactive in preventing homelessness. A "kitchen cabinet" strategy session was held on February 10, 2012 with a subset of the ICH and community partners to explore opportunities to revamp the plan and revitalize the ICH.

During the session, key topics were discussed regarding efforts underway to understand:

- the extent of homelessness in Maryland, including strategies to assess needs, special populations, jurisdictional disparities, and data collected;
- current and existing services, resources and partnerships;
- potential areas for improved coordination and service delivery; and
- opportunities to strengthen the ICH, with active stakeholders and prioritized goals and objectives.

The session resulted in a proposed list of seven strategies for the ICH to explore as part of its effort to update the 10-year plan. They are:

1. Development of a realistic, measurable "picture" of homelessness in Maryland by jurisdiction: number of homeless, demographics, availability and utilization of existing resources, and gaps in programming/resources.

3. Identification of indicators, to include population, poverty, unemployment, utilization of services and assistance programs such as food stamps, emergency shelter, housing eviction prevention and subsidies, to support the proposed allocation and distribution formula.
4. Implementation of more performance-based contracting with consistent, standardized outcome reporting among all jurisdictions in Maryland. To compete in an environment of potentially diminishing resources and funding opportunities and to ensure a positive impact on the quality of life for Maryland residents, DHR is striving to elevate the level of effectiveness of programming by making systemic changes that will impact not only our output but also our outcomes, both short and long-term.
5. Development of a cross-agency, cross-organization approach to significantly reducing homelessness in Maryland. Such a strategy among State agencies would serve to standardize definitions of eligibility criteria (such as income levels), develop compatible applications and required documentation, and encourage a consistent shared data collection system (which would require addressing confidentiality issues and cross-agency waivers).
6. Development of a cross-agency, cross-organization working group to implement this approach and reconvening the Governor's Advisory Board on Homelessness.
7. Development of an outreach strategy that would identify and build on partnerships between DHR, local departments of social services and community programs that provide direct services to the homeless population. This strategy would address needs unique to specific populations (such as ex-offenders, the physically and mentally disabled, substance abusers and domestic violence victims and their children) and encourage the creation and utilization of resources designed to meet their specialized needs. Initiatives would include partnering on funding opportunities, cross-training and integration of supportive services.

Though these seven strategies have not yet been formally approved by the ICH, they do offer great promise toward the collective goal of making homelessness rare and brief.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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The ICH has no formal recommendations for executive or legislative action at this time, as it is currently reviewing the strategies presented by the aforementioned subset of the ICH and our community partners in an effort to update the ICH 2005 10-year Plan to End Homelessness Report. The Interagency Council on Homelessness will continue to explore these strategies in depth during the coming calendar year.