



Office of the Director
October 6, 2017

Dear Partners:

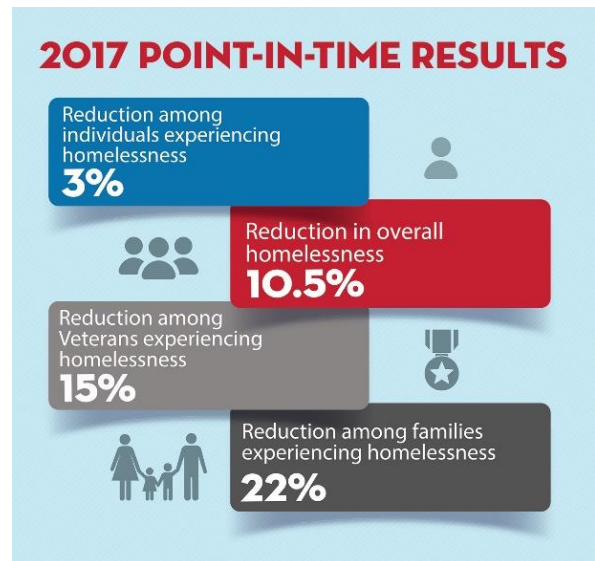
I am writing to highlight recent and upcoming program improvements that will provide additional stability and supports to families and individuals exiting homelessness and will help landlords who partner with us preserve their investments.

During Mayor Bowser’s first 100 days in office, the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) launched *Homeward DC*, the District’s five-year strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness. Homeward DC articulates a clear and comprehensive vision for reforming the City’s ailing homeless services system – and District agencies and community partners have united in new ways around this mission. Mayor Bowser and the D.C. Council have appropriated unprecedented resources to implement the plan, and our data tells us that after only one full year of implementation, the reforms are taking root.

Not only have we stabilized the system, we’ve seen a 10.5 percent reduction in District homelessness in the last year. This is no small feat in a city with a constant stream of new residents flooding the market, fierce competition for affordable units, and skyrocketing rental costs.

While our data suggests we are moving in the right direction, much work remains to reduce the length of time families and individuals spend in shelter and look for an available unit. Accelerating our progress will require the partnership of landlords who are willing to give folks a much-needed second chance. When we address the needs of landlords, we address the needs of our clients.

To that end, the Department of Human Services (DHS) is excited to share recent and forthcoming systems improvements to support program participants and to strengthen our partnerships with landlords:



The Landlord Partnership Fund: The Landlord Partnership Fund is a privately funded initiative that will offer protections to landlords on the condition that they relax their screening criteria (credit score and past evictions). The protections will include the ability to collect reimbursement from the Fund to cover unpaid rent, damages to the rental unit, or other lease charges. Eligible housing programs include Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing. The Landlord Partnership Fund was developed by the DowntownDC Business Improvement District and the Coalition for Non-Profit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED), and will be administered by CNHED.

The Rental Partnership Initiative: This initiative streamlines the payment structure for families who are in the Rapid Rehousing program and participating landlords. Instead of receiving two forms of payment for rent each month, landlords will receive the full value of the rental payment from the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA) and participants will pay their portion of the rent directly to DCHA.

Flexible Rent Subsidy Pilot Program: With a severe shortage of affordable units, this shallow rental assistance program provides families with monthly rental assistance and case management focused on increasing stability for up to four years. Set to launch this fall, the pilot program targets families who, based on their income, are at risk of homelessness and is an exciting partnership with the Interagency Council on Homeless (ICH), the Department of Housing and Community Development, and The Lab @ DC, which will help us test whether the program is working.

Enhanced Case Management in Rapid Rehousing Program: DHS has strengthened and clarified its case management requirements. Starting in October 2018, DHS is providing additional capacity building and oversight of case managers so we can better support clients to budget their money, obtain employment or enroll in training programs, and plan for a successful transition when the Rapid Rehousing program ends.

Better Communication Vehicles between DHS and Landlords: DHS has established a portal to help landlords quickly resolve issues. This portal is a direct connection to DHS and case managers to help resolve payment or other program-related questions. Additionally, with support from our generous philanthropic community, the ICH will have a full-time employee dedicated to system-wide coordination of landlord engagement and housing location efforts. *The DC Landlord Engagement and Housing Location Network* will coordinate activities across housing programs, populations, and partners.

For more information about these programs, please reach out to Darrell Cason at 202-671-4389 or darrell.cason3@dc.gov.

Sincerely,



Laura Green Zeilinger
Director