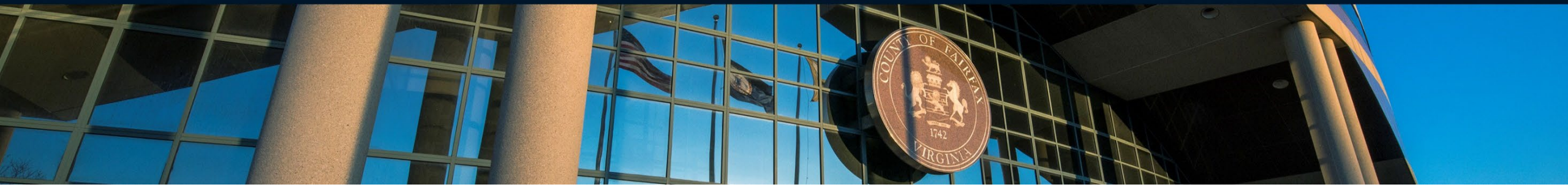
FAIRFAX COUNTY
VIRGINIA



Partners in Progress: Improving Our Response to Homelessness

Thomas Barnett, Deputy Director, Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, HCD
David Meyer, Chair, Continuum of Care Board

March 25, 2025

Fair Ridge Shelter



- **January 29**
  - Planning Commission approved use of hotel as shelter
- **Before April 1**
  - Prepare for building and fire code inspections
  - Moving families out of Embry Rucker Community Shelter
- **April 1 and later**
  - Move adults from Temporary Overnight Shelter to Rucker shelter
  - Move families from Henry, Rucker, and scattered hotel locations into Fair Ridge
  - Phase 2 – the Capital Improvement Program will fund more substantial renovations, enabling the North County domestic violence shelter to be relocate and integrated into Fair Ridge

Continuum-of-Care Funding

- **January 17, 2025, award announcement:**
  - Fairfax awarded $12,374,905
  - 17% increase with extra $1.79 million for rising rental costs
  - HUD only committed 90% of funding needed for renewals
  - Funding for lowest-ranked, 25-bed supportive housing project was lost
  - Utilizing other project vacancies to ensure individuals do not lose housing
- **Uncertainty when grant agreements will arrive.**
  - Approx. 530 disabled individuals, domestic-violence survivors, and youth served annually in 18 rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing projects
- **Awaiting "CoC Builds" award announcement**
- **Looming regional impact on employment, donations, & homelessness**

Other News

- **Point-in-Time count conducted January 22**
  - Results in May via the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
- **Hypothermia Prevention Program ends March 31**
  - Fair Ridge opening will create more capacity at Rucker for adults leaving Hypo
- **Panhandling survey contract awarded to Urban Institute**
  - Survey to be conducted over spring and early summer
  - Results anticipated in late summer this year

CoC Board Update

- **Re-chartered in FY 2024, meeting monthly**
- **Work so far includes:**
  - Orientation to role and responsibilities
  - Updated bylaws and policies
  - Learned about local services and innovative programs
  - Analyzed shelter supply and demand
  - Identified gaps in services and needed programming
  - Met with FCPS for update on homeless school-age population
  - Reviewed federal strategic plan
  - Formed new committees, including Strategic Planning, and people who have experienced homelessness will be members of each committee
  - Vetted NAACP encampment closure recommendations

Preventing and Ending Homelessness
Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless

Next Steps

- **Inclusive community engagement and strategic planning:**
  - Solicitation for consultant published Feb. 5, 2025
  - Proposals were due March 5, 2025
  - Selection committee reviewing proposals
  - Engagement expected in summer 2025
- **Strategic planning (Fall 2025)**
  - CoC Board and staff will work with consultant
  - Synthesizing feedback from the community
  - Bringing strategic recommendations to the Board of Supervisors

Encampment Closure Policies

In September 2024 Chairman McKay asked staff and the CoC Board to review the NAACP's recommendations on closure policies.

Recommendation #1

"If an encampment must be cleared, the county should offer residents an indoor shelter at least with overnight accommodation, where they can receive food and social services. Vulnerable tent campers— those who are elderly or have mental or physical health issues—should be offered daytime shelter as well. Homeless campers must be notified of how to obtain alternate shelter."

CoC Board Response:

- Shelter should be provided
- But capacity is limited
- Use all space in existing shelters
- Consider safety, nonprofit capacity

Recommendation #2

"The time and date of any planned removal must be announced at least two weeks in advance both publicly (in the county website and in a press release and to the tent encampment (through posted notices)."

CoC Board Response:

- Inform residents sleeping outside, as well as service organizations
- More than two weeks is preferred

Recommendation #3

"County employees sent to clear an encampment must include co-responders — mental health professionals from the Community Services Board as well as officers trained in de-escalation techniques — to carry out the operation without harm to the homeless people."

CoC Board Response:

- Agreed in staffing response
- Important to document protocol for all applicable agencies

Recommendation #4

"Witnesses must be invited. These could include a representative of the National Lawyers Guild in DC or an attorney or representative of a civil rights group such as NAACP."

CoC Board Response:

- Witness should not be invited
- Trained, caring staff sufficient
- Consider residents' privacy during stressful event

Recommendation #5

"Homeless people who are being displaced should not be arrested. Being homeless is not a crime."

CoC Board Response:

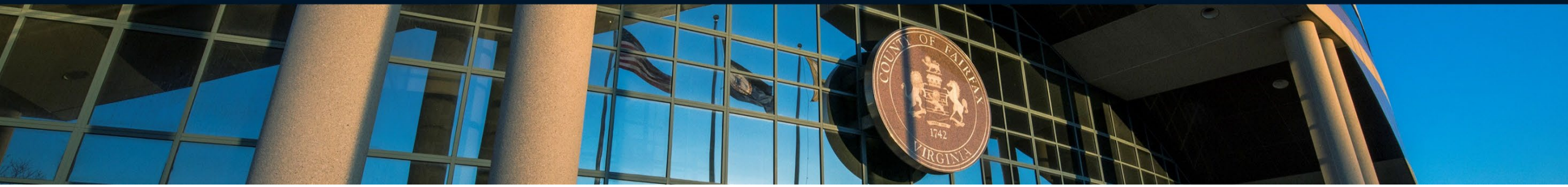
- Agreed

Recommendation #6

"The belongings that the homeless people wish to help should be put in storage for 60 days at a known location accessible by transit so the person can retrieve them at no cost."

CoC Board Response:

- Good intent, bad in practice
- Resources more strategically invested in other programs



Thank You!

Questions? Contact:

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