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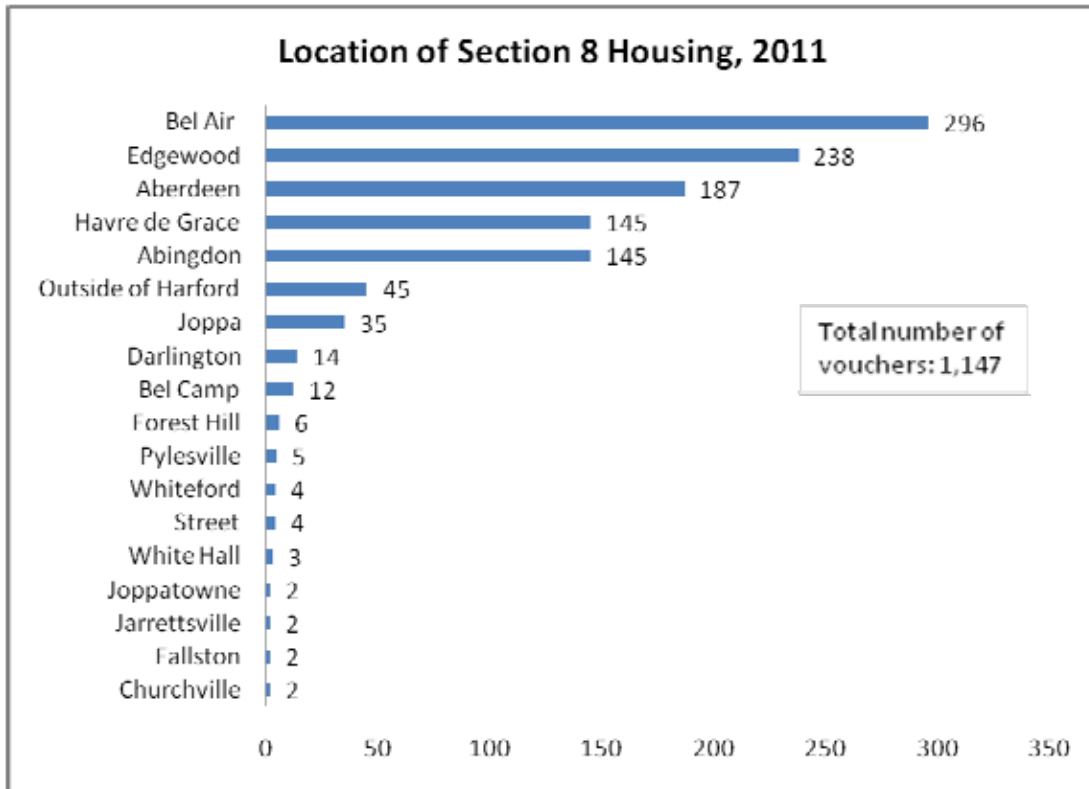
Harford County Ready by 21 Task Force Housing Meeting - Tuesday, January 4, 2011 Group Discussion

Presenters:

I. Shawn Kingston, Harford County Housing Agency,

<http://www.harfordcountymd.gov/housing/>

- a. Discussion on public housing/Section 8
 - Voucher system in place, however limited availability
 - Currently a 3-5 year wait; waiting list has been closed with 3,000 people on it
 - For every 100 people who are pulled from the waiting list, approximately 15 will obtain a lease – process includes background check, interview, credit check, rental unit approval and landlord acceptance of a voucher
 - Preference is given to individuals on the waitlist that are elderly or disabled
 - Voucher does not include utility allowance
 - It is possible to lose a voucher – therefore it is important that tenants are a good neighbor and representative of the program
 - If lost, 5 years before you can apply for a voucher again
 - See chart below of where Section 8 vouchers are currently being used
- Additional housing programs
 - Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA), a bridge program for individuals coming out of transitional housing, working towards self-sufficiency – currently working with the Office on Aging to use this funding to assist senior citizens
 - Rental Assistance
 - Rapid Re-housing
 - Program for individuals with HIV
 - Mainstream 5 Program, for non-elderly, disabled
- Other services provided
 - Homeownership, budgeting and foreclosure counseling
 - Seminars and workshops, such as for first-time homebuyers



II. Shelley Ellis, Harford Community Action Agency, <http://harfordcaa.org/>

- Organization’s goal is to help individuals obtain self-sufficiency
- Homeless Prevention Program
 - Accessible 1 time per year
 - Must be income eligible and have an eviction notice
 - Main funding source is DSS – funds can be used if household has children under 21; small amount of funding if a household without children
- Utility Assistance Program
 - Accessible 1 time per year
 - If utilities have been shut off
- Help with Mortgage Foreclosure – limited funds available
- Security Deposits – limited funds available
- Food Pantry
- Financial Development Services
 - Case management available for families (no minimum age requirement)
 - Financial Sense Workshops through PNC Bank and APG Federal Credit Union
 - Assist families in opening a checking account, cleaning up credit

III. Additional Information from Commission on Disabilities (provided after the meeting)

- Habitat for Humanity offers a FIX-IT UP program that can provide ramps for low and extremely low-income renters and homeowners, for more information visit: <http://www.harfordhabitat.org/index.cfm?section=fixItUp>

How are we doing?

- **Overall impressions/comments:**

-Key is prevention to avoid the need for public assistance for housing; generational issue – let all people know they have value and create opportunities

-Each family's issues are complex, public systems are not necessarily child friendly

*4.6 is a key item, need for Systems Navigators

-Different reporting systems capture the number of homeless families, youth differently (school system vs. HMIS); data may not be accurately reflecting the need of vulnerable at-risk families in Harford County

-Knowledge about amount of income needed to afford rent, should be part of life skills curriculum and shared with youth

-Issue raised that HCC students run into problem of 12 month lease and only needing 9 month lease. Idea to offer youth training on the effects of breaking a lease (impact on credit), how to negotiate a lease, how to sublet, etc.

-Other training needed for youth includes how to manage a checking account, obtain and maintain good credit

-Idea regarding expanding availability of host families for foster care youth. Question raised as to whether families could become licensed with the idea that they would solely serve as hosts over the holidays, take youth on family trips, invite to cookouts, etc. DSS would be interested in this if families want to volunteer to provide this type of support to foster care youth. *Key need of these youth is to develop personal relationships that can continue once they transition to adulthood.

- **Additional information that would be helpful:**

-What do you do to help a youth who is 18 and family will no longer support them?

-Ideas – Alliance Case Management; not most ideal but emergency housing through FCCAU emergency shelter (accessible through DSS) is available and has helped clients as young as 18; New Pathways Independent Living Program

- Data from schools on number of homeless youth; families

-Directory of contact information for all participants in these sessions – leave by topic, send out to all participants; possibly post online as well

What are our barriers?

- Youth placed in foster care in Harford County from another county – custody stays with home county for continuity and legal reasons. Issue is that case management is not done locally. However, if working

with a youth in this situation, can still contact our local DSS Independent Living Services coordinator for support and ideas. If child is out of state and there is an inter-state compact DSS does offer supervision and reports back to home state.

- Goal is to always place as close to county of origin, or at least family members

- Adequate funding for resources + how to empower individuals to utilize resources. For example, engaging both youth and their parents in the importance of education

- Not enough resources for youth; especially those who move to counties away from their family

Next steps/outcomes:

- How do we share the information that has been provided throughout these sessions?

- How do we keep it updated?

- How do we get it to those who work with clients, have not been in these sessions (ongoing professional development; training?)

- How do you instill value, empower families to want to access resources?

Upcoming Schedule:

Tuesday, February 1 - Task Force Recommendations 8 -10:30am at Harford Community College