

DC INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS (ICH)

We convened a Round Table Meeting in advance of the ICH meeting on May, 11 2010. This forum was open to all members of the community, and it was intended to solicit input regarding key issues facing the ICH and those who are homeless in DC. This input was sought to inform the ICH planning process and committees. Participants were asked to reflect on the questions below and to offer their input through small group conversation and/or written comments. There were approximately twenty-eight participants in three groups. The following is a compilation of the discussions during the round table.

Tuesday, May 11 2010; 12:30-1:30pm; Central Union Mission

Topic: Homeless Resource Center Environment

The Strategic Action Plan to End Homelessness proposes to redesign the basic systems of care for both families and individuals; in order to accomplish this, resource centers will be utilized. The resource centers are intended to assist those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness by making linkages to relevant services and housing supports. One resource center will focus on families (adults accompanied by a minor child) and one will be available for individuals experiencing homelessness. The resource centers will be equipped to make linkages to programs that are targeted for specific populations such as those serving youth, seniors, veterans, couples, victims of domestic violence, those re-entering the community from corrections facilities or transitioning out of medical institutions.

1. What are the most important elements of the physical environment of the resource centers?

- Accessibility to public transportation
- Warm, welcoming environment
- Clean, bright environment
- ADA compliant facility
- Basic emergency supplies for families – food, diapers, etc.
- Access to computers and internet
- Functioning water fountains/toilets
- Television(s)
- Emergency Showers
- Play area for children
- Private intake areas
- Emergency rooms
- Trained, considerate staff members
- Storage areas

2. What services and activities should be available at these resource centers?

- Child Care services
- Ongoing trainings and workshops
- Resource Library
- Computers
- Mental Health services
- Outreach
- Drug counseling
- Peer Mentoring
- Housing Services
- Case Management
- Employment

- Representation from each District agency
- Legal Services
- Supplies to meet immediate needs like food and diapers
- self-help resources like computer terminals
- staff trained to provide a welcoming environment

Additional general comments about Resource Center:

- 1) Necessary to have a strong public awareness campaign to ensure that potential users are informed
- 2) Important to use clients/consumers in the planning process, and as possible also as mentors and staff at the RC
- 3) Important to provide assurances about how personal private info will be protected
- 4) Important for the RC to have outreach workers that go off-site to engaged folks at emergency shelters and follow-up with users as appropriate to ensure linkages/referrals are effective

Topic: Summer Planning and Hyperthermia

In compliance with the Homeless Services Reform Act of 2005 (HSRA), the District develops a Summer Hyperthermia Plan to describe how member agencies and their partners will coordinate to provide services for those who are homeless during instances of extreme weather. These services include street showers, cooling centers and emergency homeless facilities.

1. What are the most important issues to consider regarding the summer season in terms of maintaining safety and well being for persons experiencing homelessness?

- Transportation to cooling centers
- Portable Showers
- Bottled water for hydration
- Ensure that shelters are addressing facility and maintenance issues
- Clear, concise system-wide plan
- Water stations that are evenly spread throughout the city
- Street outreach
- A hyperthermia media campaign is needed to educate the public about the risk and resources
- Partnership with area businesses/ churches to provides services
- Adequate police/security presence
- Emergency food/clothing
- Fliers or cards with maps to water and cooling center

