

Mayor's Office of Homeless Services: South Baltimore Gateway

Report and FY22 Budget Request – January 2021

The Mayor's Office of Homeless Services (MOHS) provides emergency and ongoing housing support and services to help individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless to transition into and maintain permanent affordable housing.

Due to COVID, MOHS expanded homeless outreach services to individuals and families across the City of Baltimore. This expansion has been facilitated by a partnership with Downtown Partnership of Baltimore. The expansion of homeless outreach services has afforded the City an opportunity to provide coordinated and persistent outreach, in-reach and engagement through the delivery of services directly to households in crisis.

MOHS' **Homeless Outreach Team** currently serves Districts 1, 10, 13 and 14. The role of the outreach team is critical in connecting persons living in places not meant for habitation (encampments, cars, abandoned properties, etc.) with housing, medical support and various other vital services. During FY20, MOHS has successfully:

- Ensured outreach coverage for the South Baltimore Gateway (SBG) / Casino Impact Area (CIA);
- Tailored services to reach those least likely to request assistance or engage in services on their own;
- Implemented monthly provider meetings with various other outreach programs and homeless services partners;
- Expanded shower services to five (5) days per week for neighbors experiencing street homelessness;
- Maintained a direct line of communication (homelessoutreach@baltimorecity.gov) for constituents, government officials, and local businesses to request homeless outreach assistance between 6am and 10pm, Monday through Friday, extended to weekends during the winter season;
- Established a Coordinated Entry Line dedicated to emergency shelter requests;
- Coordinated the day-to-day activities and schedules of outreach teams to prevent duplication of services and to ensure that services are tailored to individual client needs; and
- Coordinated with hospitals to ensure proper outreach, engagement and transportation to vital services such as hospitals and drop-in centers.

The two Outreach workers dedicated to the SBG/CIA (and one adjacent location in Brooklyn) are Geon Floyd and Faneca Porter. Both have worked diligently over the past year to address the needs of homeless individuals and communities in South Baltimore and elsewhere. Under new guidelines passed down by the CDC due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they have taken on additional duties as assigned to help the unsheltered throughout Baltimore, and they have successfully housed 35 individuals from across the City.

Specifically, for South Baltimore, MOHS' Outreach team continues to help address the needs of the homeless population in the following locations, with results for the past year shown in the table below:

1. Horseshoe Casino / Lot J Encampment
2. Sharp-Leadenhall
3. Riverside / Federal Hill
4. Pigtown / MLK Jr. Boulevard Corridor
5. Hanover Street Bridge
6. Potee Street & Patapsco Avenue
7. Reedbird Island

	Enrolled in Outreach/Housing Program	Diversion & Reunification	Mental Health/Substance Abuse Connections	Housing Offers
Horseshoe / Lot J	10	4	4	3
Sharp-Leadenhall	5	0	1	2
Riverside / Federal Hill	11	1	4	2
Pigtown / MLK Jr. Blvd.	19	0	6	4
Hanover Street Bridge	7	1	2	0
Potee St & Patapsco Ave	12	1	3	3
Reedbird Island	12	1	3	3
TOTALS	76	8	24	17

Current Outreach Efforts for Potee-Patapsco and Reedbird Island Encampments:

Both the MOHS and People Encouraging People outreach teams are currently engaging 22-25 homeless neighbors daily at this location. The teams are making visits twice daily to offer shelter and related services. Information on how to access shelters, COVID testing and vaccinations, and current housing options is communicated during each visit. Meals are delivered to clients daily to help with the relief of service-disruption that individuals have experienced during the pandemic. Wellness checks have helped to strengthen the relationships between the outreach teams and our homeless neighbors. During our winter shelter days, including weekends, the outreach teams are making visits as late as 9pm and have successfully transported six (6) individuals to shelter in the past two months.



FY22 Funding Request:

MOHS is requesting continued support from casino local impact grant funding in the amount of **\$228,000** for FY22. Casino funding would be dedicated to continuing the support of **two (2) Outreach Workers** targeting South Baltimore and the citywide **Shelter Coordinator** position.

While the Outreach Workers are dedicated to the SBG/CIA and adjacencies, the Shelter Coordinator is responsible for the daily operations across Baltimore's entire Emergency Services program. Emergency Services is a vital component of MOHS' overall response in helping our homeless neighbors connect with emergency shelter, as well as with other lifesaving services and resources. This third position was budgeted from the casino funding source on an emergency basis starting with FY21. The position was filled following a period of vacancy at the start of the fiscal year, with the result that not all funds budgeted for this position in FY21 will be used.

MOHS is seeking approval for an additional year of funding for the Shelter Coordinator position via the casino local impact grant funds administered by the City of Baltimore. Although the Shelter Coordinator's duties are not limited to the CIA/SBG, this role is critical to ensuring that the efforts of the Outreach Team lead homeless individuals to shelter placement and support services, and ultimately to safe and permanent housing. MOHS understands the importance of identifying a new, sustainable funding source for this work going forward after FY22. Yet, in an effort to ensure continuity of services to our unsheltered neighbors as we, as a City, struggle to meet the challenges posed by COVID-19, MOHS requests an additional year of funding for all three of these positions. Confirmation of funding availability is requested by March 31, 2021.