

Metropolitan Washington Council of
Governments Board of Directors Meeting

May 14, 2008

12:00 Noon

Discussion of Programs to Address Homelessness in the Washington Region



**COG Human Services Policy
Committee**

Tommy Wells, Chair

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Washington DC 20002-4290

Thoughts from HSPC Members

- The number of homeless people has remained fairly constant
- We need more than temporary hypothermia shelters; we could build shelters forever
- We need to help people stay housed
- Think of the homeless as “my neighbor”
- We need a joint effort, while acknowledging the regional diversity and different challenges each jurisdiction faces

More Thoughts

- We don't need to build county-owned units if we can master the challenge of dual relationships with landlords
- There is a wide range of incomes that need "affordable" housing.
- We need the political will to commit serious resources and to gain meaningful community participation

Origins of the Housing First Model

- Housing First was pioneered by Sam Tsemberis and New York's Pathways to Housing in the early 1990's to specifically address the needs of the chronically homeless.
- Housing First is built on the premise that housing is a basic human right, and so should not be denied to anyone.
- Housing First programs operate across the country in states such as MA, NY, CO, CA, AK, IL, PA, and WA.



Description of the Housing First Model

- The Housing First represents a shift from the traditional Continuum of Care model which moves the homeless through levels of housing.
- Housing First in contrast moves homeless individuals and families immediately from the streets or shelters into their own apartments.
- A key part of Housing First is the provision of wraparound case management services for those placed into housing to provide stability, accountability, and ultimately increase their chance for self-sufficiency and success.

Challenges

- Many organizations and institutions must be involved with this goal , educational institutions, housing boards, etc.
- “Homeless” and “housing” programs may be in different agencies.
- Some resistance from communities must be overcome if we are to be successful.

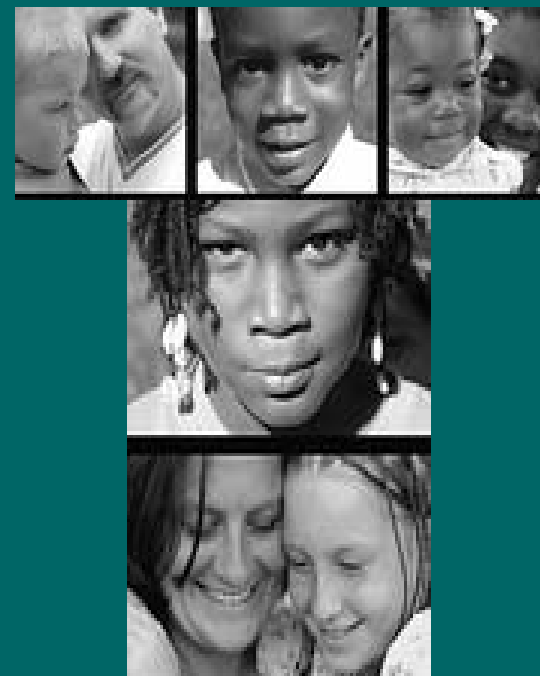
The Housing First Fund in the District of Columbia

The Housing First Fund is a mechanism to enable the District to direct funding from the disposition of properties through lease or sale into supportive housing for the most vulnerable homeless individuals and families and move them into scattered-site and site-based permanent supportive housing units throughout the community.



The Housing First Fund in the District of Columbia

- The District has allocated a total of **\$19.2 million** to the Housing First Fund.
- **\$11.2 million** will be recurring funds for service delivery; **\$8 million** in one time funding for site acquisition and development.
- Housing and services will be provided for **80 families** (\$31,192 per family) and **400 individuals** (\$21,880 per individual).



The Housing First Fund in the District of Columbia Outcomes



- This dedication of resources will decrease the chronically homeless population by 23% and family homelessness by 42%
- This commitment will also advance the District's goal of providing 2,500 units of permanent supportive housing provided for in the *Homeless No More Plan*.

Ending Chronic Homelessness

Ultimately, the successful eradication of chronic homelessness will involve:

- Bolstering political will of elected officials
- A commitment of serious resources that are consistent and can realistically fund these housing and human services

