Coordinated public funding to address homelessness: how agencies can access funding through the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care

FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL ENTITLEMENT FUNDS

COMPILED BY HOMEWARD, MARCH 2023

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT HTTPS://WWW.ENDHOMELESSNESSRVA.ORG/FUNDING

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Overview of information

• Shared community goal: targeting our limited resources to reduce homelessness for our most vulnerable neighbors

• Brief overview of the coordinated homeless services response system

• US Department of Housing and Urban Development policy overview and an introduction to the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care

• Role of public funding in addressing homelessness

• Requirements of agencies seeking public funding through the GRCoC

• Sources of coordinated public funding

• For more information

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Shared community goal: targeting our limited resources to reduce homelessness for our most vulnerable neighbors

Homelessness and Housing Instability: a community crisis

Unsheltered; nowhere safe to stay

"Doubled Up" or living with family or friends

Fleeing sexual or domestic violence

Living in a hotel

No longer able to stay where they are

Paying too much for rent; getting behind on bills

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Focus of our coordinated homeless services network

Unsheltered; nowhere safe to stay

"Doubled Up" or living with family or friends

Fleeing sexual or domestic violence

Living in a hotel

No longer able to stay where they are

Paying too much for rent; getting behind on bills

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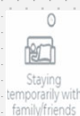
Coordinated Public Funding uses the US HUD Definition of Homelessness

A person is considered homeless when they:

• Reside in places not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings.

 • Reside in an emergency shelter.

• Are fleeing a domestic violence housing situation and no subsequent residence has been identified.

• Are staying in a hotel paid for by a nonprofit or unit of local government.

Please see https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/42/11302 and https://www.hudexchange.info/news/huds-definition-of-homelessness-resources-and-guidance/

Brief overview of the coordinated homeless services response system

Access to homeless assistance programs
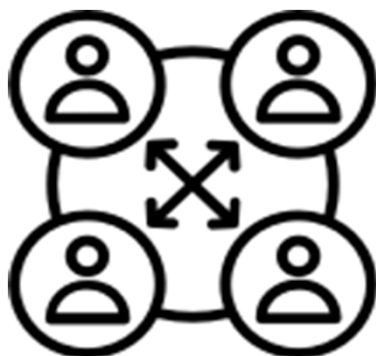
•There are not enough resources to serve everyone who is eligible.
  • There is not a right to shelter or housing assistance in most communities including ours.

•Access to programs with public funding is coordinated.

•Referrals to shelter and housing programs are centralized and prioritized in order to maximize our limited resources.
  • Programs say no a lot in order to strategically say yes and to serve the most vulnerable who need this assistance.

•Individual choice.
  • People can turn down services—even housing.

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Key features of the coordinated homeless response system

- •Homeless and housing assistance is **not an entitlement** and most households who need housing assistance or meet the criteria for homeless assistance do not receive it.

- • Efforts to "divert" people from entering homeless shelters by **connecting** them to community-based resources and support networks can be effective.

- •The **primary funding and policy** driver for homeless assistance programs is the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD.) The Commonwealth of Virginia follows HUD and is the second single largest funder of homeless assistance.

- •Most funding for homeless assistance programs comes from **private** sources (individuals, foundations, corporations, and congregations.) This funding is fragmented but vital.

- •In the Richmond region, most homeless service providers are **non-profits** raising significant private funds to provide assistance.

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US Department of Housing and Urban Development policy overview and an introduction to the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care

Communities and programs that want to access public funding to address homelessness agree to

- • Serve the **most vulnerable** households in the community as determined by the community of providers and stakeholders and local data.
- • Participate in **service coordination** and take referrals from the community "Coordinated Entry"/ Access system.
  - • Designed to target resources to those who need the assistance the most.
  - • Replaces a "first come, first served" process.
  - • Criteria for receiving services are fair, transparent, and well-advertised.
- • Participate in community planning and **data collection** efforts.
- • Focus on **housing** and helping households experiencing homelessness to return to stable housing as quickly as possible.
  - • Also known as "Housing First." (https://www.usich.gov/solutions/housing/housing-first/)

For more information, please visit https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/coc/regulations

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Community Coalition: Greater Richmond Continuum of Care (GRCoC)

Map retrieved from
http://www.richmondregional.org/

Established in 1997 by community stakeholders to fight homelessness in the region. Homeward was created to support this effort.

400 Continuums of Care around the country; 16 in Virginia

Numerous statutes and regulations guide and govern CoC's. The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009 is the guiding legislation:
- https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2012/07/31/ 2012-17546/homeless-emergency-assistance-and-rapid-transition-to-housing-continuum-of-care-program

The GRCoC develops policies and procedures locally to maximize services for each household and resources.

Learn more: www.endhomelessnessrva.org

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GREATER RICHMOND CONTINUUM OF CARE

Grassroots Community Decision-Making

The GRCoC is open to new members who are interested in joining this collaborative effort to fight homelessness. This coalition is governed by By-laws and policies developed by community members: www.endhomelessnessrva.org.

Membership is open and there are no fees to participate.

Requirements and responsibilities of CoC members:
- Participate in service coordination and collaborative planning. (Some committees and workgroups have defined composition requirements according to the by-laws.)
- Agree to abide by conflict of interest policies.
- Respect client confidentiality.
- Funded agencies have additional requirements based on the source of funding.
- Follow local, state, and federal regulations including financial reporting, as applicable.

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GRCoC in action: www.endhomelessnessrva.org

- Covers the geography shown on slide 9.

- Membership is open and there are no fees. Active membership with voting privileges comes from attending meetings. (defined in the CoC bylaws)

- Bylaws developed, updated, and approved by GRCoC membership.

- GRCoC Board is defined in the bylaws and elected by the Active members.

- GRCoC decision-making committees are defined in bylaws and appointed by the Board.

- Coordinated funding processes including HUD and Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development funding

- Service coordination including implementation of Coordinated Entry (centralized and prioritized referrals)

- Use of shared database: Homeless Management Information System (HCIS)

- Participation in Point-in-time count and planning activities

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Role of public funding in addressing homelessness

Housing Needs and Funding Eligibility

Households earning between 0 and 30% of Area Median Income and paying more than 30% of their income for housing

Youth in foster care

Living with others; "Doubled up"

Living in hotels: Self-pay

Youth aging out of foster care without stable housing

Living with others in an unsafe place

Living with others but need to leave

Staying in hotels: agency or community pays

Those fleeing domestic violence with no place to go

Those staying in emergency shelters and transitional housing programs

Those living on the streets, in cars, or other places not meant for habitation

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GREEN REPRESENTS POPULATIONS ELIGIBLE FOR TARGETED HUD HOMELESSNESS RESOURCES. PATTERNS REPRESENT UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS.

Role of public funding in homeless services network

- Federal and state funding on homelessness require
  - The use of a coordinated Homeless Management Information System database
  - Coordination with other GRCoC providers
  - Participation in Coordinated Entry System
  - Adherence to GRCoC policies and procedures
  - Compliance with regulatory requirements on eligible uses and data collection
  - Use of established best practices and solutions supported by data

- GRCoC sets regional priorities for public funding
  - Input from people experiencing homelessness
  - Program data and outcomes
  - Funder requirements
  - Promising efforts in other communities
  - Community and stakeholder input

  To learn more, visit http://endhomelessnessrva.org/funding or email Michael Rogers at mrogers@homewardva.org.

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Requirements of agencies seeking public funding through the GRCoC

GRCoC Funding Requirements for Program Applicants

Threshold requirements:

- Active member of GRCoC as defined in the GRCoC bylaws

- Serve in the GRCoC geography (City of Richmond and Counties of Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico, Charles City, Goochland, New Kent, and Powhatan)

- Eligible applicant (i.e. 501 c 3)

- Meet HMIS requirements in defined policies (https://www.homewardva.org/hcis-training-documents/user-agreements)

- Comply with GRCoC Coordinated Entry System Policies and Procedures (https://www.endhomelessnessrva.org/policies-and-standards)

- Read and comply with eligibility requirements of funding agency

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Policy requirements

- Federal funding is governed by the Hearth Act: https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2012/07/31/2012-17546/homeless-emergency-assistance-and-rapid-transition-to-housing-continuum-of-care-program

- Funded programs must follow all relevant guidelines and regulations including:
  - Documentation of eligibility
  - Fair housing
  - Equal access
  - Environmental reviews
  - Housing inspections
  - And, others! See the funder website for details.

SERVICE PROVIDER RESOURCES

Homeless Certification Form
Homeless Certification Form (Spanish)
VHSP Prevention Program Participant Eligibility Form
VHSP Rapid Re-Housing Program Participant Eligibility Form
VHSP Recertification Form
Basic Habitability Checklist
HUD Lead Based Paint Assessment Training
VHSP Lead-Based Paint Visual Assessment Form
Current Fair Market Rents
Rent Reasonableness Checklist
Environmental Review Instruction Form
Environmental Review Pre-Populated Form
Environmental Review Check Form
VHSP Request for Reimbursement Form

This is a screenshot highlighting some requirements of state funding: https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/vhsp

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Sources of coordinated public funding

Public Funding: Mainstream vs. Targeted

Mainstream resources are large programs that assist many people in our communities but these programs are not based on housing status or targeted to solving homelessness or increasing housing stability for people experiencing homelessness.

- TANF, Medicaid, Earned Income Tax Credit, Mental health services, Housing Choice Voucher, LIHTC, workforce services, etc.
- Local services may provide assistance to the same population or the same individuals (DSS, CSB, congregations)

U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development is primary source of funding **targeted** specifically to people experiencing homelessness. (18 additional federal agencies also address homelessness.)

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Where does the money come from?

Federal Funding and Local Entitlement Funding: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Continuum of Care, ESG, CDBG

- Appropriated annually by Congress
- Part of Transportation and Housing Committees
- https://www.hud.gov/budget
- ESG and CDBG funding comes in two forms to our region
  - Local Entitlement- directly to localities to administer using federal guidelines
  - Non-entitlement- administered through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and granted to CoC's using HUD guidelines

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Where does the money come from?

Virginia General Assembly: state funding portion for **Virginia Homeless Solutions Program** and the **Affordable Housing Trust Fund**

- Defines program types and state reporting requirements
  - Numbers served
  - Costs of programs
  - Match/ financial and in kind support raised by providers

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Federal Continuum of Care funding

Greater Richmond
Continuum of Care

Map retrieved from
http://www.richmondregional.org/
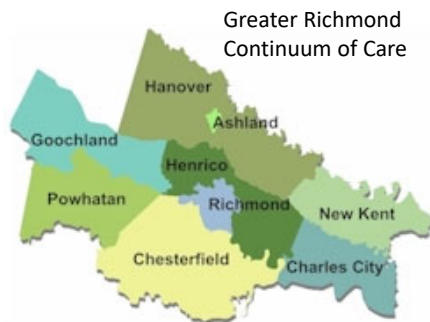
- Funding is appropriated by Congress to meet federal goals around addressing homelessness.

- Funding is made available to serve a defined geographic region, known as a Continuum of Care.

- The definition of homelessness used is one of the most conservative and includes those living in shelters or in places not meant for human habitation. Households living in hotels or staying with family and friends are not eligible for services funded through this source. This funding cannot be used for returning citizens who have been incarcerated for more than 90 days.

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Federal Continuum of Care funding

- Each funded project has to provide a 25% cash match for most funding received. Most agencies must raise significant funding to implement these programs. This funding requires significant community coordination, comprehensive data collection, and compliance with HUD and GRCoC policies.

- Each year, a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) gives the specifics for the funding.

Federal funding: Emergency Solutions Grant and Community Development Block Grant

- Entitlement programs: City of Richmond (ESG & CDBG); Chesterfield and Henrico Counties receive CDBG but not ESG (Henrico County was an entitlement community for ESG until FY23)

- Non-entitlement ESG: integrated with the Virginia Homeless Solutions Program funding from Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development

- Non-entitlement CDBG: administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development

- Localities develop Consolidated Plans and Annual Action Plans which guide entitlement allocations

- https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/budget/fy23

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HUD Funding: ESG and CDBG

Emergency Solutions Grant funds may be used for five program components: street outreach, emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, rapid re-housing assistance, and HMIS; as well as administrative activities

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Entitlement Program provides annual grants on a formula basis to entitled cities and counties to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

For more information, please visit http://endhomelessnessrva.org/funding or https://www.hud.gov/hudprograms.

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State funding for homelessness

VIRGINIA DHCD

The Virginia Homeless Solutions Program is a community-based systems approach to preventing and ending homelessness throughout the Commonwealth

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development

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- The Virginia Homeless Solutions Program (VHSP) combines state general funds and federal non-entitlement funding. VHSP combines state and federal funding and mostly follows federal guidelines.
- Funding is coordinated through Continuums of Care.
- Each Continuum of Care can submit ONE regional application for funding. Many projects can be funded as part of this collaborative application.
- Biennial funding, based on state budget allocations.
- VHSP is administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.

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Each funding program supports specific strategies and program types

HUD CoC	VHSP and ESG
• Permanent supportive housing • Rapid Re-Housing • HMIS (the data collection system which is required to be used by all funded agencies) • Coordinated Entry (the coordinated system for accessing and prioritizing services which is required for all funded agencies) • Planning (non-competitive)	• Emergency Shelter • Rapid Re-housing • Coordinated Entry (limited for ESG) • Planning (VHSP) • HMIS (ESG)

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Other public funding sources

- HUD
  - Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program: https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/yhdp/
  - Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA): https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hopwa/
  - HOME: https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/home/home-overview/
- Department of Health and Human Services Runaway and Homeless Youth: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/runaway-homeless-youth
- Department of Veterans Affairs: https://www.va.gov/homeless/for_homeless_veterans.asp
- Department of Labor: https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/grants/apply/find-opportunities
- SAMHSA: https://www.samhsa.gov/grants
- https://www.grants.gov/

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Resources and Sources

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/

HEARTH Act: https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2012/07/31/2012-17546/homeless-emergency-assistance-and-rapid-transition-to-housing-continuum-of-care-program

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development: https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/vhsp

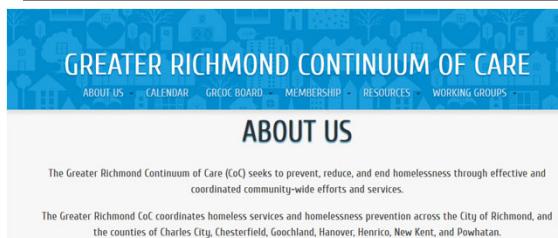Greater Richmond Continuum of Care: http://endhomelessnessrva.org/funding

National Alliance to End Homelessness: https://endhomelessness.org/

United States Interagency Council on Homelessness: https://www.usich.gov/

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Find out more at
www.endhomelessnessrva.org

GREATER RICHMOND CONTINUUM OF CARE

ABOUT US   CALENDAR   GRCOC BOARD   MEMBERSHIP   RESOURCES   WORKING GROUPS

ABOUT US

The Greater Richmond Continuum of Care (CoC) seeks to prevent, reduce, and end homelessness through effective and coordinated community-wide efforts and services.

The Greater Richmond CoC coordinates homeless services and homelessness prevention across the City of Richmond, and the counties of Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, and Powhatan.

www.homewardva.org
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