Interagency Council on Homelessness
2019 Performance Oversight Hearing
Responses to Questions from the Committee on Human Services

1. **Please provide a current organizational chart for the ICH.**
   a. **Please identify the number of full time equivalents (FTEs) at each organizational level and the employee responsible for the management of each program and activity.**

There are three full-time positions that staff the District's Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH), as shown in the table below. The Executive Director, Kristy Greenwalt, is responsible for oversight and direction of the two Policy Advisors.

Position: Executive Director (Kristy Greenwalt)   FTE: 1
Position: Policy Advisor (Lindsay Curtin)   FTE: 1   Focus: Single Adults/Chronically Homeless Individuals/Veterans
Position: Policy Advisor (Kimberly Waller)   FTE: 1   Focus: Families and Unaccompanied Youth

   b. **If applicable, please provide a narrative explanation of any organizational changes made during FY18 and FY19 to date.**

The previous ICH Policy Advisor overseeing the single adult portfolio left the District government in May 2018. Prior to Ms. Curtin's hiring in January 2019, that position was vacant for approximately six months.

Additionally, the ICH received philanthropic funding in FY18 to hire a consultant to assist with the development of a systemwide framework for landlord engagement and recruitment. The consultant resources were exhausted in December 2018, and project management of the initiative shifted to The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness.

2. **What are the ICH priorities for FY20? How have such priorities shifted from previous fiscal years?**

With the support of the ICH staff, the Standing Committees review progress at the end of each calendar year and develop work plans for the following year. The work plans help ensure stakeholders have a voice in establishing priorities for the year. The work plans are public documents and are available on the ICH website at https://ich.dc.gov/event/ich-executive-committee-12.

Systems change is a long-term process, and the majority of strategies we are working on are multi-year efforts. We may complete one phase of the work in a given year, but rarely is a strategy considered complete. To learn more about progress on different strategies, please see *Attachment A: Homeward DC Implementation Dashboard*.

3. **To accomplish the vision of *Homeward DC* and *Solid Foundations DC: Comprehensive Plan to End Youth Homelessness*, a number of District agencies are involved in specific ways. Please outline each agency's role in accomplishing the goals of the plan.**

The Homeward DC and Solid Foundations DC Plans both include over 40 strategies across numerous key objectives. The challenges of making a system work result from programs and services, often operated by different departments, that need to be better aligned and coordinated. For example, different programs may use different or conflicting definitions (often driven by Federal funding sources), have different or conflicting eligibility or documentation requirements, or present unintended barriers for clients, where mitigation actually involves help from another agency (e.g., completion of an application for a housing choice voucher requires identification, which many individuals experiencing homelessness do not have). Therefore, the work of the ICH, and the strategies in the plan, often lie at the intersection of agencies and involve multiple partners.

Attachment A: Homeward DC Implementation Dashboard outlines the strategies in the plan, the key partners involved in each strategy, and a high level summary of the milestones accomplished to date.

4. **Please describe the ICH's progress toward the FY19 priorities outlined in last year's oversight response, including progress made toward implementation outlined in *Homeward DC*.**

Please see *Attachment A: Homeward DC Implementation Dashboard* to learn more about progress on each of the strategies in the plan.

5. **For FY19, the Council funded the second year of *Solid Foundations DC: Comprehensive Plan to End Youth Homelessness*. Please outline the implementation benchmarks that have been achieved for the following periods:**
   a. **FY18;**
   b. **FY19 to date; and**
   c. **Any plans outlined for the balance of FY19.**

The ICH finalized and released Solid Foundations DC in May 2017 and has since turned its focus to implementation. The initial work has focused on expanding capacity of existing program models, such as emergency shelter and transitional housing, and supporting the design of new program models, including prevention programming for youth, a 24-hour youth drop-in center, Transition Age Youth Rapid Re-Housing (TAY RRH), and Extended Transitional Housing (ETH). ICH stakeholders worked closely with the Department of Human Services Youth Division to

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inform the design and/or expansion of these program models, and the team at DHS has done an excellent job getting these new resources out the door. In response to its oversight questions (see Question 40), DHS provides a detailed overview of how funding under the Solid Foundations plan has been allocated over the past two fiscal years.

In addition to standing up new programs, the ICH and its stakeholders have been working on a number of other implementation priorities as described in the response to Question 6.

6. **Please state and describe all (if any) priorities of** *Solid Foundations DC: Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness* **that were met in 2018 and FY19 to date.**

In 2018, the ICH Youth Committee identified six priority strategies for the year. These priorities are listed below, followed by key accomplishments for each.

1) Continue to identify, assess, and, if appropriate, implement new and innovative program models for youth experiencing homelessness in the District.

    Accomplishments**:** In 2018, the ICH worked with DHS to inform the solicitations for a new 24-hour drop-in center as well as a new Extended Transitional Housing (ETH) program for the system's most vulnerable youth. Both of these resources are new models to the system that will greatly improve the youth system's capacity.

2) Continue evolution of youth Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement (CAHP) system, with a particular emphasis on ensuring efficient and effective matching of youth to available resources.

    Accomplishments**:** In 2018, the ICH Youth Committee launched the Youth CAHP Policy Work Group, where government agencies, providers, advocates, and youth with lived experience focus on the continued improvement of the youth CAHP system. Additionally, the ICH Youth Committee developed written protocol (i.e., the Youth CAHP Manual) to ensure consistency and transparency of youth CAHP system operations.

3) Continue to develop and refine youth-focused street outreach protocols.

    Accomplishments**:** In 2018, the ICH Youth Committee launched the Youth Street Outreach Work Group, where government agency representatives and youth street outreach providers meet to troubleshoot issues in real-time with the goal of continually improving services to youth experiencing homelessness. Over the past year, the Work Group has focused on determining geographic coverage across providers, cross-training with adult system outreach providers, and in-reach to adult emergency shelters to ensure all youth have access to youth-specific resources.

4) Prepare grant application for U.S. Housing and Urban Development Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program, a federally funded demonstration grant designed to fund innovative and effective ways to reduce youth experiencing homelessness.

Accomplishments: The ICH Youth Committee completed the grant application for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program and submitted the application in April 2018. While the District was not awarded the grant, the ICH Youth Committee used this opportunity to collectively identify needed services and resources in the system. Those conversations ultimately helped shape new solicitations released by the Department of Human Services in 2018.

5) Identify youth experiencing homelessness who are served by other systems in order to 1) understand the needs of multisystem-involved youth and how to better target services; and 2) develop transition planning protocols for youth receiving long-term services from, or in the custody of, CFSA, DYRS, or DBH.

Accomplishments: CFSA, DYRS, and DBH are members of the ICH Youth Committee and are actively engaged in Solid Foundations DC implementation. They informed enhancements to the Homeless Youth Census survey tool to improve our ability to capture more robust data on multisystem-involved youth. The ICH has also been working with partners to establish data-sharing agreements so we may learn more about the needs and characteristics of this population. This work will continue into FY19.

6) Engage youth with lived experience to meaningfully engage with and participate in the ICH Youth Committee.

Accomplishments: In spring 2018, the ICH Youth Committee launched a Youth Action Board, referred to as "Through the Eyes of Youth." The group consists of five youth with current or prior lived experience. Through the Eyes of Youth ensures ongoing youth leadership in the planning and implementation of Solid Foundations DC. The direct involvement of youth and young adults is central to strengthening the systems, programs, and policies that impact youth and young adults experiencing homelessness and housing instability.

7. **In 2019, the ICH completed its 4th Homeless Youth Census. What (if any) adjustments in priority will need to be made in light of this information?**

Based on the four years of data we have collected from the Homeless Youth Census, we know that youth experiencing homelessness are a varied group of young people struggling to secure basic needs while also trying to acquire the skills necessary to make the transition from adolescence to adulthood. The ICH works closely with The Community Partnership and the Department of Human Services on the annual Homeless Youth Census to ensure we are collecting the data needed to implement Solid Foundations DC. Each year, we incorporate lessons learned from the prior year to improve our data collection efforts.

Throughout the first four years of the census, we have seen the number of youth identified through the census continue to grow. This is likely the result of improved data collection techniques combined with an increase in bed capacity (making youth easier to identify), rather than a significant increase in youth homelessness. Now, with four years of data at our disposal,

we can feel more confident that the numbers we are seeing are a true baseline of youth homelessness in the District. The demographic trends from the 2018 census are consistent with findings from past years, though the results do confirm the need for resources and a flexible system with a variety of program models to serve the varied needs of youth in the District.

8. **Please describe how the ICH is partnering with youth-serving government agencies (DYRS, MPD, CFSA, etc.) to prevent youth homelessness. What role does the ICH view these agencies having in the formation of a system of care?**

Youth who are involved in other systems, like DYRS, MPD, and CFSA, are at a greater risk of experiencing homelessness. As discussed throughout Solid Foundations DC, youth experiencing homelessness are more likely to be involved with the justice system, and many struggle with risky behaviors or survival strategies, such as theft, substance use, and sexual risk behaviors. Similarly, youth who are involved with the child welfare system also experience homelessness at a rate higher than their peers – sometimes as part of a family unit, and sometimes by themselves.

Accordingly, the ICH has designated nine seats for government partner participation on the ICH Youth Committee, including: DHS, DBH, CFSA, DYRS, OSSE, DCPS, MPD, MOLGTQ, and our Federal Collaborative Applicant (The Community Partnership to Prevent Homelessness, or TCP). These partner agencies play a critical role in expanding homelessness prevention efforts, reaching out to and identifying all homeless youth, regardless of the system they are in, and providing resources to ensure youth have access to education, employment, and permanent connections.

9. **How is the District serving LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness, and how is the ICH working with other jurisdictions to encourage similar programs throughout the region?**

Nationally, LGBTQ youth account for 30 to 40 percent of all youth experiencing homelessness but account for only seven percent of the national youth population.[1] A core component of Solid Foundations DC has been the institution of an annual youth census – similar in function to our annual Point in Time (PIT) count, but administered differently to better account for the way in which youth homelessness manifests. With each year, we are continuing to gather better data to truly understand the need of all vulnerable youth in the District, including LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness. According to the results of the 2018 Homeless Youth Census, 37 percent of unaccompanied youth identify as LGBTQ.

This data helps guide resource allocation and better target interventions to youth in our community. While the District does have dedicated programming for LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness (close to 100 beds as of February 2019), our objective is to ensure

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[1] The Williams Institute, Serving Our Youth: Findings from a National Survey of Service Providers Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth Who Are Homeless or At Risk of Becoming Homeless (July 2012). Accessed at: https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Durso-Gates-LGBT-HomelessYouth-Survey-July-2012.pdf

that all providers are culturally competent and able to serve the needs of any and all youth in need of assistance.

The ICH has been working in partnership with staff from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments to share information and identify opportunities for collaboration with our regional partners (all populations – not just LGBYQ youth). In FY17, the District signed a Data Use Agreement (DUA) with Montgomery County and Prince Georges County. This DUA allows us to do system-wide data analysis to better understand movement between systems, and it enables us to do better case coordination regarding specific individuals and families that may be touching multiple systems. Additionally, we appointed members of the ICH (i.e., service provider representatives) that work in multiple communities; they also help with the informal sharing of information and best practices.

That said, the sophistication of homeless service systems across the region varies widely. The District has been fortunate to have much greater levels of investment in homelessness and affordable housing, and we are fortunate to have more direct control over state policy. And, of course, there is no ultimate arbitrator across the region to help establish joint policy and funding priorities. All of these things make multi-state coordination challenging.

10. How is the District serving undocumented youth experiencing homelessness, and how is the ICH working with other jurisdictions to encourage similar programs throughout the region?

Providing a safe and welcoming place to stay, regardless of a person's documentation status, is an important aspect of an accessible Continuum of Care (CoC). There are a variety of ways the District's homeless services system ensures it is properly serving undocumented individuals. Many providers in the District's CoC have bilingual staff and all are trained on the language access line. Homeless services providers are offered access to a variety of trainings, including cultural competency, trauma informed care, and other topics that train staff on how to ensure all individuals feel safe and welcome. Additionally, the ICH worked in coordination with the Department of Human Services to develop and distribute guidance for providers on what to do if Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents show up at a program site in search of undocumented individuals.

As mentioned above, the District is trying to identify ways to improve collaboration with regional partners through the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government. Although there is no official vehicle through which we can establish joint policy across the region, the District is committed to being a leader by sharing information and best practices.

11. Please share the ICH observations regarding homelessness among senior women and what interventions are being offered to address this need.

During FY18, 1,428 seniors were served in programs for single adults; this represents 16 percent of those who provided their date of birth at entry into shelter. Approximately 20 percent (266) were female.

Of course, we are concerned about the unique needs of all seniors – not just senior women. Our current low-barrier shelter facilities are not designed to meet the needs of this population. As we look toward the redesign of shelters for single adults, starting with 801 East Men's Shelter, we are planning a separate wing for seniors and persons with physical disabilities. This will allow us to ensure that space is designed with their unique needs in mind.

Additionally, to ensure we are helping as many seniors exit to permanent housing as possible, we have been prioritizing our Targeted Affordable Housing (TAH) allocations over the last three years to chronically homeless seniors that were not assessed as needing PSH. The TAH subsidy was designed to target individuals experiencing homelessness who do not have high supportive service needs but, due to their fixed income, will likely need financial assistance to obtain and maintain permanent housing.

One trend that does seem more prevalent among women – and especially older women – is the hesitancy to accept a tenant-based voucher and move to an apartment on their own, especially when that means leaving their community and going to a more remote part of the city. To address these needs, we are interested in investing more in project-based PSH developments in the coming years – projects similar to the Conway Residence on North Capital Street and La Casa on Irving Street.

Finally, we know our clients – and especially our seniors – struggle with issues of isolation. We are working on innovative solutions to these issues, including an emerging partnership with the Humane Rescue Alliance to use pets to combat loneliness and support service engagement.

12. Please share the ICH observations regarding homelessness among youth-headed households and what interventions are being offered to address this need.

The 2018 Homeless Youth Census counted 551 youth heads of household experiencing homelessness in the District. Ensuring that youth-headed households have access to resources and interventions that are tailored to their unique needs and developmental stage is an important aspect of the District's Continuum of Care. The ICH Family System Work Group has identified this as a key priority for 2019.

13. Please describe the work the ICH is doing to improve landlord engagement.

A number of steps have been taken over the past year to bolster landlord engagement in Continuum of Care programs. First, the Landlord Partnership Fund was launched in early FY18 to incentivize landlords to relax their screening criteria and accept clients exiting homelessness. The Landlord Partnership Fund was developed in partnership with the Downtown DC Business

Improvement District and the Coalition for Non-Profit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED) and is being administered by CNHED.

In addition to the launch of the Fund, the District took a number of steps in 2018 to begin standing up a coordinated, system-wide approach for landlord engagement and unit/client matching. Beginning in May, the Landlord Outreach Work Group – a cross-section of government, nonprofit, and private sector partners – began meeting weekly to build this infrastructure. This team completed the following tasks:

- Designed and piloted a collaborative unit identification and unit-sharing protocol for families exiting DC General and for single adults matched to a voucher;
- Engaged landlords for feedback through two training events and a landlord focus group;
- Organized and hosted two successful, large-scale leasing events with landlord partners;
- Mapped different leasing processes across the CoC; currently consolidating four different leasing packages into one standard package for use across the system;
- Established a more regular working relationship with partner agencies, such as the DC Housing Authority (DCHA), to streamline the inspection process and reduce inspection scheduling times;
- Established protocol with DCHA to identify and recapture units becoming available as a result of anticipated turnover from their subsidy programs;
- Reviewed technology tools and recommended the STEP Tool, a Quickbase application, as a viable tool for system data-collection and support;
- Developed system-wide standard marketing content aimed at helping landlords understand different housing programs within the Continuum; and
- Began development of a common web portal for information-sharing with external partners.

Please provide data including, but not limited to, the following:
a. Number of landlords engaged;

Of programs where rent payments are made by the District or TCP (and therefore the landlord is known to the District), we can see approximately 750 unique landlords engaged in a Continuum of Care-funded program. Of these, only a handful (15) have come on board during the last year.

b. Number of units committed by engaged landlords;

The newly engaged landlords have committed just over 50 units in total. The biggest return on investment from the Landlord Risk Fund and the other changes referenced above comes not necessarily from new landlords, but rather from existing partners that increased their unit contributions.

c. **Average size of engaged units;**
Across the Continuum of Care, which includes both single adults and family households, the average rental unit size is a two-bedroom unit.

d. **Average rental cost of units; and**
Federal and local housing assistance (such as Section 8 housing choice vouchers or Local Rent Supplement Program vouchers) can only be used at units that meet federal Fair Market Rent (FMR) standards. These FMRs are the best indication of rental prices for clients exiting the homeless services system. FMRs for the District can be found at https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr/fmrs/FY2019_code/2019summary.odn.

e. **Number of units for which a lease has been signed by a tenant in 2018 and 2019 to date.**
Figures below are for calendar years 2018 and 2019 to date:
- 2018 Permanent Housing Placements/Families: 1,365
- 2019 (to date) Permanent Housing Placements /Families: 82
- 2018 Permanent Housing Placements/Single Adults: 1,105
- 2019 (to date) Permanent Housing Placements /Single Adults: 52

14. **The ICH participated in an inter-jurisdictional roundtable discussion last year with Montgomery County and Prince Georges County to identify potential points of collaboration. What strides are you making regarding the following:**

a. **Data sharing;**
Montgomery County and Prince George's County recently participated in a data match with the District to identify clients accessing multiple systems. The analysis was completed in January. The next step is to convene to review the results together and discuss implications. In the year ahead, we hope to be able to expand the current Data Use Agreement between the District, Montgomery County, and Price Georges County to include other counties in the metropolitan region.

b. **Understanding movement between jurisdictions; and**
The data match mentioned above helps us identify how many people access services in more than one Continuum of Care, but it doesn't tell us why people are moving. To learn more about what drives people to use services in multiple communities, the District conducted a more in-depth survey in association with our 2019 Point in Time (PIT) Count. The survey, referred to as PIT+, was conducted by service providers over a series of 10 days to capture additional information from a representative sample of clients regarding what issues caused their homelessness, why they chose to seek assistance when and where they did, and what type of assistance could have prevented their need for shelter. Results of the PIT+ survey will be available this spring.

c. **Potential resource-sharing to better serve persons experiencing homelessness who have lived in multiple jurisdictions?**
Each year, the District provides shelter for a significant number of individuals from surrounding counties in the greater Washington metropolitan region. Approximately 12 percent of total shelter users in the single adult system, and nearly 28 percent of individuals experiencing first-time homelessness, reported their last permanent address to be in Maryland or Virginia. Of course, determining residency is a complicated issue, especially given the gentrification that has occurred in the District in recent decades. It's possible that at least some residents coming from Maryland or Virginia were originally District residents that were displaced.

It is not yet clear how resources can be shared or what collaboration across states might look like. Each jurisdiction has different capacity, opportunities, and constraints. Conversations on this topic continue through the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, but there are no easy answers.