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INFORMATIONAL HEARING – HOMELESS OUTREACH EFFORTS
MAYOR’S OFFICE OF HUMAN SERVICES – HOMELESS SERVICES PROGRAM
OUTREACH COORDINATION
COUNCIL REPORT SEPTEMBER 29, 2016

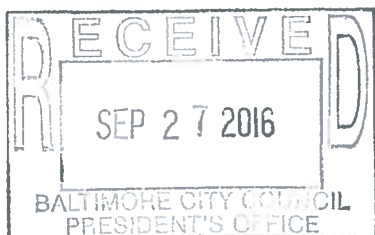
The Homeless Services Program (HSP) manages, administers and coordinates federal, state and local funds to provide services for individuals experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. The City, through HSP, contracts with service providers to provide shelter, housing and support services and as the Continuum of Care (COC) lead for federal Housing and Urban Development funds, HSP coordinates all mandated and supplemental activities addressing homelessness in the City including the coordination of outreach activities.

On any given night in Baltimore, nearly 3,000 people are experiencing homeless in the City. Our most recent Point-in-Time Count showed that on a single night in January 2015, Baltimore City had more than 2,400 people who were staying in temporary shelter and additionally 340 people staying outdoors. This is widely recognized as an undercount, as persons in hidden places, especially abandoned buildings, are difficult to locate and persons staying with friends or family are excluded from the count. Outreach workers provide the link to services and path to stability for individuals and families staying outdoors. Through established relationships, trust is the key factor that can change the lives for our most vulnerable populations.

A key funding source for outreach activities in the City has been the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding for homeless services projects through an annual Continuum of Care Program Competition. In early May, HUD released the final results from the competition conducted in the fall of 2015 and focused their funding on a number of changing policy priorities at the federal level, including an increased focus on funding permanent housing solutions, evaluating system and project performance, and adoption of housing first/low-barrier policies (HUD Statement on FY15 CoC Program Competition Results). Baltimore City received renewal funding for over \$20million which was largely for permanent supportive housing (including one outreach program) and lost funding of over \$3million which included two outreach programs.

Currently the City administers funding for three homeless outreach programs– one through State funds to Healthcare Access Maryland (HCAM) for \$124,300, one to Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) for \$364,687 from HUD (and SAMSHA to fund two homeless outreach programs) and most recently, City general funds in FY17 for \$174,286. In addition, Healthcare for the Homeless supplements the City’s outreach activities although they are funded specifically for the SOAR program, which connects persons experiencing homelessness to SSI/SSDI benefits. Currently there are approximately 7 outreach workers across the City which represents a loss of over 50% of the previous capacity.

The Homeless Services Program coordinates homeless outreach efforts for the City and as such, serves as the point of contact for requests for homeless outreach services across the city. HSP collaborates with BHSB and HCAM which includes weekly meetings co-facilitated by BHSB and Healthcare Access Maryland to case conference approximately 50-100 clients. HSP also processes outreach requests received through 311 or the community at large including businesses and community groups and supports the service facilitation to clients through communications with City agencies, advocacy and connections to resources.



Fav w/ comments