



alexandria community
services board

Promoting Respect, Recovery, Hope

Housing Plan for FY 2018 to FY 2025

(July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2025)

Department of Community and Human Services



Purpose and Background of the Alexandria Community Services Board Housing Plan

The Alexandria Community Services Board (CSB) is a group of 12 volunteers appointed by Alexandria City Council. The CSB oversees the use of public funds to provide mental health, developmental disability and substance use disorder services through the Department of Community and Human Services

(DCHS). The Department has a Center of Operations and three service centers: Center for Adult Services, Center for Children and Families and Center for Economic Support.

The Alexandria CSB mission is to provide effective, essential and compassionate safety net services that measurably improve or maintain the quality of life and support self-determination, recovery and resiliency for Alexandria residents affected by mental illness, developmental disabilities and substance abuse disorders. The Alexandria Community Services Board Policy #13, “Alexandria Community Services Board Residential Services Development Policy,” requires the Board to periodically develop a housing plan that identifies the Board’s highest priority supported housing needs and offer a proposed means by which these housing needs can be met. The Board’s Housing Plan is submitted to City Council for review and approval. In addition, the citizens of Alexandria are given an opportunity to provide input into the Board’s future housing plans, as the plan is distributed to civic associations and others prior to the Board’s Annual Public Hearing.

The Board’s 2010-2015 Housing Plan, consistent with best practices, continued the implementation of a major paradigm shift away from buying and directly operating residential properties to providing services to individuals in affordable housing of their choice whenever possible. The maintenance, management and administration of mental health permanent supportive housing units was transitioned to a Property Management team within DCHS, while clinical CSB staff remain responsible for client-centered service delivery and support in the housing setting. CSB staff continues to operate group homes and the Safe Haven for individuals with mental illness and/or co-occurring substance use disorders as well as all group homes and apartments serving individuals with developmental disabilities.

Under the previous CSB Housing Plan, Board efforts focused on advocating for increased affordable housing opportunities in the City of Alexandria. The Board did not purchase any additional properties. The Board increased its advocacy role through CSB staffs’ attendance at Alexandria’s Affordable Housing Advisory Committee monthly meetings as well as their provision of feedback to Council on the Affordable Housing Initiatives Work Group Final Report 2012. CSB members and staff have participated in City Council’s strategic planning meetings. CSB staff was also appointed to participate on the City’s Affordable Housing Master Planning Task Group and was directly involved in the development of the Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the City of Alexandria FY 2014 to FY 2020. CSB staff continues its advocacy by participating on the Low Income Housing Group consisting of representatives from the Office of Housing, DCHS Community Services, CSB Residential, Office of Performance and Accountability and GIS. CSB staff is also a member of the City’s Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness.

Since 2012, CSB staff has been working with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to respond to the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) investigation and the Commonwealth’s subsequent settlement. In January, 2012 the DOJ’s investigation was resolved, which led to the closing of some of Virginia’s training centers and addressed the Commonwealth’s compliance with the Americans with Disabilities and Olmstead Acts with respect to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Olmstead decision requires that individuals be served in the least restrictive and most integrated settings appropriate to meet their needs, consistent with their choice. This settlement agreement and subsequent regulatory changes directly impact the CSB’s Housing Plan, as efforts will increasingly need to be focused on offering clients with developmental disabilities opportunities to live in smaller shared living arrangements or in individual units located throughout the City.

Overview of Housing Plan Process and Identification of Needs

In preparation for the Board's 2018-2025 Housing Plan revisions, staff reviewed residential wait list data and reports, annual homeless point in time count data, Consolidated Plan annual reports, best practices and current trends. Analysis of CSB residential services waiting list data indicates that a wait list exists primarily because beds are not able to be freed up to serve new clients because current residents choose to remain in CSB residential settings due to the lack of other affordable market rate housing options.

In addition, the FY 2014 to FY 2020 Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, Consolidated Plan FY 2016 to FY 2020, and the Housing Master Plan were also reviewed. The primary goals of these plans are to develop or preserve 2,000 affordable housing units through 2025.

CSB Highest Priority Needs:

- Conformance with DOJ settlement and licensing changes for ID/DD individuals by moving residents to smaller shared living settings or individual units of their choice integrated throughout community.
- Increase consumer choice and access to affordable units.
- Continue implementation of best practice permanent supportive housing practices through increased opportunities for single occupancy housing units for individuals with mental illness and/or substance use disorders.
- Prevent and end chronic homelessness.

Proposed Housing Plan for FY 2018 to FY 2025 (July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2025)

The Board's Housing Plan for FY 2018 to FY 2025 proposes continuation of all current CSB supportive residential services, as long as they continue to meet consumers' needs. All future housing and residential services expansion will be congruent with best practice whenever possible, i.e., housing will be uncoupled from treatment and supportive services; clients will be able to exercise choice to the greatest extent possible in deciding where they live; clients will have increased access to single occupancy units. To operationalize these best practices, the CSB has shifted from buying and directly operating homes and other properties to providing consumer services and affordable housing of their choice through partnerships with non-CSB housing providers.

Proposed Strategies

The Board identifies the following strategies to meet highest priority housing and supportive service needs:

- Continue Board's advocacy role with existing and future affordable housing groups and activities to increase access to affordable market rate housing for CSB clients earning 30% of the average median income.
- Shift from providing DD residential services primarily in larger group homes to units of four or fewer residents owned by non-profit organizations and located throughout the City.

- Through partnerships with housing non-profit providers and consistent with best practice, increase access to single-occupancy units to provide permanent supportive housing to individuals with mental illness and/or substance use disorders.
- CSB staff will work closely with the City's Office of Housing, Alexandria Housing Development Corporation, Sheltered Homes of Alexandria and other private affordable housing providers, developers and ARHA to increase Board client access to available affordable housing units.
- Provide supportive, person-centered residential services to CSB clients.
- Assess chronically homeless persons for housing needs and refer to appropriate housing and services.
- Assist individuals and families at risk of homelessness to avoid homelessness through access to prevention programs.

The new Board Housing Plan will be for the time period of July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2025 (FY 2018 to FY 2025) and will coincide with the City of Alexandria's Consolidated Plan and the Housing Master Plan. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires public and private entities to demonstrate consistency with the City of Alexandria's Consolidated Plan to be eligible for or continue to receive funding from HUD. The Board's Housing Plan is incorporated into this document.