Everyone in our community deserves a safe place to call home. The Greater Richmond Continuum of Care (GRCoC) has served as the Richmond region’s collaborative network of homeless service providers for 25 years. More than 34 mission-oriented agencies participate in the GRCoC. GRCoC homeless service agencies develop and deliver trauma-informed programming, share data with other GRCoC partners, provide extensive reports to federal and state funders, undergo audits and monitoring visits to ensure compliance, and commit to continuous quality improvement in order to meet the needs of our neighbors.

Our inaugural annual report highlights the impact of our collective efforts in Calendar Year 2022 to tackle the crisis of homelessness and to identify opportunities to amplify and accelerate the work of the GRCoC help more people and have a bigger impact. Homelessness is becoming more visible throughout our region; it doesn’t just impact one zip code or type of person. In 2022, more than 6,800 people in our region sought homeless assistance. Causes of homelessness range from short-term financial crises to chronic homelessness among people with complex behavioral and physical health challenges. Low rental vacancies and the lack of deeply affordable housing remain critical challenges in our region. Our community’s network of homeless service providers collaborates to tackle this crisis but lacks sufficient investment to respond at scale.

We recognize that the collective impact of our coordinated and compassionate homeless services network is significant but insufficient to meet the region’s needs. By joining together, across our differences, we can deliver demonstrated solutions and fund proven programs to ensure that everyone in our region has a safe place to call home. Thank you for your support of our coordinated and compassionate response to homelessness.

**GRCoC Board Members**

- Annette Cousins, Chair
  Community Volunteer
- Jovan Burton, Vice Chair
  Partnership for Housing Affordability
- Scott Andrews-Weckerly
  Community Foundation
- Melissa Canaday
  Focused Outreach Richmond
- Dr. Patricia Cook
  Daily Planet Health Services
- Brian Davis
  Capital Region Workforce Partnership
- Christine Elwell
  Commonwealth Catholic Charities
- Kenyatta Green
  Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority
- Sherill Hampton
  RVA Dept. of Housing & Community Development
- Vanessa Johnson
  Richmond Public Schools
- Fred Karnas
  Richmond Memorial Health Foundation
- Eric Leabough
  Henrico Dept. of Community Revitalization
- Matthew Leslie
  TAC, Inc.
- Mica Morgan
  YWCA
- Kiva Rogers
  Chesterfield - Colonial Heights
- Matt Scaparro
  Better Housing Coalition
- Beth Vann-Turnbull
  Housing Families First
- Janna Wiener
  VA Dept. of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services
- Irene Zolotorofe
  VCU Health
- Michael Rogers
  Homeward Staff Lead

**What is Homeward?** Homeward is the planning agency that supports the GRCoC. Homeward facilitates greater collaboration & more efficient use of limited resources among homeless service providers. Homeward analyzes data & creates reports to help GRCoC partner agencies & local governments better understand causes of and proven solutions to homelessness. Homeward secures significant resources, ensures funding compliance, researches & compiles best practices for homeless solutions, & provides recommendations based on input from people with lived experience in our region.
In the GRCoC, we start by listening to the people most impacted by the crisis of homelessness. Through the twice-yearly point-in-time counts of people experiencing homelessness and through the multi-agency Homeless Connection Line and Coordinated Street Outreach teams, we talk to people experiencing homelessness to hear directly from them about their experiences of homelessness; the factors that contributed to their housing instability; their service and program usage; and their ongoing or unmet needs. We use this data to make referrals for homeless assistance and community-based resources and to identify the gaps in our community’s network of homeless assistance programs.

One of the ways Congress tracks homelessness is through single day counts of people staying in emergency shelters or sleeping in places not meant for human habitation. This does not represent all types of housing crises in our community.

Racial Equity & Homelessness in Our Region

Individuals represent 63% of those served. Families with children represent 37%.

Ages of People Served by the GRCoC

For more data analysis, visit www.homewardva.org/point-in-time-count/
The Greater Richmond Continuum of Care collaborates to have maximum impact, but there is a significant need for deeply affordable housing. An infusion of resources to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on people experiencing homelessness allowed for the opening of additional programs that enabled GRCoC providers to maintain the pre-pandemic volume of services.

As COVID-related resources are ending, the additional beds made available for people experiencing homelessness have closed, and clients are staying in shelters twice as long as they did pre-COVID.

African-Americans are disproportionately impacted by the crisis of homelessness in our region.

Key findings in the 2022 Gaps Analysis Report:

- The Greater Richmond Continuum of Care collaborates to have maximum impact, but there is a significant need for deeply affordable housing.
- An infusion of resources to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on people experiencing homelessness allowed for the opening of additional programs that enabled GRCoC providers to maintain the pre-pandemic volume of services.
- As COVID-related resources are ending, the additional beds made available for people experiencing homelessness have closed, and clients are staying in shelters twice as long as they did pre-COVID.
- African-Americans are disproportionately impacted by the crisis of homelessness in our region.

SERVICE COORDINATION: THE HOMELESS CONNECTION LINE

The Homeless Connection Line (HCL) is a multi-agency collaborative supported by Homeward, ACTS, HomeAgain, Housing Families First, & Senior Connections. The HCL is staffed by Diversion Specialists who are trained to engage in compassionate problem solving with each caller and connect them to the available services and resources that best fit their needs. HCL staff capture data that is used to inform and improve service coordination. **On average, the HCL receives 7,000-8,000 incoming calls a month.**

**CALLERS TO THE HCL EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, JAN-MAR 2023**

- Adults: 539
- Adults in families: 184
- Children in families: 277

**WHERE HCL CALLERS HAD THEIR LAST STABLE HOUSING, JAN-MAR 2023**

- Richmond: 62%
- Henrico: 18%
- Chesterfield: 9%
- Elsewhere in VA: 7%
- Out of state: 3%

Pictured: staff members of the multi-agency collaborative Homeless Connection Line
COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM

*Coordinated Entry* is a system in which all homeless assistance programs work together to ensure that services are accessible and well-targeted to the immediate needs of our neighbors experiencing homelessness. The goals of a coordinated entry system are to simplify access to services for people pushed into homelessness; to track program and system outcomes in reducing homelessness; to inform and enhance decision-making; and, to improve a community’s overall response to the crisis of homelessness.

The agencies listed to the right have current Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) with the GRCoC to provide services as part of a Coordinated Entry System (CES). The annually-established MoU ensures commitment to community-developed program standards and policies that meet federal guidelines and maximize our limited resources. These policies and standards ensure that all programs in the GRCoC employ fairness and transparency for people accessing services, use best practices in program delivery, follow non-discrimination and equal access guidelines, and participate in service coordination.

**FY23 Designated & Approved CES MoU Agencies**

ACTS, CARITAS, Chesterfield/Colonial Heights DSS, Capital Region Workforce Partnership, Commonwealth Catholic Charities, Daily Planet Health Services, Hanover Safe Place, HomeAgain, Homeward, Housing Families First, Liberation Veteran Services, OAR of Richmond, Richmond Behavioral Health Authority, The Salvation Army, Senior Connections, St. Joseph’s Villa Flagler, Virginia Supportive Housing, YWCA

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Parts of Coordinated Entry as defined by HUD

- **Access**: How do people find and connect with homeless assistance programs?
- **Assessment**: What are the household’s needs? Are they eligible for homeless assistance?
- **Prioritization**: With insufficient resources, which households are most vulnerable/ most likely to die without assistance? Who should be the next household to be referred to available resources?
- **Referral**: Which programs have openings? How does the household get connected to the program?
The federal statutes and regulations governing publicly-funded, community-based homeless assistance systems build on what we hear from our neighbors facing homelessness and bring together a wide range of stakeholders to tackle the complex issues faced by our neighbors experiencing homelessness.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) first began funding targeted programs to address homelessness in the mid-1990’s.

The HEARTH Act (2009) updated the McKinney-Vento Act and laid the groundwork for much of what we do today. The GRCoC supports inclusive planning and collaborative decision-making in order to fulfill its purpose and to comply with the regulations for a communitywide planning body to address homelessness laid out in 24 CFR 91.5 and meets the requirements for a Continuum of Care laid out in 24 CFR 578.1 and 578.7 and in the 2012 Continuum of Care Interim Rule.

The collaborative decision-making processes and protocols were developed by regional stakeholders over time. The current bylaws, policies, and standards can be found here: www.endhomelessnessrva.org

The idea of collaboration is not a new one – the entire Continuum of Care (CoC) concept was born out of the recognition that in order to effectively address homelessness it needed to be done in a coordinated fashion.

REQUIREMENTS OF GRCOC MEMBERSHIP

The GRCOC is open to new members who are interested in joining this collaborative effort to fight homelessness. This is not a political or legal entity and is governed by By-laws and policies developed by community members. Membership is open and there are no fees to participate. The GRCOC Board is elected by the membership for a term of two years. See the list of current board members on the introduction page.

To become a member of the GRCOC, an agency or community partner can express interest in collaborating to fight homelessness by emailing info@homewardva.org

To be an active member of the GRCOC and to be eligible to apply for coordinated funding, a member must participate in the ongoing planning efforts of the GRCOC and meet further requirements.

To learn more about membership, visit endhomelessnessrva.org

Requirements & Responsibilities of GRCOC Members:

- Participate in service coordination and collaborative planning. (Some committees 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.

Pictured: Dedicated homeless service providers at Homeward’s 2023 Best Practices Conference.
# GRCoC Committees & Their Members

Several committees and workgroups facilitate the planning, policy-making, service coordination, and resource allocation functions of the GRCoC. Thank you to the committee members for working to solve homelessness in our community!

**The System Policy and Process Committee** reviews and updates system and project policies as required by HUD and DHCD and based on need within GRCoC.

**Chair:** Katie Chlan, RBHA  
**RRH:** Erica Holmes, St. Joseph’s Villa  
**Vets:** Brooke Pendleton, Veterans Affairs  
**DV:** Mica Morgan: YWCA  
**Emergency Shelter:** Paul Murphy, The Salvation Army  
**Outreach:** Diana Martinez, Daily Planet Health Services  
**PSH:** Sharonita Cousins, Virginia Supportive Housing

**The Governance Committee** recruits qualified, willing members of the CoC to serve as Board members as outlined in federal and state regulations and in accordance with the HEARTH Act and other relevant planning documents. They ensure board organizational effectiveness.

**Chair:** Hana Yun, ACTS  
Beth Vann-Turnbull, Housing Families First  
Jovan Burton, Partnership for Housing Affordability  
Annette Cousins, GRCoC Board Chair

**The Ranking Program Committee** reviews the CoC application to HUD as well as other funding programs. In coordination with the Collaborative Applicant, they evaluate the performance of CoC member agencies applying for these funds. No member agency that is applying for CoC funds serves on this committee.

**Chair:** Kathleen Kramer, Enterprise Community Development  
Jessica Sagara, Chesterfield Dep. of Community Enhancement  
Scott Andrews-Weckerly, The Community Foundation  
Cara Kaufman, Henrico Dep. of Community Revitalization

**The HCIS Committee** provides guidance to the CoC related to the implementation of HCIS. They ensure all HUD funded organizations are trained in utilizing HCIS. They provide input, oversight, and guidance on the development of HCIS policies and procedures. They ensure the GRCoC’s implementation of HCIS meets or exceeds all federal and applicable regulations.

The HCIS Committee is comprised of data and HCIS professionals: Margot Ackermann, Marissa Varnado, Kavita Tiwari, Katie Chlan, Anton Overby, Ana Mendoza, Karen Swansey-Brewer, Michael Mallett, Jacob Snow, Sam Shoukas, Latosha Johnson, Paul Murphy, Tamara Mason, Kaitlin Heatwole, Antonio Edgerton, Paige Eschler

**The Youth Action Board** has been a standing committee of the GRCoC since 2021. Its goals are to provide youth-centered guidance to the CoC board on funding, evaluation, data collection, and community resources; address community needs for youth experiencing homelessness; create sustainable, effective, and equitable youth engagement in CoC leadership; creatively address community barriers and/or gaps to ending youth homelessness; develop a youth-specific addendum to the GRCoC’s current strategy; oversee youth-specific projects and initiatives.

[https://www.endhomelessnessrva.org/yab](https://www.endhomelessnessrva.org/yab)

**The Quality Improvement Leadership Committee (QIL)** meets to identify and discuss programmatic quality issues in coordinated homeless services. QIL is comprised of organizations in the GRCoC that receive HUD CoC, DHCD VHSP, and/or ESG funding: CARITAS, Commonwealth Catholic Charities, Daily Planet Health Services, Hanover Safe Place, HomeAgain, Homeward, Housing Families First, RBHA, The Salvation Army, St. Joseph’s Villa, Virginia Supportive Housing, YWCA.
The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) solicits applications from communities to address the needs of those experiencing homelessness through a process called the Continuum of Care Program. The Virginia Homeless Solutions Program is a state- and federally-funded program to support Continuum of Care strategies and homeless service and prevention programs.

Both of these grant processes include the need for a collaborative application with supporting materials that are reviewed by our GRCoC Ranking Committee. The Ranking Committee uses the GRCoC Funding Priorities to guide its decisions.

This money is then distributed to GRCoC partner agencies to address homelessness.

47.6% of the federal and state funding allocated to the GRCoC supports ongoing rental assistance for program participants; the remaining funds support emergency shelter programs and essential staffing support to assist households in crisis.

GRCoC agencies must provide at least a 25% funding match from other sources in order to be able to implement these critical programs.

If you would like to know more about eligible programs, please see the program standards: https://www.endhomelessnessrva.org/policies-and-standards.
WHAT'S NEXT? ADDRESSING UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS

In January 2023, we recorded 188 people living outdoors, the highest number in our region during a winter point-in-time count. This follows a record high summer count in July 2022 (just over 200). Key findings: Almost all unsheltered individuals in our region are single adults. The high number of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness indicates the need for housing-focused shelter programs and homes that everyone can afford. Unsheltered individuals are at greater risk for negative health impacts from extreme weather events including extreme cold and extreme heat. Addressing unsheltered homelessness should be a priority for our region. Additional resources should be directed to existing shelter and housing programs with a documented record of effectiveness. Shelter alone does not end homelessness but additional housing-focused emergency shelter, along with other investments, can provide a compassionate and effective response to unsheltered homelessness.

In response, the GRCoC board endorsed two workgroups to address two critical issues facing members of our community who are unsheltered or staying in places not meant for human habitation:

**GRCoC Workgroup on Shelter Expansion**

In concert with other high impact strategies and additional support for programs with proven track records, adding capacity to the GRCoC year-round, housing-focused shelter system would have a noticeable impact on the number of unsheltered individuals in the region. Adding 50 beds to a high quality provider (or providers) could potentially serve an additional 350 – 450 single adults over the course of a year. Combined with increased investments in targeted permanent supportive housing programs that serve individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, additional shelter beds would increase the number of people connected to stable housing and services that meet their needs.

**GRCoC Workgroup on Extreme Weather Response**

During times when extreme weather conditions threaten the life, health, and safety of unsheltered individuals, the GRCoC and community partners need a plan to respond appropriately to keep regional residents safe. Extreme weather planning should consider the need for emergency day centers, emergency or inclement weather overnight shelters, and expanded street outreach as well as ancillary needs such as food, transportation, personal supplies, and connections to medical care. Additionally, an extreme weather response plan should consider the supports needed by year-round homeless service providers to maintain business operations and to expand capacity or hours of operations during extreme weather events if possible.

STRATEGIC PLAN

In June 2022 the GRCoC undertook an inclusive strategic planning process to identify strategies and partnerships needed to increase access to affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness. In early 2023, the GRCoC released the "Connections to Affordable Housing Plan". The plan was developed through a series of focus groups with people experiencing homelessness, CoC membership meetings, and steering committee meetings from June 2022 to March 2023.

Mission: The GRCoC will educate, advocate, and innovate with existing and new partners to increase the supply of, and access to, homes that are high quality, deeply affordable, and capable of providing permanent solutions for ending homelessness in our community. Goals:

- Make the case: Inform local housing industry about unique needs and barriers facing GRCoC clients.
- Advocate: Strengthen the existing state and local-level advocacy apparatus for legislative and budgetary achievements to increase access to permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness.
- Innovate: Identify and promote innovative housing solutions among CoC development and government partners to produce more units and assist households in securing permanent housing.

The Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) is an exciting new federal funding initiative designed to reduce the number of youth and young adults ages 18 – 24 experiencing homelessness in our community. YHDP Funding is available under the HUD Continuum of Care Program. The GRCoC was selected for YHDP Funding on October 24th, 2022. After a 6-month planning process led by the GRCoC Youth Action Board and facilitated by Homeward, our community developed a Coordinated Community Plan to Address and End Homelessness in the Greater Richmond Region. The GRCoC’s first local YHDP project applications are being accepted in May 2023 with the goal for new programs to support youth and young adults experiencing homelessness to start in the fourth quarter of 2023. Learn more: www.endhomelessnessrva.org/grococyhdp
HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Visit [endhomelessnessrva.org](http://endhomelessnessrva.org) to learn more about the GRCoC.

Reach out to us at [info@homewardva.org](mailto:info@homewardva.org) for more information on this report, GRCoC membership, and general inquiries.

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This report was written, edited, & compiled by:

Kelly King Horne
Michael Rogers
Margot Ackermann
Kavita Tiwari
Elizabeth Handwerk

[Homeward](http://www.homewardva.org)

www.homewardva.org/who-we-are

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