

ACTION PLAN

This action plan identifies the top priority action steps our community should take over the next three years to continue our progress toward making homelessness *rare, brief, and nonrecurring*. All of these action steps will enhance our system.

However, generally not listed in the action plan, but forming the basis of continued success, is the need to ensure that we maintain our current funding, organizational structures, relationships, partnerships and available facilities. This does not mean that there should be no change in **how** we go about using those resources, but we cannot neglect the current bases of our success in order to move forward.

GOAL 1: TRANSFORM OUR SERVICE SYSTEM TO MAKE HOMELESSNESS RARE, BRIEF, AND NONRECURRING

Overview

For this plan to be successful it is necessary that services for persons who experience homelessness operate as a cohesive, comprehensive system. The system must incorporate all services in the community, whether they are part of the nonprofit, government or non-governmental sector. The assistance provided must also ensure that the basic needs for shelter and food are met, as well as access to stable housing.

The federal HEARTH Act creates some of the rationale for this goal. The HEARTH Act requires significant changes to the way localities deliver homeless services. Communities must now operate as a service delivery system rather than as a collection of individually funded projects. Funding will be predicated on meeting specific performance measures.

Our current system has made significant strides in creating a streamlined process of accessing services that incorporates prevention and diversion, utilizing an evidence-based assessment tool to determine the service needs of literally homeless households, and providing referrals for housing placements for those assessed to be the most vulnerable. These accomplishments were achieved through service providers and stakeholders coming together and operating as a coordinated system, as opposed to individual projects functioning as silos. While this has been a significant step forward, additional improvements can be made.

To be a truly successful model for coordinated service delivery, our network of agencies and community volunteers will collaborate to provide wraparound services to address specific homeless issues, such as

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family, chronic, and youth homelessness. Our goal is to integrate ancillary services, such as employment and behavioral and mental health, to facilitate our efforts to end homelessness and help to build resiliency around the sustainment of housing. Our plans for the next three years call for working with providers to create or enhance these networks, and expand or enhance these services.

Objective 1.1: Adapt our current system to ensure that it incorporates all necessary components to prevent and end homelessness and required by the HEARTH Act.	
Action Steps	Date
a. Diversion and prevention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Improve and enhance efforts for diversion, prevention, and access to mainstream resources and housing-focused case management ii. Collaborate with The Planning Council’s diversion and prevention system to ensure effective utilization of available resources 	March 2018
b. Continue to support and invest in “Housing First” and Rapid Re-Housing models for homeless families and individuals that provide housing-focused case management and resources necessary for community-based housing placement	2018
c. Support and enhance the Regional Housing Crisis Hotline through a shared governance system	Ongoing
d. Create and adopt standards of care for delivery of housing services, and provide community training opportunities to enhance the provision of Housing First, trauma-informed care	2018
e. Reduce shelter stays by repositioning shelters to provide short-term stays with reduced barriers to access, unified standards and procedures, and a focus on accessing permanent housing	2019 and ongoing

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Objective 1.2: Continually enhance the professionalism, effectiveness and accountability of the services system.	
Action Steps	Date
a. In partnership with regional educational institutions and the Regional Task Force to End Homelessness, create a regional professional development curriculum that addresses key knowledge gaps, including housing-focused case management, outreach for special needs populations, and person-centered planning and support	2019
b. Develop a partnership or contract for an external monitoring/evaluation process that provides regular, objective, and data-based analysis and evaluation of individual programs and overall system performance	2018

Objective 1.3: Ensure that housing and supportive services projects will receive appropriate and eligible referrals for housing placement.	
Action Steps	Date
a. The coordinated assessment process will be redesigned to incorporate priority grouping to ensure that those with the greatest service needs are placed in permanent supportive housing beds with intensive services	2018
b. Increase access to homeless services through enhancements to our communitywide system of coordinated assessment and prioritization and ongoing feedback from providers	2017 and Ongoing
c. Households experiencing a housing crisis who cannot be diverted will access emergency beds with as few barriers as possible, and independent of the operating hours of coordinated entry and assessment	2019
d. Ensure coordinated entry and assessment are well-advertised throughout the entire geography of Virginia Beach (print media and signage in public places, e.g. bus stations, food pantries, soup kitchens, etc.)	2018
e. Continue to use evidence-based assessment tools to determine service needs and appropriate connections to permanent solutions	2017 and Ongoing

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Objective 1.4: Enhance our system of capturing and reporting data.	
Action Steps	Date
a. Explore options to expand the effective use of Charity Tracker, increase users and link Charity Tracker data to the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), or transition over to the HMIS	2019
b. Provide monthly reports of critical data to the BEACH Governing Board and staff in order to monitor system performance and support key decision-making, and make available to the public	2017 and ongoing
c. Enhance and expand the regional HMIS to improve client data and support service delivery, evaluation, and communication between providers	Ongoing

Objective 1.5: Provide effective case management and aftercare services.	
Action Steps	Date
a. Build strong relationships with community and faith-based organization to provide aftercare services to newly-housed households in project-based housing	2019
b. Ensure permanent supportive housing providers are employing evidence-based models of case management that matches the service needs of the clients	2019
c. Prioritize professional development training of case management skills to ensure the implementation of appropriate and effective supportive services	2018

Objective 1.6: Complete and open the Housing Resource Center to expand and enhance our existing system, and replace the services provided by the Lighthouse Center.	
Action Steps	Date
a. Develop, construct, and operate center	Summer 2018
b. Develop a plan for the relocation of appropriate current services and the creation of new services for the Housing Resource Center, to include physical and virtual access	October 2017

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c. Solicit for and obtain appropriately skilled and qualified contractors to provide all appropriate services at the Housing Resource Center	January 2018
d. Seek to establish social enterprises as part of, or in conjunction with, the Housing Resource Center	August 2018
e. Develop and implement an access and security plan that provides a welcoming and safe environment for all at the building	Summer 2018 and ongoing
f. Develop and implement a transportation plan to ensure appropriate access opportunities are provided	Summer 2018 and ongoing
g. Develop and implement a health services plan that helps address critical health needs of the participants and enhances services to the community outside the Housing Resource Center	Summer 2018 and ongoing
h. Reduce impact of homelessness at the Oceanfront by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Working with churches and providers to modify the system of assistance in the Oceanfront area in order to reduce the impact on area neighborhoods, and increase coordination and effectiveness of services ii. Closing the Lighthouse Center upon opening the Housing Resource Center iii. Working with Judeo-Christian Outreach Center on potential changes in services and location iv. Focusing outreach and service coordination efforts at the Oceanfront during the spring, summer, and fall of 2018, potentially including a by-name list and schedule 	October 2017- June 2018 and ongoing

GOAL 2: ENDING FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

Overview

According to our annual PIT Counts, family homelessness has been steadily declining in Virginia Beach for the past five years. In 2017, family homelessness decreased by 44% since 2013. The 2017 PIT Count found 111 persons in families experiencing literal homelessness, compared to 200 persons in families in 2013.

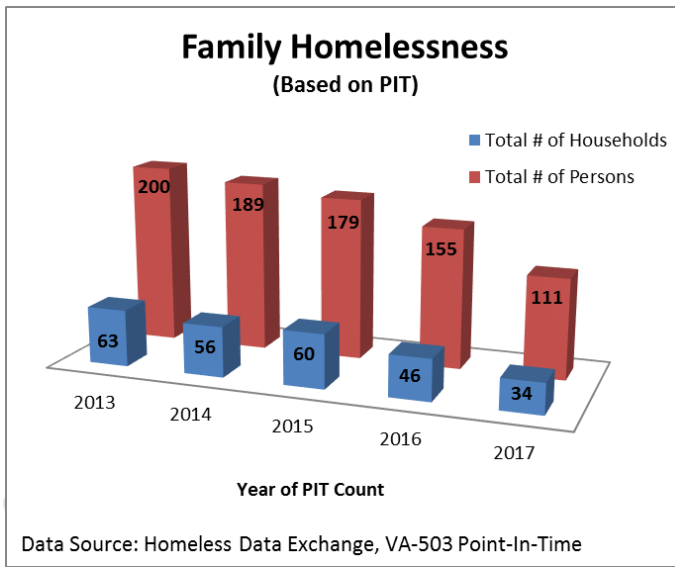
While these numbers are promising, there are still many families in Virginia Beach who are living below the federal poverty line and at risk of homelessness. Unemployment, lack of affordable housing, domestic

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violence, family breakups, and a decrease in government supports are some factors that contribute to family homelessness.

In 2016, the Virginia Beach City Public School system reported more than 800 school-age children lacked a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This means these children and their families were living in inadequate and unstable housing situations, such as doubled-up or hotel/motel living arrangements.

The data indicates our system is effectively addressing family homelessness. However, to be truly successful, we will enhance our system with better prevention and diversion strategies that are targeted to at-risk families. Families who are unable to avoid homelessness and have less severe barriers to housing will be connected to Rapid Re-housing assistance or a rental subsidy in order to help them become stably housed.



Objective 2.1: Reduce the number of families experiencing homelessness for the first time.

Action Steps	Date
a. Create a diversion program that will incorporate short-term case management, conflict mediation, financial assistance, and connections to mainstream services to prevent families from entering into shelter	2018

Objective 2.2: Provide appropriate shelter and survival assistance to ensure that homeless families are safe and protected as they transition from homelessness to stable housing.

Action Steps	Date
a. Ensure through the coordinated assessment policy and practice that the most vulnerable families who cannot avoid shelters are able to quickly access shelter and obtain needed supports that will decrease the negative outcomes associated with experiencing homelessness	2019

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b. Sustain our existing stock of family shelter beds to meet the scale of need of families experiencing street homelessness	2017 and ongoing
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Objective 2.3: Create affordable housing for families who have demonstrated a need for permanent rental housing subsidies.	
Action Steps	Date
a. Provide a percentage of Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8) to be targeted to formerly homeless families in need of a long-term subsidy	2019
b. Reallocate 10 Project-Based Voucher units to families in shelter and/or interim housing	2018

Objective 2.4: Target appropriate homeless assistance resources for families that are categorized as McKinney-Vento families.	
Action Steps	Date
a. Target prevention and diversion strategies to families with children under 18 years old who are doubled-up, self-payers in a hotel, or not yet in a place meant for human habitation	2018
b. Closely coordinate housing assistance and related services with Virginia Beach City Public Schools Project Hope	2017 and Ongoing

GOAL 3: ENDING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Overview

Historical data has consistently shown that the largest homeless subpopulation in Virginia Beach is single adult men and women. Of the 349 people who were identified as homeless during the 2017 PIT Count, there were 226 single adults, of which nearly 18% (62 persons) were defined as chronically homeless. Families or individuals who have been continually homeless for a year or more; or who have had four or

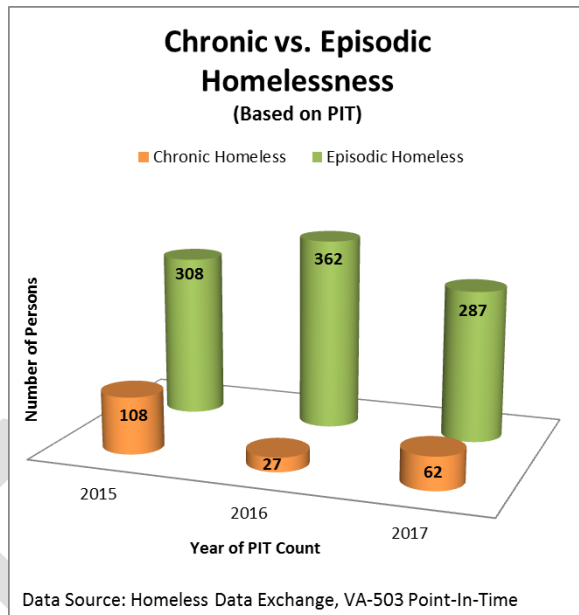
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more episodes of homelessness in the past three years are considered chronically homeless, as opposed to those who go in and out of homelessness (episodically homeless).

Since 2013, the city’s chronic homeless population has fluctuated between 7% and 26% of the overall homeless population.

Persons experiencing chronic homelessness typically struggle with medical conditions, physical disabilities, mental illness, or substance abuse. Not only is it difficult for these individuals to get back into housing, their conditions are compounded by long periods of homelessness, putting them at risk of premature death.

It is estimated that the cost to the community for police and court intervention, jail stays, and emergency medical services and hospital visits can be more than \$20,000 per person per year. Ending chronic homelessness can drastically reduce public costs and help free up resources that can be used toward preventing and ending episodic homelessness.



Objective 3.1: Ensure those experiencing street homelessness are provided opportunities to connect to the housing crisis response system

Action Steps	Date
a. Increase outreach staff to ensure outreach efforts cover the entire geography of Virginia Beach, and coordinate across all providers	November 2017
b. Create an outreach plan that includes opportunities for communication and collaboration among a broad range of community service providers, business owners, and neighbors helping to identify the location of encampments	November 2018 and ongoing
c. Develop a multi-system approach of sharing information across outreach teams to include PATH Outreach, and coordinate with other systems (e.g. hospitals, jails, other emergency systems)	November 2018 and ongoing

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Objective 3.2: Provide appropriate shelter and survival assistance to ensure that the chronically homeless are safe and protected as they transition from homelessness to stable housing.	
Action Steps	Date
a. Continue to operate the Winter Shelter program in winter 2017-18, and evaluate the need for it during spring and early summer 2018	Fall 2018
b. Ensure emergency shelters are incorporating trauma-informed, harm reduction strategies and housing-focused case management in order to rapidly connect chronic households to appropriate permanent housing solutions	2018

Objective 3.3: Increase the number of permanent housing beds and target them for persons experiencing chronic homelessness.	
Action Steps	Date
a. Establish policies and provider agreements so that 20% of turnover of non-chronic permanent supportive housing beds will be allocated to chronic households	2020
b. Through the Continuum of Care (CoC) application process, compete for bonus funding in order to create more permanent supportive housing beds for chronic households	2017 and Ongoing
c. Continue to prioritize documented chronic households for housing placement and wraparound services to increase the rate of housing and foster stability	2017 and Ongoing

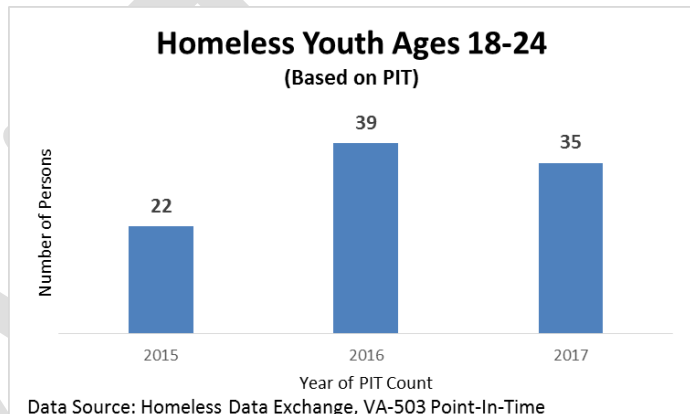
Objective 3.4: Prioritize the improvement of health and well-being of those with the longest history of homelessness by addressing physical and behavioral health issues to increase their quality/quantity of life.	
Action Steps	Date
a. Increase access to health care, including behavioral and substance abuse treatment, free of charge for those without insurance or income	2018
b. Support, enhance, and expand relationships with providers to provide medication at low or no cost to those with little to no income or insurance	2019

GOAL 4: ENDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Overview

HUD defines “homeless youth” as an unaccompanied individual 24 years of age and younger who is disconnected from a parent, guardian, or spouse. Federal requirements for counting the youth homeless population for PIT began in 2015. According to our 2017 PIT Count, there were 54 homeless youth under the age of 24, of which, 34 were unaccompanied.

Homeless youth face unique challenges and dangers on the street. They are especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation, criminal victimization, and traumatic stress. Therefore, youth and young adults need a full range of comprehensive, accessible services to become stably housed to help them successfully develop into adulthood.



Although our system has shelter beds dedicated to youth ages 17 and under, there are no specific beds for youth ages 18-24.

Helping this vulnerable group, including those aging out of foster care or who are LGBT, must be a priority in our system in order to get them off the streets and connected to housing and services.

Objective 4.1: Provide appropriate shelter and survival assistance to ensure that the unaccompanied homeless youth are safe and protected as they transition from homelessness to stable housing.

Action Steps	Date
a. Create transitional housing for youth who are not ready to live independently with a focus on developing life skills and staying in school or securing employment	2020
b. Continue to prioritize vulnerable homeless youth as equally as those who are identified as chronic in order to quickly access emergency crisis beds	2017 and Ongoing

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Objective 4.2: Reduce number of youth and young adults experiencing youth homelessness.	
Action Steps	Date
a. Continue to support the disconnected youth committee to maintain and expand engagement and support services for youth, and identify best practices for youth housing and services	2017 and Ongoing
b. Ensure at least one outreach team member has the cultural competency to engage the youth population and facilitate system access	2018
c. Work with Human Services and youth service providers to identify and connect youth to services and housing	2018

Objective 4.3: Ensure an adequate supply of housing that is appropriate for disconnected youth.	
Action Steps	Date
a. Create and implement plans to address permanent housing needs and funding for disconnected youth	2018
b. Allocate 10 (1/3) permanent housing apartments located at the Housing Resource Center to unaccompanied youth	2018
c. Research the utilization of host homes for youth aging out of the foster care system	2019

GOAL 5: MAINTAIN AND INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF PERMANENT, ACCESSIBLE, AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Overview

One of the fundamental causes of homelessness is the gap between a household's income and the cost of housing. People are generally extremely poor at the time they become homeless. An adequate supply of housing that is affordable is a permanent, cost effective solution to homelessness that provides benefits to the entire community.

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The relatively high cost of housing in Virginia Beach poses a significant challenge to lower income families. A recent study that looked at housing affordability challenges in Virginia Beach found that more than one-third of all households in Virginia Beach, approximately 61,420, are cost-burdened. This means these households pay more than 30% of their income for housing, the accepted standard for housing affordability.

Renters and owners have different housing costs, and renters are more likely to grapple with housing affordability challenges. A disproportionately large share of renters have low household incomes, less than 80% of Area Median Income (AMI). Renters are also disproportionately cost burdened (51%).

Households that pay more than 30% of their income for housing may have to make choices between housing and other necessities like medical care, transportation or food. Such households are at risk of homelessness through a single event, such as loss of employment or a medical emergency.

Compelling evidence of the housing affordability crisis was also demonstrated in September 2012, when applications were accepted for Virginia Beach Housing Choice vouchers, a federally-funded rental subsidy. In one week, approximately 5,000 applications for assistance were received from Virginia Beach residents alone.

Objective 5.1: Continue to support the development of affordable housing units to meet identified priority housing needs using all available methods.	
Action Steps	Date
a. Contract for the operation of the 30 available efficiency apartments at the Housing Resource Center as permanent supportive housing	January 2018
b. Complete and open Church St. Station Apartments in Norfolk: will include 10 units of permanent supportive housing for formerly homeless Virginia Beach residents	January 2018
c. Support the development of Price St. Apartments: 260 units of affordable housing, including 20 subsidized units	2019
d. Continue to utilize Housing Choice Vouchers as appropriate to support the development of new housing	Ongoing
e. Implement a housing strategy plan to obtain and utilize funding and other incentives to support development of affordable housing citywide	2019

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Objective 5.2: Expand housing services to facilitate access to rental housing.	
Action Steps	Date
a. Ensure the availability of housing locator services to support rapid re-housing programs	June 2018
b. Support, expand, or create landlord recruitment and retention strategies to increase landlord partnerships	2018

Objective 5.3: Ensure an adequate supply of housing that is appropriate for all populations.	
Action Steps	Date
a. Increase the supply of community-based permanent supportive housing to meet the needs of households with high acuity and the longest history of homelessness	2018
b. Use Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8) to provide opportunities for permanent supportive housing residents to transition to community-based housing	January 2019
c. Continue to use HOME and other funds for temporary rental subsidies for very-low-income and/or disabled households	Ongoing

GOAL 6: INCREASE LEADERSHIP, COLLABORATION, AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN OUR COMMUNITY EFFORTS

Overview

Ending homelessness only occurs where there is a strong, informed community commitment and partnership evidenced by the involvement and support of business and civic leaders, public officials; faith-based volunteers; and housing, human services, and health care providers.

Although significant progress has been made, collaboration across all sectors must be increased to establish and implement action plans that will end homelessness. There must also be additional ongoing

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opportunities for citizen engagement through educational programs, volunteerism, and public-private partnerships.

Innovation -- in the use of resources, interaction with our partners, and how we work with our homeless citizens -- has been a key factor in the development of model programs, such as the creation of five regional efficiency apartments, and must continue to inform our work.

Greater involvement, better coordination, and more innovation will generate new ways to achieve our goals and more support for achieving them.

Objective 6.1: Maintain and expand partnerships with all those who wish to be a part of the effort to prevent and end homelessness.	
Action Steps	Date
a. Continue to improve the governance and transparency of the BEACH Governing Board by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Examining and adopting a policy regarding conflict of interest issues ii. Reviewing term limits and ensuring that regular appointments and elections continue iii. Developing an orientation process for board members 	November 2017
b. Support the continued participation of all participants of the BEACH Community Partnership, and ensure its openness to new organizations and people by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Seeking to ensure continued participation by smaller organizations through outreach, support, and communication strategies ii. Enhancing recognition of all participants for their contributions iii. Providing an organized and open process for utilization of available office and classroom space at the Housing Resource Center iv. Conducting outreach to new potential participants from faith, university, and business communities 	Ongoing
c. Create a Community Advisory Committee to provide community input on the development of the Housing Resource Center	October 2017
d. Create partnerships with higher education institutions to provide interns and volunteers to support the system and key services	March 2018
e. Develop an employment and training program in partnership with the Regional Task Force to End Homelessness	March 2018

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f. Support and strengthen the network of services and housing available to address youth (ages 18-24) homelessness	October 2018
g. Work closely with Virginia Beach City Public Schools to address needs of school children and their families without regular or appropriate housing	Ongoing
h. Enhance existing and create new partnerships with the corrections, behavioral health, and health and foster care systems to prevent people being discharged to homelessness; include reviews of discharge policies and pre-discharge housing planning.	2019
Objective 6.2: Increase community knowledge about homelessness and our community's efforts, successes and challenges.	
Action Steps	Date
a. Disseminate a monthly newsletter and other publications about the Housing Resource Center	August 2017 and ongoing
b. Post and make available data and reports for stakeholder and public review and utilization	September 2017 and ongoing
c. BEACH Governing Board should regularly identify and publish key system gaps and community needs as part of an ongoing system of engaging partners and creating understanding in the community	May 2018 and ongoing

GOAL 7: DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT OUR ONGOING COMMUNITY EFFORT

Overview

Predictable and sustainable funding for programs is required to achieve the goals of our plan. In an era of diminished federal funding and economic uncertainty, it is important to identify new and diversified revenue sources, redirect existing funding to support high performance programs, and create partnerships to leverage new resources.

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Objective 7.1: Maintain and increase the availability of funding to address community needs and system gaps.	
Action Steps	Date
a. Support the VB Home Now foundation’s ongoing fundraising efforts for the Housing Resource Center	2017 and ongoing
b. Develop and implement outcome-based requirements so that funding is directed to the most effective programs	2018
c. Seek new funding from diverse and all appropriate sources in conjunction with partners by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Becoming a high performing Continuum of Care (CoC) to qualify for bonus funding ii. Identifying a non-federal, ongoing source of funds for a short-term “Housing First” program that helps potential renters overcome one-time barriers to renting existing market-rate housing units iii. Seeking foundation, social investment, or other new funding sources 	2019
d. Seek support to establish a housing trust fund or similar mechanism to provide local support for affordable housing	2019
e. Explore the use of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to support housing options	October 2018
f. Maintain and continually improve our system of services to qualify for and obtain all available federal and state CoC and Virginia Homeless Solutions Program (VHSP) resources	Ongoing
g. Identify and develop plans to preserve existing affordable housing stock that may need improvement or may be threatened with conversion to market rate	2018
h. Support and participate in policy and resource development initiatives at the regional and state levels to promote resources that will support plan objectives	Ongoing