

The Journey Home

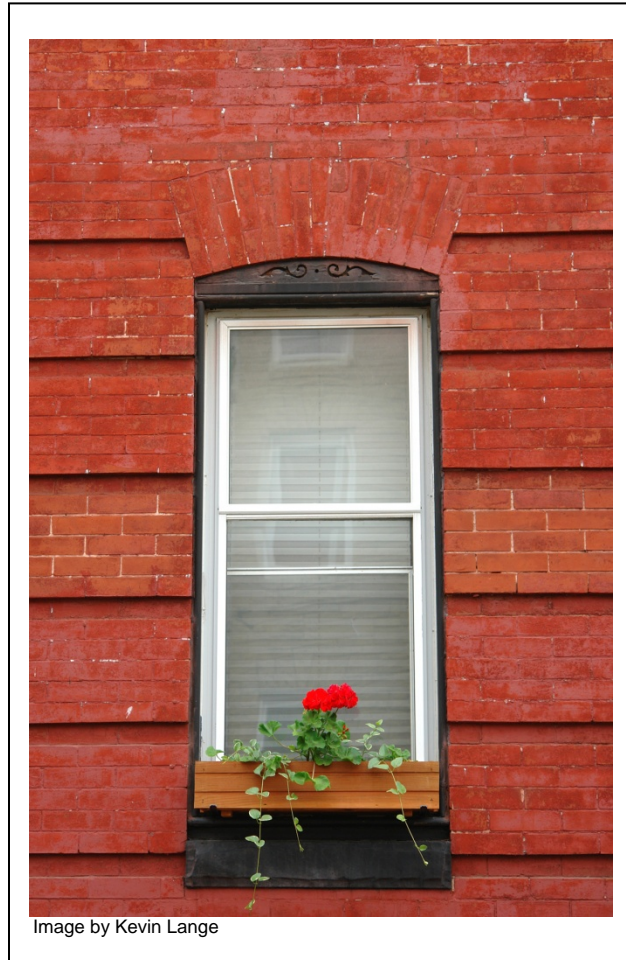


Image by Kevin Lange

Baltimore City's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness

One Year Outcome Summary
March 2009



Sheila Dixon, Mayor

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The Journey Home

The Journey Home: Baltimore City's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness was released by Mayor Dixon on January 17th 2008. It focuses on four major goal areas that address the root causes of homelessness: affordable housing, comprehensive health care, sufficient incomes, and preventive and emergency services. With this plan, Baltimore will implement specific actions to provide and maintain sufficient housing in order to re-house persons experiencing homelessness and to help them remain stably housed.

Throughout the first year of implementation the following achievements should be highlighted:

- ◆ More than 100 people have been stably housed in the Housing First model using the Mayor's set-aside of Housing Choice Vouchers for people who are homeless. Approximately another 30 clients are now in process for this program.
- ◆ The City has maintained the highest number of emergency shelter beds in history with 200 beds at satellite locations throughout the summer months and 350 24-hour beds at 210 Guilford Avenue for at least the next year.
- ◆ The Planning Commission has approved a request for conditional use approval for an \$8 million, 24-hour Housing and Resource Center at 620 Fallsway. The project has received all necessary approvals and construction is expected to begin in July 2009.
- ◆ A partnership with the United Way of Central Maryland has been established to assist with the fundraising, fiscal, and marketing components of the Baltimore City 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.
- ◆ Baltimore Mental Health Systems and Baltimore Health Care Access have been charged with coordinating the Hands in Partnership Initiative (HIP). This coalition of homeless outreach providers meets weekly to review outreach cases and share resources. The HIP initiative has already gone a long way in decreasing the duplication of services within homeless outreach. The Downtown Partnership, Waterfront Partnership, and Baltimore City Police Department meet regularly with the Hands in Partnership outreach coalition.

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<p><i>Goal I. Affordable Housing: By 2018, Baltimore will create and maintain a supply of housing sufficient to rapidly re-house homeless individuals and families and meet the needs of those at risk of homelessness; these individuals and families will have access to housing affordable to them in the least restrictive possible environment and will receive the supportive services necessary to remain stably housed.</i></p>		
<p>Objective 1: Support and/or develop alternative housing models that serve homeless individuals and families.</p>		
Action	First Year Benchmarks	First Year Outcomes
<p>1.1: Lease 500 “Housing First” units to individuals and families who have experienced homelessness for a long period of time or have multiple barriers to housing.</p>	<p>Create and maintain housing for 100 chronically homeless individuals and families in a “housing first” model.</p>	<p>More than 100 individuals and families have been stably housed in the Housing First model using Housing Choice Vouchers. Approximately another 30 clients are now in the process receiving a voucher.</p>
<p>1.2: Acquire and develop 25 permanent supportive housing projects for homeless families and individuals.</p>	<p>Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development will commence site selection and identify three sites for future development.</p>	<p>BHS is working with DHCD to identify properties that can be rehabilitated utilizing the recently awarded Neighborhood Stabilization stimulus funds.</p>
<p>1.3: Establish standards of care for permanent supportive housing to be monitored by Baltimore Homeless Services.</p>	<p>Create and disseminate supportive housing standards.</p>	<p>BHS has collected standards from AIRS, Community Housing Associates, and the Baltimore Area Association for Supportive Housing and is compiling the standards into a document for distribution.</p>
<p>Objective 2: Increase the number of rental subsidies received by homeless persons.</p>		
Action	First Year Benchmarks	First Year Outcomes
<p>1.4: Move individuals into subsidized housing by prioritizing those non-elderly persons with disabilities who are chronically homeless for the housing opportunities established under the Bailey Consent Decree in the Housing Choice Voucher program (Section 8).</p>	<p>HABC will amend its administrative plan to include a priority within its priority for non-elderly persons with disabilities for non-elderly persons with disabilities who are chronically homeless.</p>	<p>This preference is included in HABC’s new Administrative Plan to HUD and will take effect once the plan is approved in March.</p>
<p>1.5: Work with the Maryland Legislature and the Baltimore City Council to support legislation for a city anti-discrimination law for renters</p>	<p>Maryland Legislature or Baltimore City Council will introduce anti-discrimination legislation.</p>	<p>This recommendation was introduced in the last Maryland Legislative Session and did not pass. The bill will likely be</p>

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with regards to source of income (e.g. TANF, SSI, Housing Choice Vouchers, etc.).		reintroduced.
Objective 3: Develop means to preserve and upgrade existing affordable housing to households with “very” and “extremely” low-income people.		
Action	First Year Benchmarks	First Year Outcomes
1.6: Advocate for Congress to restore funding to both maintain the current stock of public housing and create new affordable units.	City, State and Federal officials will advocate for full funding of operating subsidy and Housing Choice Vouchers and for a substantial increase in the funding of capital fund from HUD.	Public housing preservation funds are included in the stimulus legislation.
Objective 4: Design approaches for developers to create affordable housing targeted to homeless persons or those in danger of becoming homeless.		
Action	First Year Benchmarks	First Year Outcomes
1.7: Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development should provide bonus points to applications for Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) financing for projects serving homeless individuals and families.	DHCD will begin process of amending Maryland’s Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) for the Low Income Housing Tax Program.	Due to the credit crunch the tax credit industry has substantially diminished. As a result, the feasibility of this recommendation is being reevaluated.
1.8: Advocate for increased funding for Maryland DHCD’s Shelter and Transitional Housing Grant Program and amend program guidelines to include permanent housing.	Maryland DHCD will amend program guidelines.	Permanent housing programs are now eligible for these funds.
1.9: Review and amend the Zoning Code of Baltimore City to remove barriers to creating housing for homeless people.	Baltimore City Planning Department will make recommendations to the City Council to amend the Zoning Code to remove provisions restricting the construction of housing for homeless persons so that the requirements will be the same as for other multifamily housing.	The feasibility of this recommendation is still being discussed.
1.10: Include as a prominent part of the City’s advocacy agenda the establishment of state and federal Affordable Housing Trust Funds so developers can create housing for households with extremely low-incomes (≤30% AMI).	The Baltimore City Delegation will advocate for the creation of state and federal Affordable Housing Trust Funds.	An Affordable Housing Trust Fund has been passed on the federal level and advocacy continues to ensure that it is properly supported. There is an active advocacy campaign to create a Trust Fund on the State level. Legislation has been

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		introduced.
<p>Goal II. Comprehensive Health Care: <i>By 2018, all Baltimoreans will have access to comprehensive and affordable health care including mental health services and addiction treatment.</i></p>		
<p>Objective 1: Increase the number of Baltimoreans with health insurance.</p>		
Action	First Year Benchmarks	First Year Outcomes
<p>2.1: Advocate for the state of Maryland to include adults up to 116% of the federal poverty line in the Medicaid program.</p>	<p>Baltimore City Legislative staff will develop and implement a plan to advocate sufficient funding for expansion over the next several years as contemplated in the special session.</p>	<p>Passed legislation in special session – to be phased in over 4 years.</p>
<p>2.2: Advocate for the state to implement 12-month continuous eligibility for the Medicaid program.</p>	<p>Legislation to achieve this objective will be introduced in both the 2008 and 2009 sessions (if needed).</p>	<p>Legislation, which was supported by the city, was introduced in 2008 by Delegate Health Mizeur and did not pass. BHCA will work with delegates to re-introduce it 2009.</p>
<p>2.3: Expand outreach to help homeless persons enroll in healthcare programs.</p>	<p>Baltimore Homeless Services will work with its partners to develop a plan to coordinate and expand public benefit-related outreach teams.</p>	<p>Baltimore Health Care Access is now a key partner is the City's Homeless Outreach Initiative. Since February 2008, HIP outreach advocates have assisted 36 individuals experiencing homelessness move into permanent housing and have helped hundreds of people access the PAC program.</p> <p>In response to urgent need, BHCA has hired 4 full-time outreach workers that have engaged 8222 individuals experiencing homelessness from August 2007 – August 2008.</p>
<p>Objective 2: Improve public health efforts to prevent and mitigate chronic illness.</p>		
Action	First Year Benchmarks	First Year Outcomes
<p>2.4: Advocate for the state to strengthen local public health activities, including prevention of chronic disease.</p>	<p>Develop an agenda of public health initiatives to prevent chronic disease. Apply for funding from state, federal, and private foundations.</p>	<p>Applications to state, federal and private foundations for a comprehensive cardiovascular disparities initiative are pending.</p>

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Objective 3: Expand health care services to meet the needs of homeless persons		
Action	First Year Benchmarks	First Year Outcomes
2.5: Vigorously pursue the goal of "treatment on demand."	Support benchmarks in 2.1. Develop an assessment of "treatment on demand" and a plan for achieving this goal in Baltimore.	BSAS now provides outreach to men, women, and children at the City's 24 hour shelters.
2.6: Work with hospitals and the state of Maryland to support a level of convalescent care for homeless persons so that the choice is not between costly inpatient care and the street.	Convene meeting of hospitals and state officials to discuss the development of this level of care.	The new 24 hour Housing and Resource Center will have 25 convalescent care beds overseen by Health Care for the Homeless.
2.7: Work with the state to develop a strategy to ensure appropriate medical transition of inmates to community health providers upon release.	Convene meeting with state corrections officials to encourage the development of a plan to ensure that all sentenced inmates with chronic medical and mental health conditions will receive at least a 30 day supply of medication upon release, have an appointment for follow-up care, and submit applications for state and federal disability benefits prior to release.	There is a Re-Entry Implementation Council, staffed by the Mayor's Office of criminal justice, that is working on this issue.
2.8: Expand healthcare options for the uninsured.	Assess gaps in care for the uninsured in Baltimore.	BHCA is tracking people in need of health insurance and will incorporate a question that captures this information in the Community Health Survey. BHCA is expanding its outreach plan to the uninsured in an attempt to meet the need.
Objective 4: Advocate for universal health insurance.		
Action	First Year Benchmarks	First Year Outcomes
2.9: Advocate for universal access to health insurance at the state and federal levels.	The Health Department will contact state and federal legislators urging support of universal coverage.	The BCHD submitted testimony in March 2008 for HB1125 (Maryland Universal Health Care Plan) and will continue to peruse this issue with legislators.

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<p><i>Goal III. Sufficient Incomes: By 2018, all Baltimore workers will earn a wage sufficient to afford housing; funding of public benefits will be sufficient to prevent the homelessness of recipients.</i></p>		
<p>Objective 1: Increase access by homeless persons to employment opportunities that provide sufficient wages.</p>		
Action	First Year Benchmarks	First Year Outcomes
<p>3.1: Increase the number of shelter-based life-skills and job training programs available to homeless persons.</p>	<p>Two additional emergency shelters will offer employment or occupational skill internship programs.</p>	<p>Mayor's Office of Employment Development provides on-site referral to job skills and life training programs at the City's 24 hour shelters.</p>
<p>3.2: Increase access to employment, training, and occupational internships offered by workforce development partners by strengthening relationships with these partners, implementing a formal referral process, and establishing joint training opportunities.</p>	<p>Establish a working group comprised of workforce development partners and homeless service providers to develop more formal relationships.</p>	<p>Kirby Fowler of the Downtown Partnership will head an Employment Subcommittee of the Leadership Advisory Group which will further develop these partnerships.</p>
<p>3.3: Baltimore Cash Campaign will increase access for homeless people to services such as financial literacy classes (including credit counseling), free tax preparation services, savings programs, and mainstream banking opportunities.</p>	<p>The Baltimore Cash Campaign will establish a list of services available to people who are homeless and hold information sessions to educate homeless service providers on these opportunities.</p>	<p>The Baltimore Cash Campaign provided free tax preparation at the City's 24 hour shelter this year.</p>
<p>3.4: Support Baltimore City's efforts to reduce barriers to employment for ex-offenders.</p>	<p>Work with Baltimore City to develop strategies that would open job opportunities to homeless people with previous criminal offenses.</p>	<p>The City's Administrative Manual and City job applications have been changed to eliminate the need to disclose criminal backgrounds on job applications, except for limited "positions of trust."</p> <p>The Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice is working with neighborhood organizations to put together re-entry kits for people returning to their neighborhood, including such concrete assistance as two-week bus passes and vouchers for clothing suitable for a job interview.</p>

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<p>3.5: Work with the Maryland Office of the Public Defender and other legal service providers to assist clients with expungements of non-convictions and advocate for changes that will allow for the expungement of certain nuisance crime convictions not currently eligible.</p>	<p>Establish a committee of comprised of public defenders and judges to design a program for record expungement.</p>	<p>During the last legislative session the Criminal Procedure Article was amended so that an individual may now file for the expungement of particular nuisance crimes related to homelessness, including : public urination; panhandling; drinking an alcoholic beverage in a public place; sleeping on park structures; loitering; vagrancy; and riding a transit vehicle without paying the fare. Individuals are eligible to file for expungement three years after their last conviction or the successful completion of their probation or sentence, whichever is later.</p>
<p>3.6: Provide incentives to employers to hire persons referred by homeless service providers.</p>	<p>Identify sources of funding to support the implementation of wage subsidies for 100 people who are homeless.</p>	<p>An employment subcommittee of the Leadership Advisory Group has been assembled to identify the incentives needed to encourage the hiring of homeless persons.</p>
<p>3.7: Advocate for increased federal and state funding of the Workforce Investment Act.</p>	<p>Baltimore City Department of Legislative Affairs will meet with the Baltimore City Delegation to discuss the importance of the Workforce Investment Act.</p>	<p>Increased funding for this program was included in the City's advocacy agenda over the last year.</p>
<p>3.8: Increase access to transportation for homeless persons by expanding the capacity of transportation programs, and advocating for the Maryland Transit Administration to increase discounts on bus tokens for homeless service providers.</p>	<p>Baltimore City will meet with representatives from the MTA to discuss the feasibility increasing discounts on bus tokens purchased by homeless service providers.</p>	<p>The feasibility of this recommendation is still being discussed.</p>
<p>3.9: Develop a housing rehabilitation program that trains and employs homeless workers.</p>	<p>Identify a homeless service provider to administer the program, convene potential partners, and begin to identify funding sources.</p>	<p>A partnership with Jubilee Housing and the Greenmount West Community Association has been established and fundraising has already begun to create a housing rehabilitation and training</p>

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		program for people who are homeless. Partners are working closely with the Baltimore City.
Objective 2: Increase access to and sufficiency of public benefits for homeless persons.		
Action	First Year Benchmarks	First Year Outcomes
3.10: Train case managers on assessing job readiness and accessing public benefits.	Work with experts on employment and public benefits to write a curriculum for case managers. Identify an entity to teach the curriculum by holding monthly trainings.	A task force of the SHARP Advocacy Coalition have been assembled to offer training and resource sharing opportunities for case managers.
3.11: Promote a universal application for TANF, TDAP, SSI, Medicaid and Food Stamp programs to increase access to these benefits by homeless people.	Establish and convene workgroup to develop universal application.	A City representative to the state's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness Leadership Committee advocated that this recommendation be implemented. A workgroup of relevant state agencies has been established to pursue the recommendation.
3.12: Advocate for increased funding to Baltimore City for the Temporary Disability Assistance Program.	Baltimore City Department of Legislative Affairs will meet with the Baltimore City Delegation to discuss increasing the Temporary Disability Assistance Program to be in line with Temporary Cash Assistance to families.	Last year, promoted legislation to align funding for TDAP with the MD Minimum Living Level. This legislation did not pass. Due to the current economic climate advocates are working to ensure that TDAP is at least maintained at its current level.
Goal IV. Preventive and Emergency Services: By 2018, Baltimore City will have sufficient capacity to identify and respond to individuals and families at risk of homelessness, to provide immediate short-term outreach and emergency shelter to those who are homeless, and to transition from emergency shelter into permanent housing with appropriate supportive services within 30 days.		
Objective 1: Develop a system of services that prevents individuals and families from becoming homeless.		
Action	First Year Benchmarks	First Year Outcomes
4.1: Improve legal interventions for individuals and families at imminent risk of becoming homeless through legal representation in rent court, in public housing grievance and termination proceedings, in negotiations	Increase the number of legal interventions to prevent eviction. Decrease the number of people evicted by 10%.	BHS is working with the Homeless Persons Representation Project to ensure that Section 8 and Public Housing clients are connected to their legal services.

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<p>with Section 8 staff, and in landlord disputes.</p>		
<p>4.2: Advocate for increased state eviction prevention dollars, consolidate funding under one administrative body, and create a single application to ensure effective targeting of short-term interventions to prevent loss of housing.</p>	<p>Establish an eviction prevention advisory board and consolidate eviction dollars.</p>	<p>The City has received a large increase in eviction prevention funds as a result of the stimulus package.</p> <p>These funds, as well as the current funds, will be consolidated under a small number of service providers to ensure that they are used efficiently.</p>
<p>4.3: Develop an education campaign for low-income tenants to provide information on (1) resources available to prevent homelessness and methods to prevent falling behind on rent/utilities, and (2) tenants' rights and how to navigate the eviction process.</p>	<p>Develop materials and curriculum and prepare a distribution plan.</p>	<p>BHS has developed a plan to create a homeless prevention outreach card.</p>
<p>4.4: Advocate for amended state law to require a landlord, before filing a complaint to evict a tenant for nonpayment of rent, to first give the tenant a written "pay or quit" notice, advising them of the amount due, the final date to pay before a complaint is filed, and eviction prevention services.</p>	<p>Introduce legislation in FY2009.</p>	<p>A bill was recently passed on the state level which increases protections given to tenants during the eviction process.</p>
<p>4.5: Create a mechanism to ensure that all residents of publicly subsidized housing facing eviction are first referred to eviction prevention services.</p>	<p>Develop and distribute a flyer for HABC to include with all eviction notices.</p>	<p>BHS has recommended that HABC implement this recommendation.</p>
<p>4.6: Develop standards for discharge planning that will be adopted by all institutions.</p>	<p>The Baltimore Health Department will convene a task force comprising major healthcare, correctional, and residential mental health and substance abuse institutions to develop discharge procedures.</p>	<p>Baltimore City Health Department will propose standards for discharge that are based on effective plans from other jurisdictions.</p> <p>This proposal will be assembled by December 2009. The recommendations will be sent out for public comment and meetings will be held to discuss them with stakeholders such as healthcare, corrections and mental health/substance</p>

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		representatives.
Objective 2: Develop an integrated system of outreach and emergency services designed to rapidly re-house homeless individuals and families.		
Action	First Year Benchmarks	First Year Outcomes
4.7: Replace the existing winter shelter with a 24-hour, year-round fully accessible facility at another location that will serve as one of the main resource centers for clients to enter and access homeless services.	Secure a site and secure funding for capital and operations.	The City has maintained the highest number of emergency shelter beds in history with 200 beds at satellite locations throughout the summer months and 350 24-hour beds at 210 Guilford Avenue. A new \$8 million, 24-hour Housing and Resource Center at 620 Fallsway will begin in May 2009.
4.8: Expand the capacity of the Baltimore Interfaith Hospitality Network to meet the needs of homeless families.	Develop one new location and bring five new congregations into the Network.	The BIHN is no longer in operation. Alternative strategies will be developed.
4.9: Ensure that shelters receiving city dollars are accessible or planning to be accessible to individuals with physical disabilities.	Evaluate existing shelters to determine feasibility of becoming accessible and identify possible sources of capital funding.	An assessment has been done on existing facilities and modifications have been made where feasible. The City's new Housing and Resource Center will be fully accessible.
4.10: Expand integrated resource centers ("one stop shops") that include services such as benefits assistance, eviction interventions, legal services, health care services, housing referrals, mental health services, and employment development. Designate one resource center specifically for homeless youth.	Identify locations for at least two sites and develop capital and operating funding strategy.	Potential sites for resource centers are currently being evaluated. The outcomes of these discussions will impact the development of the funding strategy.
4.11: Baltimore City should ensure that homeless service providers are trained on securing government-issued identification for their clients and should establish a fund to cover related fees.	Schedule and present trainings to homeless service providers.	Baltimore Health Care Access (BHCA) has secured new grants to continue to offer this service to homeless clients. The majority of clients access IDs through BHCA but BHCA has also offered technical assistance to other agencies through the Hands in Partnership

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		<p>Outreach Initiative.</p> <p>The Maryland Vehicle Administration recently revised its requirements for people within sixty days of their release from prison. Those individuals with proper documentation will no longer have to pay the \$15.00 fee to obtain a Maryland state ID.</p>
<p>4.12: Maryland Department of Human Resources' Office of Transitional Services should increase its current allocation to Baltimore City.</p>	<p>Request additional funding in FY 2009.</p>	<p>This funding is now administered by the Maryland Department of Human Resources' Office of Grants Management. This request was included in the City's advocacy agenda over the last year but funding has remained at the same level.</p>
<p><i>Objective 3: Coordinate and expand outreach efforts to homeless persons living on the streets to offer housing and services more rapidly.</i></p>		
Action	First Year Benchmarks	First Year Outcomes
<p>4.13: The Baltimore Homeless Youth Initiative, in partnership with the Baltimore City Department of Social Services, should create a youth outreach team to provide outreach and case management services to homeless youth in a variety of settings and in a way that meets their developmental needs.</p>	<p>Collaborate with the Baltimore Homeless Youth Initiative and Baltimore City DSS to create a youth outreach team.</p>	<p>BHYI has expanded services to homeless youth through the Rose Street Center and the Restoration Gardens Transitional Facility. BHS will work with the BHYI and its partners to identify a funding source for a Youth Outreach Team.</p>
<p>4.14: Coordinate outreach teams under one lead agency to provide a responsive, city-wide outreach effort to homeless persons.</p>	<p>Identify an entity responsible for leading the coordination. This agency should develop and circulate a comprehensive coordination plan.</p>	<p>Baltimore Mental Health Systems and Baltimore Health Care Access have been charged with coordinating the Hands in Partnership Initiative (HIP). This coalition of homeless outreach providers meets weekly to review outreach cases and share resources.</p> <p>The HIP initiative has already gone a long way in decreasing the duplication of services within homeless outreach. The Downtown Partnership, Waterfront</p>

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		Partnership, and Baltimore City Police Department meet regularly with the Hands In Partnership outreach coalition.
4.15: Increase collaboration between homeless outreach teams, the Baltimore City Police Department, Baltimore City Fire Department, the Office of Emergency Management, the Downtown Partnership, and the Baltimore City Health Department.	Schedule regular meetings between these agencies and conduct joint trainings.	<p>The Downtown Partnership now meets regularly with the Hands in Partnership Outreach Initiative.</p> <p>The BCHD, OEM, and BCPD have collaborated with BHS on a number of initiatives throughout the year including satellite emergency shelters this past summer and our temporary shelter at 210 Guilford this winter.</p>
<i>Objective 4: Improve data collection and information sharing to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of homeless services.</i>		
Action	First Year Benchmarks	First Year Outcomes
4.16: Improve data systems to better track homeless data and establish indicators to evaluate program outcomes and monitor the progress of the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness within the Citistat program.	Assess the capacity of Baltimore City's current Homeless Management Information System and create indicators to evaluate the progress of the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness within the Citistat Program.	A Citistat Analyst has been assigned to incorporate the goals of the 10 Year Plan into the Citistat program.
4.17: Develop a comprehensive homeless services web site to be used as a tool for service providers and clients to access services.	Prepare web site for launch.	<p>The United Way of Central Maryland is arranging meetings with marketing companies to request pro-bono marketing and communications work on the 10 Year Plan.</p> <p>The information for the web site is being assembled.</p>