



CHACE

Campaign for Housing and
Civic Engagement

ISSUE BRIEF

HOUSING SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AND PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

A Proven Solution for Ending Homelessness

With targeted investments in evidence-based homeless service delivery models, Virginia has seen a **33% decrease** in homelessness since 2010 and an effective end to veteran homelessness. Yet as of January 2017, there are still **over 6,000 Virginians experiencing homelessness**.¹ Investments in Permanent Supportive Housing and wrap-around supportive services have been critical to the progress Virginia has made in addressing homelessness. Many of those experiencing chronic homelessness struggle with substance abuse, or serious mental illness and need support services along with housing opportunities to remain stably housed.

What is Permanent Supportive Housing?

PSH is a model intended to house low-income persons who struggle with disabling chronic health and behavioral health conditions — such as mental illness, HIV/AIDS, and/or substance abuse — and who have been unable to access and maintain stable, permanent housing without some level of ongoing supportive services and rental assistance. PSH can either be built as dedicated housing units or leased out as scattered site in the private rental market, which is the case with much of the PSH in Virginia.

Why Permanent Supportive Housing?

It Works. In Virginia, PSH programs have **success rates of 85%–100%** for clients not returning to homelessness. Many clients had previously experienced homelessness for years.²

It Saves Money. The target population often cycles between life on the street, hospital emergency rooms, and mental health facilities. The average daily cost of a PSH unit in Virginia is **\$49** – versus \$70 for a jail bed, or \$598 for adult psychiatric state hospital.³

It Benefits the Community. Unlike traditional shelters, PSH can look like any other type of housing in a community. In many cases, PSH units stand side-by-side with unsubsidized units in a property, and in other cases development of PSH can **spur community revitalization** and increase property values through renovations of dilapidated properties.

How Does Housing Supportive Services Lead to Stable Housing?

Transition services. Services that support an individual's ability to prepare for, locate, and transition to stable Permanent Supportive Housing. Examples of these services include:

- Conducting a **tenant screening and housing assessment** that identifies the participant's preferences and barriers related to successful tenancy.
- Identifying **resources to cover expenses** such as security deposit, furnishings, adaptive aids, environmental modifications, moving costs and other one-time expenses.
- Developing a **housing support crisis plan** that includes prevention and early intervention services when housing is jeopardized.

Tenancy sustaining services. Services that support an individual in becoming a successful tenant and ensure they are capable of maintaining stable housing. Examples of these services include:

- Providing **early identification and intervention** for behaviors that may jeopardize housing, such as late rental payment and other lease violations.
- Education and training on the **role, rights and responsibilities** of the tenant and landlord.
- Assistance in **resolving disputes** with landlords and/or neighbors to reduce risk of eviction or other adverse action.

What the General Assembly Can Do

Increase funding for successful programs

In recent years, The General Assembly has recognized the value of the Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) model, by increasing investments in the program to \$9.3 million in FY17-18 targeted at both homeless and non-homeless individuals struggling with serious mental illness. This funding can provide approximately 700 additional households with PSH. There are currently about 4,300 PSH-funded beds in Virginia, with another 5,000 units of PSH necessary to meet the need in the state.⁴ Funding needs to be increased to create additional units while maintaining those already created. This entails funding to not only support rental subsidies, but also the development of additional rental properties through programs such as the Virginia Housing Trust Fund.

Expand veteran care model

About half of Virginia's existing PSH units are utilized for veterans and are funded through special federal vouchers. The success of transitioning veterans out of homelessness and into homes to call their own has been a result of the availability of resources to simultaneously provide rental assistance and housing supportive services. Virginia needs comparable resources for other populations experiencing homelessness that are in need of rental assistance and housing supportive services.

Dedicate funding for supportive services

Much of the existing funding is devoted to rental assistance, leaving community based housing provider organizations straining to fund the staff that provide housing supportive services that are critical to Permanent Supportive Housing's success. Additional carve outs or funding sources specifically for services would further improve program outcomes.

1 Governor's Coordinating Council on Homelessness. (07/13/2017). Presentation slides.

(Note: According to preliminary 2017 point-in-time count numbers. Official numbers to be released by HUD in fall 2017.)

2,3 Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness. (2015). *The State of Permanent Supportive Housing*.

4 Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. (07/11/2017). *Permanent Supportive Housing for Adults with Serious Mental Illness: Participant Characteristics & Early Outcomes*. Presentation slides.

•••• *Stable homes build strong communities.* ••••