

Benefits of Regional Cooperation



The cooperation of localities to address homelessness has produced benefits to citizens and to the governments themselves in the following ways:

- The risk to each city of moving too far on its own and being seen as an attraction for homelessness is reduced; rather, the risk and the benefits are shared regionally.
- Funding and resources are leveraged.
- Major housing projects, that none of the localities would likely have been able to afford on its own, have been developed or are in the process.
- Ideas and strategies for addressing regional homelessness are communicated and shared between the localities.

For more information about the South Hampton Roads Regional Task Force on Ending Homelessness, visit www.VBgov.com/housing or call (757) 385-5761.

Boundaries Don't Have to Be Barriers

HOW SEVEN LOCALITIES IN VIRGINIA ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO END HOMELESSNESS

The South Hampton Roads Regional Task Force on Ending Homelessness

Homelessness Isn't Confined to City Borders

On any given day, nearly 1,400 individuals in South Hampton Roads experience homelessness¹. Thirty-seven percent experience chronic homelessness.

It's not uncommon for homeless individuals who spend their nights in one city to seek services during the day in another. South Hampton Roads localities agree that homelessness is a regional problem and needs a regional solution.

ABOUT THE SOUTH HAMPTON ROADS REGIONAL TASK FORCE ON ENDING HOMELESSNESS

Thus, the South Hampton Roads Regional Task Force on Ending Homelessness (Task Force), a collaboration of seven localities in Virginia -- the Cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Isle of Wight County -- and non-profit organizations, The Planning Council and United Way of South Hampton Roads, was formed in 2005.

The Task Force is the "working group" that implements the regional activities approved by the Mayors and Chairs of the localities in South Hampton Roads. It consists of staff participants from a variety of offices in the localities, all dedicated to getting regional projects accomplished. Together, through the Task Force, these localities and organizations address homelessness on a regional basis as an addition to each locality's individual efforts. As a result of their regional cooperation, they have achieved major successes in raising awareness, building new housing units, leveraging funding, and expanding access to existing housing. These localities achieved results together that they could not have achieved separately.

The South Hampton Roads Regional Task Force on Ending Homelessness is a testament to what can be accomplished when local governments work together to solve a problem. It is through the Task Force that homelessness projects get planned, organized and accomplished. This brochure is a brief summary of their accomplishments thus far and the benefits of the regional collaboration.

¹ Based on January 2007 Point in Time Count

REPORT ON REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS: “HOMELESSNESS IN SOUTHSIDE HAMPTON ROADS”

“Homelessness in Southside Hampton Roads” provides an overview of the region’s homeless population, the housing and shelter capacity, and funding of homeless intervention and prevention programs. Also included in the report is each locality’s analysis of its programs and services for the homeless and low-income populations and the proposals or initiatives to address any gaps.

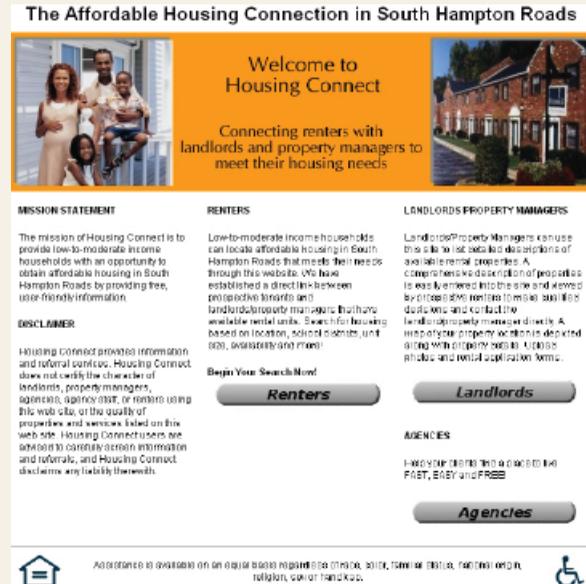
“Homelessness in Southside Hampton Roads” has become a key tool for educating city leaders, organizations and the public about the scope of the homelessness issue in the region.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING DATABASE: “HOUSING CONNECT”

Using a grant from the United Way of South Hampton Roads, the Task Force implemented “Housing Connect”

(www.housingconnect.org), an online database of affordable housing options in South Hampton Roads. This centralized resource administered by The Planning Council, a non-profit human services organization headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia, provides access to up-to-date housing information with user-friendly tools such as a Housing Locator, a Housing Affordability Calculator, and a Housing Services Locator.

“Housing Connect” streamlines the search process for low-to-moderate income households and connects them to the affordable rental properties and housing resources in the region.



SOUTH HAMPTON ROADS REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENDING HOMELESSNESS

The conferences provide a forum for local and regional leaders, service providers and industry stakeholders to share best practice information and promote strategic planning.

The two conferences have featured Philip F. Mangano, Executive Director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness as the keynote speaker, and subject matter experts from across the country that presented best practices in addressing homelessness.



REGIONAL SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANCY (SRO) PROJECTS: GOSNOLD AND CLOVERLEAF APARTMENTS

A significant accomplishment of the Task Force is the development of the only two regional Single Room Occupancy (SRO) buildings in the nation:

Gosnold Apartments - Located in Norfolk, Virginia

- Partnership between Cities of Norfolk, Portsmouth and Virginia Beach and Virginia Supportive Housing (VSH).
- Houses 60 formerly homeless single adults from Norfolk, Portsmouth and Virginia Beach.
- Named “Best Housing Development” in Virginia in 2007.



Gosnold Apartments

Cloverleaf Apartments - Located in Virginia Beach, Virginia

- Partnership between Cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth and Virginia Beach and VSH.
- Houses 60 formerly homeless single adults from Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth and Virginia Beach.
- First to be certified by EarthCraft Virginia for energy and resource efficiency.



Rendering of Cloverleaf Apartments

In both projects, the use of housing choice vouchers administered by a housing authority or housing agency is key to the project’s financial feasibility. Some vouchers were obtained through the homeless Continuum of Care process, and some were awarded to VSH for the project under the project-based authority of the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Residents are connected to resources, training and employment opportunities.

These projects have decreased homelessness and added to the stock of permanent supportive housing in the region. They also enhance the physical quality of the community by transforming vacant, dilapidated structures into quality, viable housing and tax-generating properties in the cities where they are located.

SOUTH HAMPTON ROADS REGIONAL PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

Each South Hampton Roads locality has committed to the development of a regional plan to end homelessness, intended to enhance and formalize the regional efforts already underway, which have resulted in these major successes, and identify additional initiatives to be pursued collaboratively.

The regional plan will commit the localities to continuing to work together and will not substitute or override each locality’s own plan to end homelessness, but rather build upon them. It will also demonstrate each locality’s commitment to work together in a way that reduces overall costs and increases overall benefits, without shifting the costs or burdens around the region.