

**Maryland General Assembly
Joint Committee on Ending Homelessness
2018 Interim Membership Roster**

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Delegate Mary L. Washington (House Chair)

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Committee Staff

Jason A. Kramer
Anne P. Wagner

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., Co-Chairman
The Honorable Michael E. Busch, Co-Chairman
Members of the Legislative Policy Committee
December 14, 2018
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- and an update from the Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Attached is a summary of the committee's interim studies as well as the recommendations of the committee.

We wish to thank the joint committee members for their participation, representatives of public and private organizations who kept us informed, and our committee staff for their support.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard S. Madaleno, Jr
Senate Chair

Mary L. Washington
House Chair

RSM:MLW/JAK:APW/km

Enclosure

cc: Members of the Joint Committee on Ending Homelessness
Ms. Victoria L. Gruber
Mr. Ryan Bishop

Joint Committee on Ending Homelessness

Interim Report

The Joint Committee on Ending Homelessness (JCEH) was established by Chapter 427 of 2014 and became effective June 1, 2015. To ensure that public resources, programs, and policies are coordinated and effective in preventing, mitigating the effects of, and ending homelessness in Maryland, the committee is to study issues related to homelessness including (1) housing; (2) income; (3) health care; (4) education; (5) government supports; and (6) veterans experiencing homelessness. The committee is to consult with governmental agencies, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders to identify State policies, programs, and actions that should or could prevent, mitigate the effects of, and end homelessness in Maryland. The committee is to review and make recommendations, including identifying new laws, regulations, programs, services, and budgetary priorities to meet these goals. The committee is also required to search for any intradepartmental or interdepartmental gaps, inconsistencies, and inefficiencies in the implementation or attainment of the State policies, programs, and actions related to these goals. The committee is required to submit an annual report to the General Assembly of its activities and recommendations. This report fulfills this requirement.

Chapter 104 of 2016 expanded the membership of JCEH from 10 to 16, allowing for 8 members from both the House of Delegates and the Senate. The chapter became effective October 1, 2016. The committee currently has 5 Senate members and 7 House of Delegate members.

During this fourth year of activity as a committee, JCEH held two meetings (September 26 and October 23). Topics discussed at these meetings included:

- a summary of relevant legislation proposed and enacted during the 2018 session;
- an overview of the Youth Reach MD count of unaccompanied homeless youth results;
- a discussion of the need for funding for the Ending Youth Homelessness Act (Chapter 748 of 2018);
- a review of the reorganization of the Department of Housing and Community Development's (DCHD) Homeless Solutions Program (HSP) and the changes in funding for providers;
- a presentation from the Student Homelessness Initiative Partnership of Frederick County;

- an update on the Maryland Total Human Services Information Network (MD THINK) information technology (IT) project;
- a review of two-generation strategies and the work of the Governor's Two-Generation Family Economic Security Commission;
- an overview of the Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) Program;
- a report from the Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Workgroup; and
- a review of the work of the Maryland Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) in 2018.

State Funding of Homelessness Programs

The joint committee held one briefing that included information about State funding for homelessness programs in Maryland. One of the briefings included a discussion of the need for funding to implement the Ending Youth Homelessness Act and a presentation by DHCD on the department's reorganization of its HSP.

Funding for Ending Youth Homelessness Act

Staff members from the Youth Empowered Society (YES) Drop-In Centers thanked the committee for its support of the Ending Youth Homelessness Act and stressed the importance of funding it in the future. YES Drop-In Centers, located in Baltimore City, serve youth ages 14 to 25 and offer services including showers, laundry, phone charging, access to health care, connections to housing and employment, and workforce development. Providing funding for the implementation of the Act could increase funding for the YES Drop-In Centers and programs that house youth as well as collaboration among programs to create a continuum of care (CoC) for youth.

Ms. Ingrid M. Löfgren, Homeless Youth Initiative Director, Homeless Persons Representation Project, outlined the changes resulting from the Act. The Act establishes a program providing housing and supportive services for youth experiencing homelessness by funding community-based organizations. She noted that many of the youth served by these community partners would likely be the same population served by the costly State foster care and juvenile justice systems. Similarly, she described how funding programs for youth would decrease chronic homelessness and related reliance on social safety nets, emergency services, expensive health care, and unemployment.

Reorganization of Homeless Solutions Programs

The panel on this topic included two speakers from DHCD, Ms. Heather Sheridan,

Associate Director of Homelessness Initiatives, and Mr. P. Stuart Campbell, Director of the Office of Community Programs; and two speakers from CoCs, Ms. Jeanine Beasley, Manager of Mid Shore Behavioral Health, Inc., and Ms. Sandy O. Washington, Executive Director of LifeStyles of Maryland, Inc. Ms. Sheridan provided an overview of the changes, goals, and timeline regarding the consolidation of the Department of Human Services (DHS) and DHCD grant programs. Mr. Campbell described the grant-making process for fiscal 2019, including fund sources and requirements for grantees, under the new HSP.

CoC representatives discussed the impact of the grant consolidation on the Southern Maryland and Mid Shore CoCs, and emphasized how the transition streamlined the monitoring and application processes for multiple grant programs. The Mid Shore CoC benefitted from increased administrative funding and leveraged State funding to attract more federal funds for rapid rehousing.

Service Providers

The joint committee held one briefing that included presentations from the Student Homelessness Initiative Partnership (SHIP) of Frederick County and Marian House, two service providers in the State.

Discussion of SHIP of Frederick County

Staff members of SHIP of Frederick County told the committee about SHIP's work with the Frederick County school district, including helping to provide food and clothing to homeless students in the district, providing funding to allow homeless students to participate in extracurricular activities, and attempting to find emergency shelter when necessary. However, SHIP does not have the capacity to provide shelter for homeless children and instead makes emergency placements in motels. The youth-specific needs, such as adult supervision, make the provision of housing for youth difficult. The homeless students SHIP serves are disproportionately people of color or victims of abuse, and people who are homeless in youth are much more likely to experience homelessness as adults. The goal of SHIP's New Horizons Counseling Program for Homeless Youth is to assist homeless children with graduating from high school. The program has worked with 89 youth and provides assistance with issues surrounding education, economics, and health and dental care. SHIP will also create a host home pilot program in fall 2019 that will have a goal of providing a safe environment in which youth can complete high school.

Ms. Löfgren told the committee that her organization was working with SHIP to identify the barriers for unaccompanied homeless minors in finding housing and noted that data shows that there are more than 2,300 unaccompanied homeless youth in the State, primarily in Prince George's, Baltimore, Anne Arundel, and Montgomery counties and Baltimore City but that the number is almost definitely undercounted. Minors are unable to apply for housing subsidies, cannot rent, and cannot get a hotel room. Additionally, homelessness is not considered grounds

for neglect or abuse, so homeless youth are not necessarily eligible for child protective services. Community-based organizations are also risk averse when deciding whether to serve minors and instead focus on youth ages 18 to 24. Minors are often not legally able to consent to housing services in Maryland, but some states have laws that allow homeless youth to consent to services. Programs like SHIP are a response to the gap in need created by many of the barriers previously noted.

Provider Perspective on the Impact of State Homelessness Funding Changes

Staff members and residents of Marian House, a Baltimore City organization that provides rehabilitative services and housing to homeless women and their children, discussed the impact of DHCD changes to its homelessness programs. DHCD is now requiring funding recipients to provide low-barrier housing and to focus on a Housing First strategy. While low-barrier housing and Housing First are national best practices, there can be disagreement with the strategies. Housing First requires intensive wrap-around services, but organizations may lack the funding to implement the strategy due to increased costs associated with serving higher need populations. Additionally, a portion of the homeless population is not immediately ready to be housed, and Housing First may not be appropriate for them. Due to the new DHCD requirements, Marian House will see its State funding cut. Ms. Todd, a Marian House resident, told the committee of her experience in becoming homeless. Ms. Todd coped with the death of her son with alcohol consumption and lost her job and home due to alcoholism. She was originally connected with a low-barrier shelter in Prince George's County, but the presence of alcohol was allowed, which was not conducive to her recovery efforts. However, Marian House provided both a roof and the structure she needed in recovery.

Update on the MD THINK IT Project

The panel regarding the MD THINK IT project included two staff members from DHS: Mr. Gregory S. James, Deputy Secretary for Operations and Mr. Subramanian Muniasamy, Chief Technology Officer. The goal of MD THINK is to modernize human service IT systems and to integrate the systems on one platform that will hold centralized consumer data. Current human service systems use out-of-date technology and have little interface with other systems that serve similar target consumers. DHS is the lead agency in charge of this project and partners with the Department of Information Technology, the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS), the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, and the Maryland Department of Health.

Mr. Muniasamy emphasized that the project uses an agile method, in which multiple vendors implement and test components of the software and IT systems in two-week sprints. Past IT projects have used a waterfall process that turns over all operations to a single integrator that presents and tests the final product upon completion. As of October 23, 2018, the shared data platform was completed and the Long Term Care application was launched statewide following a pilot in four jurisdictions (Cecil, Frederick, Harford, and Howard counties). DHS expects to launch

the next pilot in May 2019 for the Child Juvenile Adult Management System that replaces and integrates the case management IT system in DJS and the Maryland Children's Electronic Social Services Information Exchange (also referred to as CHESSIE).

Two-Generation Family Economic Security Commission Update

Ms. Netsanet Kibret, Executive Director of the Family Investment Administration in DHS, presented on the recent activity of the Governor's Two-Generation Family Economic Security Commission. The commission was established by Executive Order 01.01.2017.03 to investigate policy challenges, opportunities, and recommendations regarding the mitigation of multigenerational poverty. At a meeting in June 2018, the commission discussed the Next Step program in Prince George's County that uses a two-generation approach. The program is a partnership between the local Department of Social Services and Prince George's Community College to offer free tuition, professional development, and academic support to participants in TCA so that they can support themselves and their families. The commission is scheduled to sunset after submitting a final report due December 2018.

Overview of the TCA Program

Ms. Kibret and Ms. Letitia Passarella, Research Director of Family Welfare Research and Training Group in the University of Maryland, School of Social Work, described the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, referred to as TCA in Maryland. Eligibility requirements include having dependent children, cooperating with the child support program, participating in work activities, and meeting income level requirements. The value of the monthly TCA benefit is reviewed annually to ensure that cash assistance combined with federal food stamps is equal to at least 61% of the State minimum living level. As a result, the maximum TCA payment for a household of three increased by 4.7% to \$709 per month, effective October 1, 2018.

Regarding data that DHS collects on homelessness among individuals receiving public assistance, the current IT system allows case managers to note homelessness under a certain code for a new TCA case. However, the process for existing cases does not trigger case managers to revisit this to ensure the accuracy of that code. MD THINK is expected to improve data collection methods for individuals receiving public assistance and whether they experience homelessness.

Ms. Passarella discussed the overall characteristics of TCA recipients and the benefit of TCA recipients also receiving child support payments. Among all TCA recipients, 70% are children and 40% reside in Baltimore City. Among adult TCA recipients, 91% are women. Families on average receive TCA benefits for nine consecutive months, but families may also return to the program after exiting. When families exit the program, the most common reason is noncompliance with the work activity requirement (28% of cases). Of families with a child support order one year after TCA exit, 71% received a payment, and the median payment received was

\$1,788 over one year. Ms. Passarella emphasized that child support payments are an important income source and can help prevent families from returning to TCA.

Findings from the 2018 Youth Count and Report from the Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Workgroup

Ms. Amanda Miller, Project Manager of Youth REACH MD, presented the findings from the 2018 Youth Count, a survey and census of unaccompanied youth and young adults who are experiencing homelessness. Unaccompanied homeless youth include individuals under age 24 who are not in the custody of a parent or legal guardian and lack a regular nighttime residence. The 2018 Youth Count included 20 out of 24 jurisdictions in Maryland, an increase of three jurisdictions (Frederick, Howard, and Montgomery counties) from the 2017 count. In each jurisdiction, the local CoC conducted the count over a two-week period between March 3 and April 15, 2018.

Of the 1,782 surveys administered in the 20 participating jurisdictions, 816 surveys were for individuals who met the Youth REACH MD definition for an unaccompanied homeless youth. Among the surveyed unaccompanied homeless youth, 78% identified as non-White, 59% identified as male, 17% identified as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, or queer, and 30% were a parent. The most commonly reported location that youth slept in over the prior two months was doubled up with a family member or friend. Youth reported transportation and waiting lists as the most common barriers stopping them from accessing services. Ms. Miller emphasized that most youth experiencing homelessness are not accessing traditional housing services.

Ms. Christina Drushel-Williams, Chair of the Youth and Young Adult Workgroup for the Maryland ICH, updated the committee on the recent and future activity of the workgroup. Recent accomplishments include a tuition waiver for youth experiencing homelessness and the passage of the Ending Youth Homelessness Act of 2018. The Maryland ICH workgroup will publish a report in December 2018 discussing youth decision making; equitable outcomes for youth of color and lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender youth; and prevention and diversion strategies.

Update on Maryland ICH and Preliminary Findings from the Annual Report on Homelessness

Ms. Heather Sheridan, Associate Director of Homelessness Initiatives in DHCD, presented the work of Maryland ICH in 2018, its fourth year of activity. Some accomplishments include consolidating State funded homeless service grants, expanding the Youth Count conducted by Youth REACH MD, surveying jails and prisons to determine how staff exit people so they do not become homeless, and helping State agencies develop strategies to increase permanent supportive housing.

Ms. Sheridan also outlined recent trends in the homeless population and changes to federal

funding discussed in the 2018 Annual Report on Homelessness. From 2016 to 2018, both years in which only sheltered homeless individuals were counted, the number of individuals counted on January 31 as part of the Point-In-Time Count decreased while the total number of homeless individuals served in the year increased. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development increased 2018 federal fund awards to Maryland CoCs for permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing services and decreased awards for transitional and safe-haven housing.