



Working Together to Build Housing Stability: The Crater Region's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

March 16, 2012

Housing and Community Services in the Crater Region

Revised December 2011

<p style="text-align: center;">Prevention</p> <p>Agencies that provide resources that directly help individuals/families maintain housing. Resources include rental and mortgage assistance, & utility payments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAPUP (Capital Area Partnership Uplifting People) • CCHASM (Chesterfield, Colonial Heights Alliance for Social Ministry) • Commonwealth Catholic Charities (HELP & EFSP) • Departments of Social Services • Downtown Churches United • Improvement Association • Salvation Army (Hopewell-ESFP Funds) • Senior Connections • St. Joseph's Villa (Flagler Housing Resource Center) • The James House (For Hopewell Citizens) • Virginia Supportive Housing (HIPP) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Emergency Shelter</p> <p>Short-term (30-90 days) shelter for families and individuals experiencing homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CARES • Salvation Army Men's Shelter 	<p style="text-align: center;">Transitional Shelter</p> <p>Longer-term shelters (up to 24 months) for families and individuals experiencing homelessness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salvation Army Men's Shelter 	<p style="text-align: center;">Specialty Shelters</p> <p>Shelters designed for individuals and/or families who are homeless and meet additional criteria.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Overflow • Madeline's House (Dinwiddie) • McGuire Transitional Center • Salvation Army Men's - Cold Weather
	<p style="text-align: center;">Rapid Re-housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Joseph's Villa (Flagler Housing Resource Center- Families and Veterans) • Virginia Supportive Housing (Single Veterans) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Public Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hopewell Redevelopment Housing Authority • Petersburg Redevelopment Housing Authority 	<p style="text-align: center;">Specialty Housing Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALAMO • Ellis Square (CSB-District 19) • The ROC
<p style="text-align: center;">Outreach, Intake, Referral, and Information</p> <p>Agencies that identify or provide information to those who are homeless, at risk-of-homelessness, and those in need of shelter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 211 Virginia • Association of Wounded Veterans • Shelters, Housing, Specialty Housing Programs • Departments of Social Services • District 19 CSB • McGuire Veteran's Hospital • Petersburg Police Department • Saint Joseph's Villa- Flagler Housing Resource Center • Senior Navigator • The James House • Virginia Navigator • Wounded Warrior 		<p style="text-align: center;">Permanent Housing Resources:</p> <p>Agencies that provide assistance to those in permanent housing that allows them to live in affordable units or maintain their own housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • project: HOMES • Rebuilding Together Tri-cities • Virginia Supportive Housing • Senior Connections • Better Housing Coalition • Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) • Tabernacle Baptist Church • Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) 	

Acknowledgements

This plan represents the culmination of two years of community collaboration and partnerships focused on improving housing stability and streamlining homeless services in the Crater Region. The development of a community plan for housing stability is a critical first step in our community's efforts to prevent, and ultimately, end homelessness. This effort would not have been possible without the contributions of many different agencies and individuals who offered their time and expertise to assist with the development of this plan.

Representatives from the local governments of the Crater Planning District have been instrumental in developing this document, and their support has been invaluable. The staff of local Planning Departments from the cities of Petersburg, Colonial Heights and Hopewell provided support for brainstorming about the continuum's structure and the future sustainability of a community planning effort. Their expertise in understanding the connections between homeless services and local, state, and federal planning efforts helped us to create realistic and complimentary solutions. The Crater Planning District Commission members and staff also provided support to ensure a plan that reflects the complexity of the communities in the region.

We extend a special thanks to our homelessness service provider partners, especially those who participated in the key informant interviews that helped to identify initial needs and challenges in the community. The expertise of the staffs of the James House, Planning District 19 Community Services Board, and Southside Community Partners provided a wealth of knowledge and history of service provision in the Crater Region. We also thank all of the providers who participated in our planning meetings and gave feedback on draft versions of the plan.

This project has been sustained by the philanthropic support of the Cameron Foundation, and the guidance and expertise of its staff proved extremely helpful in navigating the community development process that supported the creation of this plan.

The United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg has served as the lead agency for the Petersburg Continuum since 1999, and it has provided on-going staff support for local activities. This has been a critical resource for sustaining the continuum, and the Crater community expresses its gratitude.

Lastly, we would thank Homeward, the planning and coordinating agency for the Richmond, Virginia Continuum of Care, for providing technical assistance and data analysis to the Petersburg Continuum as it developed this plan.

Background, Overview and Purpose

In July 2011, Homeward received a grant from the Cameron Foundation to provide technical assistance to the Petersburg Continuum of Care. During the grant award period, Homeward worked with the United Way of Greater Richmond and Petersburg, the Crater Region's continuum's lead agency, and area service providers to improve the planning and coordination activities carried out in the community. The overarching purpose of this grant was to develop a community strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness in the Petersburg Continuum.

The primary mechanism for developing this plan has been a series of individual meetings and facilitated group discussions. Efforts were focused on four main activities: 1) orientation to the concept of community planning around homelessness and housing stability, 2) gathering information and strategy identification, 3) implementation of the key strategies, and 4) plan development and organizational design.

Below is a timeline of the events that contributed to the development of the community plan.

Orientation to the Concept of a Community Plan to Address Homelessness	Information Gathering and Strategy Identification	Strategy Implementation	Plan Development and Organization Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homeward provided an overview to the community on the continuum of care concept during a community orientation held at the Appomattox Regional Library in June 2010.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community conducted the bi-annual HUD-mandated Point-in-Time Count in January 2011 and presented the results to the community as a webinar.• In spring 2011, Homeward conducted a series of key informant interviews with service providers in the community to assess needs and identify system gaps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuum of Care funding process during for the 2010 HUD SHP grant process. This assistance included conducting site visits with Salvation Army and The Urban League, hosting ranking meeting and review of the CoC's Exhibit I.• Spring 2011 - community stakeholder meeting was held to discuss the development and implementation of a central portal of assistance for those experiencing a housing crisis. This resulted in St. Joseph's Villa successful application to DHCD for a grant to fund this activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summer 2011 - led a community conversation about merging the continuum with Richmond and the Balance of State Continuum.• Fall 2011 - held community conversations with the Crater Planning District, Petersburg Planning Department, the Cameron Foundation, and Southside Community Partners to discuss assuming the responsibilities of the CoC lead agency.• December 2011 the help a planning session to provide input on the draft plan.• February 2012 community stakeholders met adopted the draft community plan and agreed to form a free-standing coalition to address homelessness.

In partnership with the United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg Homeward, provided the staffing leadership for the development activities. Key staffing activities used to develop this plan included:

- the review of Ten-Year Plans to Prevent and End Homelessness in other communities
- key informant interviews with local service providers and other stakeholders
- review of data and regional trends related to homelessness and housing stability

The resulting document is this community plan - *The Crater Region's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* - to address homelessness and housing stability. This plan is a blueprint for the establishment of a coalition to address homelessness. Rather than being based on a ten-year time frame, the plan is a three-year strategic plan that provides direction for establishing the needed structure for a successful continuum and implementing the best practices that will help the community achieve its programmatic goals. Once a new coalition is established, the community will need to reconvene and further flesh out the community's goals and priorities and design a longer term plan for addressing homelessness.

Purpose

The goal of the Crater Region's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness is to

- develop a strategic vision for addressing housing stability,
- coalesce community support around strategies to create housing stability, and
- establish goals for a community that refuses to accept homelessness.

Vision

Our vision is to develop the community capacity and infrastructure that collaboratively works to address the housing, social, and financial needs of families and individuals experiencing housing instability in the Crater Region.

Our Guiding Principles

- We believe that our solutions must be tiered to create a continuum of services that adequately match services offered with the severity of individual and family crises.
- We believe that regional cooperation is critical to creating and implementing an effective plan to address homelessness. This requires us to work together to adequately share the burden of homelessness and housing instability, and thus, we will share the work and costs of implementing the solutions.
- We believe our plan should reflect the cultural and geographic diversity of the communities represented in our continuum. We also believe that our solutions must reflect the diversity of housing instability and homelessness in our community.
- We believe that any plan to address housing instability in the Crater Region must be comprehensive and include approaches from multiple disciplines and sectors in order to fully address the complex housing needs of our most vulnerable neighbors.

Our Mission

The Crater Area Coalition on Homelessness (CACH) was established to bring together community partners, service providers, and stakeholders to support the community's coordinated efforts to prevent and end homeless in the Crater Planning District. CACH's mission is to address housing instability by linking together community stakeholders to implement a regional strategic vision for creating a continuum that will be operational in Petersburg, Colonial Heights, Dinwiddie, Prince George, Hopewell, Surry, Sussex, Greensville and Emporia no later than 2015.

Our Target Population

Our efforts will focus on those persons experiencing housing instability in the Crater Region. Such individuals and families typically fall into two categories: 1) those persons who are housing insecure and 2) those persons currently experiencing homelessness.

Housing Insecure - This term refers to those who are at significant risk of losing their housing because they have housing that is not suitable for their household needs. This can include those living in housing that is unaffordable, unsafe, overcrowded, and/or does not adequately meet some other basic need.

Homeless - This term applies to individuals meeting the HUD criteria for homeless. At the time of this draft, the federal definition for homelessness includes:

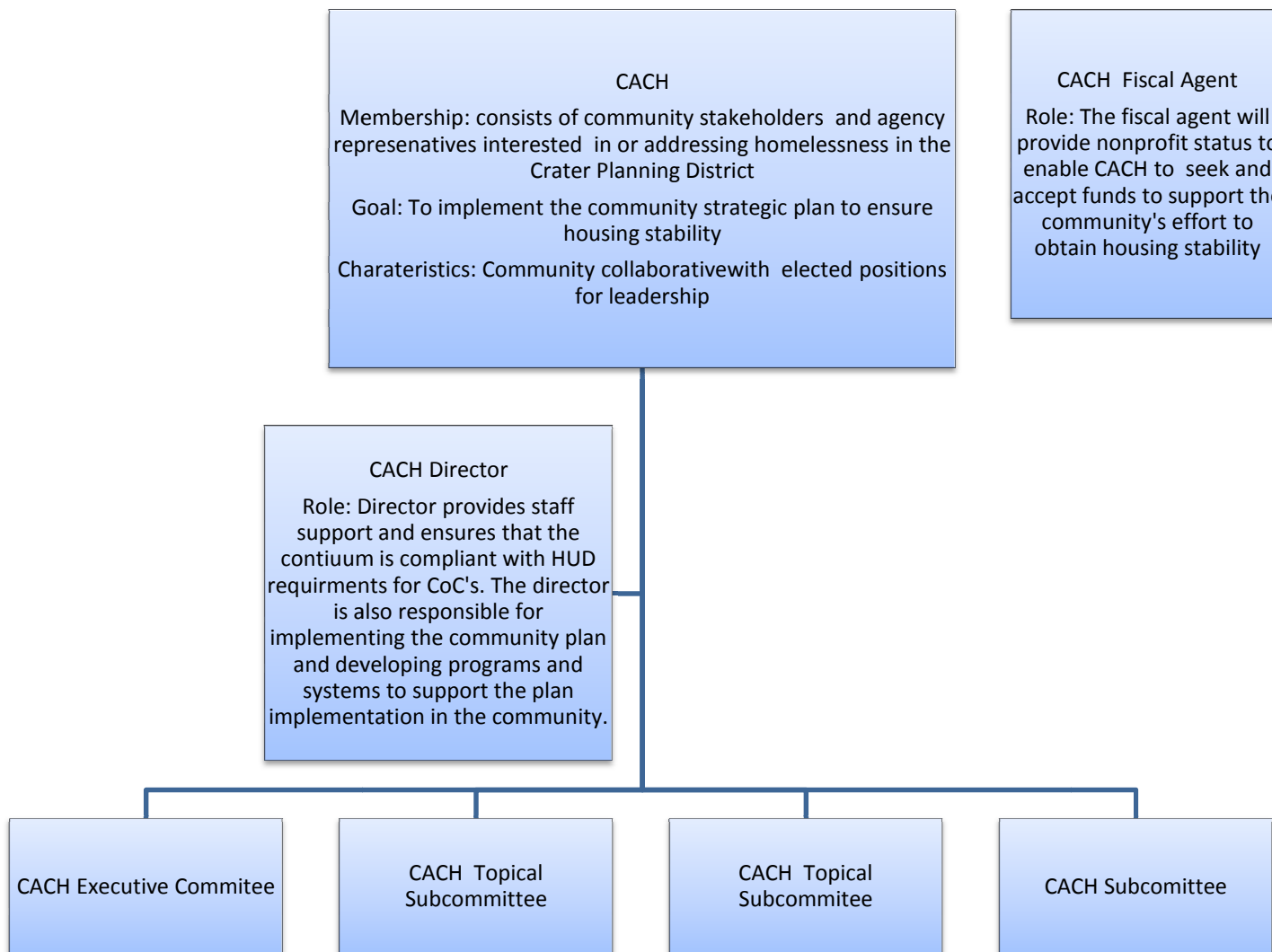
1. an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and
2. an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is -
 - A. a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);
 - B. an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
 - C. a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Our Structure

In order to meet the goals and implement the activities included in our community plan, our structure will be as follows.

The Crater Area Coalition on Homelessness (CACH) will carry out the goals and objectives identified in the *Crater Region's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*. CACH's membership will consist of stakeholders located in one of the localities in the region or stakeholders serving or receiving services in the Crater Planning District (see attached map for the localities included). It will function as a community collaborative and will be a stand-alone entity. Until CACH can establish its own nonprofit status, the collaborative will utilize a third-party fiscal agent so that it can seek and accept funding to support the collaborative's work. CACH will work to establish a timeline for becoming an independent nonprofit organization. Depending on the community's needs, CACH may hire staff to support the collaborative's work, fundraise for collaborative initiatives, and accomplish the HUD-defined tasks governing the actions of a continuum of care. The following chart provides a staffing structure for the administration of CACH.

Proposed Structure



Community Snapshot on Need

The number of individuals experiencing homelessness in the Petersburg Community

In January 2011, 69 adults in the area served by the Petersburg continuum were identified as experiencing homelessness. There were 57 single adults and 12 adults with children. The count also included seven children. Most people were found in local shelters (i.e., Salvation Army and CARES), but 11 people were found living outdoors.

Of this group, 30 individuals were identified as “chronically homeless.” which is defined by HUD as “an unaccompanied disabled individual who has been continuously homeless for over one year or has had four or more incidences of homelessness in the past three years.”

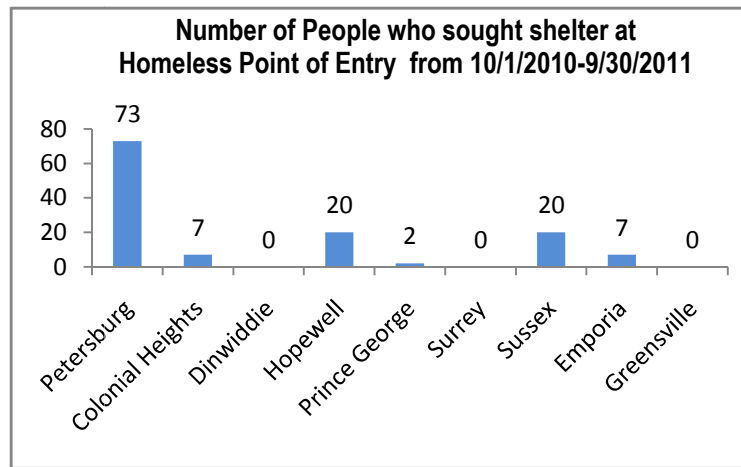
The following table shows the trends in the community’s homelessness count and chronic homelessness for the past three Point-in-Time Counts.ⁱ

	Overall Point-in-Time Count	Chronic Homeless Count Point-in Time Count
2008	97	22
2009	90	22
2011	69	30

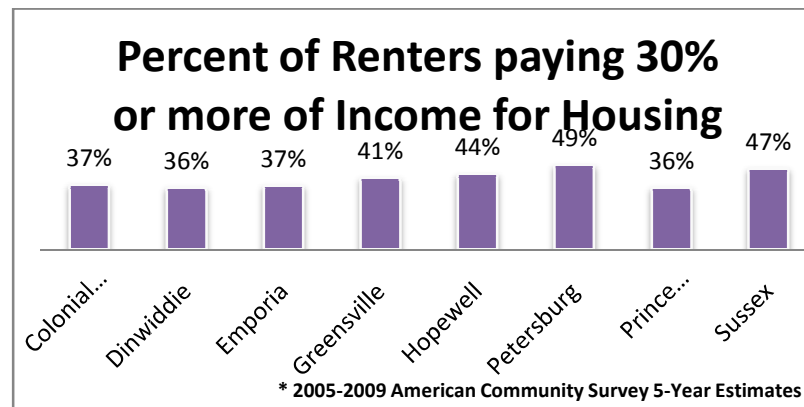
Estimating the community need for shelter

To estimate the need for shelter, a review was conducted of those seeking shelter through Commonwealth Catholic Charities Homeless Point of Entry (HPE). HPE is the central portal of entry into shelter for the Richmond area. Though HPE is based in Richmond, its staff receives calls and inquiries from those in the Crater community who are seeking shelter assistance.

The chart below provides a snapshot of HPE inquiries by locality in the Crater Region. From 2010 to 2011, HPE received a total of 129 inquiries about shelter from individuals and families. The largest numbers of individuals seeking shelter at HPE were from the Petersburg locality (73 inquiries from unique households).



Inquiries to HPE do not necessarily represent individuals who need assistance with prevention resources and are housing burdened. At the time of this publication, there is no good data source for identifying the need for prevention assistance. As a proxy for understanding who may need assistance with rental assistance, we reviewed data on the percent of individuals who are paying 30 percent or more of their income towards housing expenses. The chart below provides a per-locality breakdown of such “housing burdened” persons



In all localities, between one-third and one-half of the renters are housing burdened, and Petersburg has the highest number of renters who are housing burdened. Almost half of renters from the city of Petersburg pay 30 percent or more of their income towards housing.

A Plan to Prevent and End Housing Instability in the Crater Region

Based on the data and the input of community stakeholders, the Crater Region has developed a community plan to promote housing stability.

The overall values of the plan are:

- a focus on housing stability in addition to homelessness,
- a plan that is culturally appropriate and reflective of the regional diversity present in the continuum,
- a plan driven by qualitative and quantitative data and that allows for input from multiple data sources,
- a structure for leadership and implementation of the plan, and
- a plan that acknowledges community strengths and resources and identifies gaps and the need for additional resources.

The goals of our plan are to:

- support shelter and service providers in providing best practices for addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness,
- create a prevention and service system that focuses on housing stability through streamlined service provision,
- develop a sustainable structure, planning, coordination, and provision of services to individuals experiencing homelessness in the Crater Region, and,
- maximize the use of existing housing stock for permanent housing and develop community appropriate permanent and supportive housing for families and individuals.

Goal 1: Support shelter and supportive service providers in providing best practices for addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness

<u>Tasks</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>
Conduct a community needs assessment on shelter needs and develop an action plan based on the assessment. The goals of the needs assessment will be to review the population served by shelters, client needs and shelter utilization in the community.	Year 1
Develop community accepted definitions for homelessness, prevention, and housing stability.	Year 1
Based on the needs assessment findings, develop a blue print for a structured initiative to enhance the existing shelter stock and/or develop alternative programs that better meet client and community needs.	Year 1- Year 2
Implement the following effective shelter and case management practices in all shelters serving individuals in the community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing focused case management - Rapid Re-housing and housing first - Trauma informed case management - Motivational Interviewing and case management - Connections to mainstream service systems - Frequent Users of criminal justice and homeless services system - Recovery focused services for populations with SA/MH needs 	Year 3 – Year 5
Work with local government and funders to align funding decision with the priorities established in the community plan to address housing instability.	Year 2 – Year 3
Provide technical assistance on shelter policies, client needs, and service delivery to be offered to shelter and supportive services providers to assist with remaining relevant in the changing environment. Technical assistance will include direct assistance, one-on-one assistance to shelters on specific topic areas, regional annual workshop/conferences, and ad hoc trainings.	Ongoing

Goal 2: Create a prevention and service system that focuses on housing stability through streamlined service provision

<u>Tasks</u>	<u>Timelines</u>
Identify and document existing prevention providers in the community and develop a mechanism for sharing information on prevention resources.	Year 1

Review HCIS data to better understand client service needs and develop strategies based on identified typologies.	Year 1
Review existing outreach efforts to determine which populations are being effectively served.	Year 1
Coordinate intake and assessment for prevention resources and develop a strong network of community based prevention partners who have formal agreements.	Year 1- Year 2
Establish a community-wide assistance portal of entry that offers a full spectrum of services including information and referral, intake and assessment, financial assistance, conflict resolution, case management and emergency shelter placement.	Year 2- Year 3
Work with mainstream institutions including criminal justice, hospitals, child welfare and mental health providers to develop discharge plans that place individuals into permanent housing so that homelessness is avoided.	Year 1- Year 2
Work with mainstream service providers to establish protocols for working with individuals who are homeless and screening for eligibility for mainstream services.	Year 2- Year 3
Develop an on-going process for assessing prevention services, client accessibility and effective service delivery.	Ongoing

Goal 3: Develop a sustainable structure, planning, coordination, and provision of services to individuals experiencing homelessness in the Crater Region

<u>Tasks</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Formalize a coalition structure to carry out the planning and coordination work of the continuum and task a staff person with implementing the continuum structure. The continuum could choose to adopt the structure proposed in this document or develop another structure that is more suitable.	Year 1- Year 2
Develop a funding strategy to support the planning and coordination sustainability.	Year 1
Review existing initiatives in the continuum and develop a strategy for integrating homeless services into these efforts. Existing examples include mental health courts, prisoner re-entry work, and workforce initiatives.	Year 1 – Year 3

<p>Establish working groups/subcommittees that organize members around specific topic areas. The workgroups will fall under the coalitions existing structure and membership will be responsible for reviewing data and information to establish priorities, identifying responsible entities for addressing the priorities, and monitoring the success at achieving the priorities. Suggested subcommittees will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families and children • Adults and Chronically Homeless • Supportive services • Prevention services • Permanent housing services • Shelters • CoC Governance/Ranking Committee • Local government and funders • Data collection and planning • Ad hoc committees 	Year 1- Year 3
<p>Partner with other continuums, state and federal entities to understand patterns of service use and to coordinate better system of care for those at risk of homelessness. This includes partnering with adjacent continuums of care, and participation in the Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness.</p>	Year 2- ongoing
<p>Educate local officials, funders, and general public about homelessness in the continuum and advocate for community resources to support efforts to address the problem.</p>	Year 1 – Year 3

Goal 4: Maximize the use of existing housing stock for permanent housing and develop community appropriate permanent and supportive housing for families and individuals.

<u>Tasks</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Work with local departments of planning to map existing affordable housing stock and efforts to support affordable housing in the continuum.	Year 1
Partner with existing affordable housing providers to give priority and or maximize access to housing for those leaving homelessness. This include partnerships with LISC, Better Housing Coalition and local housing authorities.	Year 1- Year 2
Review CoC funding to support the development of small scale permanent supportive housing in the continuum.	Year 1- Year 3
Develop additional permanent housing to meet unmet community need.	Year 2- Year 3
Partner with permanent supportive housing providers to develop a needs assessment for PSH in the continuum and a development plan for creating additional PSH stock and recruitment plan for filling units with individuals from the continuum.	Year 1- Year 3

Work with service providers to meet the supportive services needs associated with providing PSH.	Year 1 – Year 3
Engage and educate private market landlords to consider renting to individuals leaving homelessness.	Year 1
Develop a robust system of housing brokerage services to assist and support people entering into permanent housing.	Year 2

ⁱ Community receiving HUD funds for serving the homeless are required to take a census of those experiencing homelessness every two years. This census is known as the Point-in-Time Count. The Petersburg Continuum of Care conducted counts in 2008, 2009, and 2011. The community decided not to conduct a count in 2010 since it was not required by HUD.