



MAYOR'S OFFICE OF
HOMELESS SERVICES

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

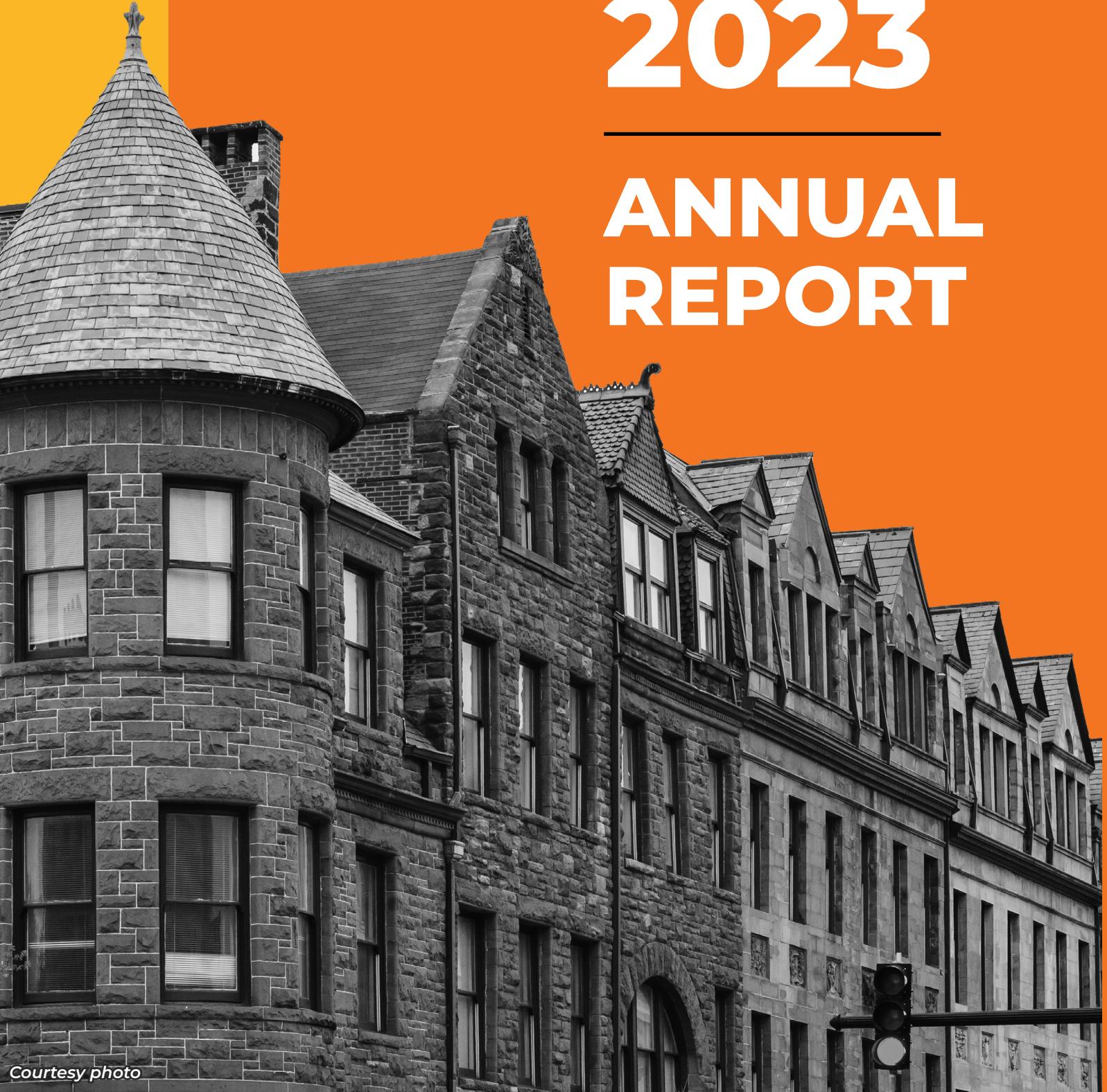


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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Baltimore,

As I reflect on my brief time as Director of the Mayor's Office of Homeless Services, I am both humbled and inspired by the collective dedication to fulfill our mission. The journey has been filled with challenges, but in partnership with many of you, we have been able to turn some of those challenges into successes. This collective effort has inspired me more than I can express and I am grateful for every kind word, email, offer of support, collaboration, partnership, and meeting invite to collaborate and find ways that will strengthen our ability to create a homeless response system that is person-centered and responsive to the clients we serve.

As we embark on the new year, I am proud to highlight the triumphs of the year 2023 as we look forward to increasing our efforts in 2024. Through strategic partnerships and the tireless efforts of our community, we have witnessed tangible victories that have made a meaningful impact on the lives of those we serve. The statistical data represents the clients we have served and through increased collaboration and cohesion.

We will have increased impact in 2024, and we have implemented new systems and processes designed to promote transparency and efficiency such as timely payments to providers, increasing the number of housing units available to people experiencing homelessness, and providing financial

supports to divert people from entering homelessness. Our commitment to innovation and adaptability will be our driving force as we continue to explore new opportunities, leverage community support, and refine our strategies to meet the evolving needs of people experiencing homelessness in Baltimore City.

To our dedicated staff, Continuum of Care, and extended community, I express my appreciation and thankfulness for your support since my arrival. Your passion and hard work have been the catalysts for the positive changes we've seen thus far. It is through your unwavering commitment to our community that we can face the future with confidence and optimism.

Together, we will build a community where homelessness is viewed as each of our responsibilities to partner, solve, and call to action. Moving forward, let us carry the lessons learned, the strength gained, and the hope that fuels our mission. MOHS remains committed to working alongside each of you in achieving our shared mission of making homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

**In service,
Ernestina Simmons, LCSW-C
Executive Director**

MISSION STATEMENT



Courtesy photo

The mission of the Mayor's Office of Homeless Services (MOHS) is to make homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring in Baltimore City through a trauma-informed, data-driven, and person-centered approach. We believe that homelessness is preventable. Through strategic public-private partnerships, we will meet the immediate needs of our neighbors experiencing homelessness while creating a more efficient homeless response system in Baltimore City.

As we celebrate the outcomes of last year's **Mission in Action**, we are reminded of the work ahead. Securing essential needs, like affordable housing will guide our strategic plans for a more efficient homeless response system in 2024.



Trauma-Informed



Data-Driven



Person-Centered

YEAR END DATA

In 2023, the Mayor's Office of Homeless Services (MOHS) supported thousands of Baltimore City residents experiencing or at risk of homelessness through a variety of programs, services, community partnerships, and initiatives.

4,215

Residents successfully enrolled in Coordinated Access, marking a significant milestone in our mission to enhance access to essential resources and support for individuals who are experiencing homelessness and connecting to our homeless response system.

936

Households exited homelessness to a more secure housing option. These housing outcomes include City-funded programs such as Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing, as well as family reunification and self-resolution.

2,224

Formerly homeless households remained stably housed through City-funded housing programs administered by MOHS. Ongoing assistance ensures housing stability and the opportunity to thrive in other areas such as physical and mental health, education, job training, and career advancement; and more time for activities that enhance quality of life.

2,323

Residents accommodated in City-funded shelters. These shelters provide access to case management; assistance with completing Coordinated Access to determine housing eligibility and options; behavioral health and peer recovery services; enrichment programs and activities; and catered meals.

56,152

Service connections made to **2,523** unhoused clients served by Homeless Outreach Teams. Interactions include survival kits, connections to shelter, connections to housing resources, and additional supports that address basic needs as well as advocacy regarding individual issues and concerns that individuals are encountering.

Additionally, MOHS has supported our partnering organization House of Ruth Maryland in serving **256** households experiencing domestic violence in 2023. During that same period, **175** households connected with emergency shelter services in which **57 percent** of households exited to a more secure housing option. MOHS was also able to leverage formula and competitive grant funding to provide housing to **504** households with persons living with HIV/AIDS.

WELCOME HOME

Caring for our neighbors is a collaborative effort, and because of the support from our Continuum of Care (CoC), partners, funders, service providers, advocates, volunteers, and community members, our neighbors were able to be successfully connected to housing and other support services. We look forward to renewed commitment and increased efforts in 2024 as we work to end homelessness in Baltimore City.



“ I didn’t think it was going to be easy because it always been hard for me, but once I started asking for help, it made things a lot easier. No matter how hard things get, no matter what obstacles are in your way, just don’t give up.

Kailha

St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore Client

“ I still considered myself homeless when I was living with family because my name was never on anything; it feels really good to have my name on the lease. Now that I have a home and my son is living with me, things are falling into place.

Cristi

Project PLASE, Inc. Client



“ Within two months of moving into shelter, I was able to move into my own apartment. Since moving in, a huge weight has been lifted off of my shoulders. Most importantly, I have a safe place for my daughter to stay during our visits.

Michael

Project PLASE, Inc. Client

“ I have a brand new apartment near the Maryland Center for Veterans Education & Training (MCVET). I like being close enough to still meet with my case manager and the wonderful support system here.

**Denise, Navy Veteran
MCVET Client**



GRANT MANAGEMENT

MOHS administered funding awards for the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) Competition and Continuum of Care (CoC) Grant Competition – totaling over **\$42 million** being made available to nonprofit organizations and community partners to serve people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Baltimore City.

In FY 2023, Baltimore City awarded over **\$16 million** through the CFA Competition to fund 24 projects over 15 homeless services organizations. Baltimore City's CoC was awarded over **\$26 million** that will fund 42 projects across 18 homeless services organizations. Not only did the CoC receive the full requested amount, but also a bonus funding award. This will allow five new projects to be funded and increase access to housing for our neighbors who need it most.

\$42 MILLION

\$16 MILLION

Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) Competition

Projects

- Emergency Shelter
- Housing Stabilization
- Rapid Rehousing
- Street Outreach
- Permanent Supportive Housing Resources

\$26 MILLION

Continuum of Care (CoC) Grant Competition

Projects

- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Rapid Rehousing
- Transitional Housing
- Support Services
- Safe Haven Projects
- Youth Homelessness Demonstration Programs (YHDP)
- CoC Planning
- Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS)
- Coordinated Access

ARPA IN ACTION

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDING

In response to the COVID-19 global public health emergency and its negative economic impacts, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provided relief funding to the City of Baltimore. Mayor Brandon M. Scott is using this funding to make strategic investments in Baltimore's future and equitably deliver resources and services to all City residents.

In February 2022, Mayor Scott announced that MOHS would be allocated **\$75 million** of ARPA funding, in which MOHS used to produce and fund four significant projects to date.

ARPA projects launched in 2023:

Housing Navigation Program

House Baltimore | Landlord Engagement & Incentive Fund

Flex Fund for Diversion & Rapid Resolution

Housing Accelerator Fund



Courtesy photo

Housing Navigation Program

Community members can now meet with Housing Navigators at conveniently-located community hubs to get help resolving a potential or current housing crisis. This new service is being offered at five select Enoch Pratt Library branches in partnership with MOHS.

Since the program's launch in June 2023, Housing Navigators provided **565** community members with the following services:

- Guidance to help community members understand their housing crisis and work toward a strategic resolution.
- Identification of community resources to quickly resolve current episodes of homelessness or prevent a potential housing crisis.
- Development of an individualized housing plan that accounts for long-term housing stability.
- Connection to Emergency Shelter (based on availability).
- Completion of Coordinated Access Intake to determine eligibility for housing resources for people experiencing homelessness.
- Navigation support for community members who have been matched to a housing program through Coordinated Access but still need to select housing or sign a lease.
- Short-term case management and connection to vital services.

Enoch Pratt Library	Phone Number	Address
Brooklyn	443-615-1232	300 E. Patapsco Ave., Baltimore MD 21225
Central	443-401-9750	400 Cathedral St., Baltimore, MD 21201
Pennsylvania Avenue	443-401-9759	1531 W. North Ave., Baltimore, MD 21217
Southeast Anchor	443-571-3679	3601 Eastern Ave., Baltimore, MD 21224
Waverly	410-458-9113	400 E. 33rd St., Baltimore, MD 21218

*For direct inquiries, community members can email HousingNavigatorMOHS@baltimorecity.gov.

House Baltimore

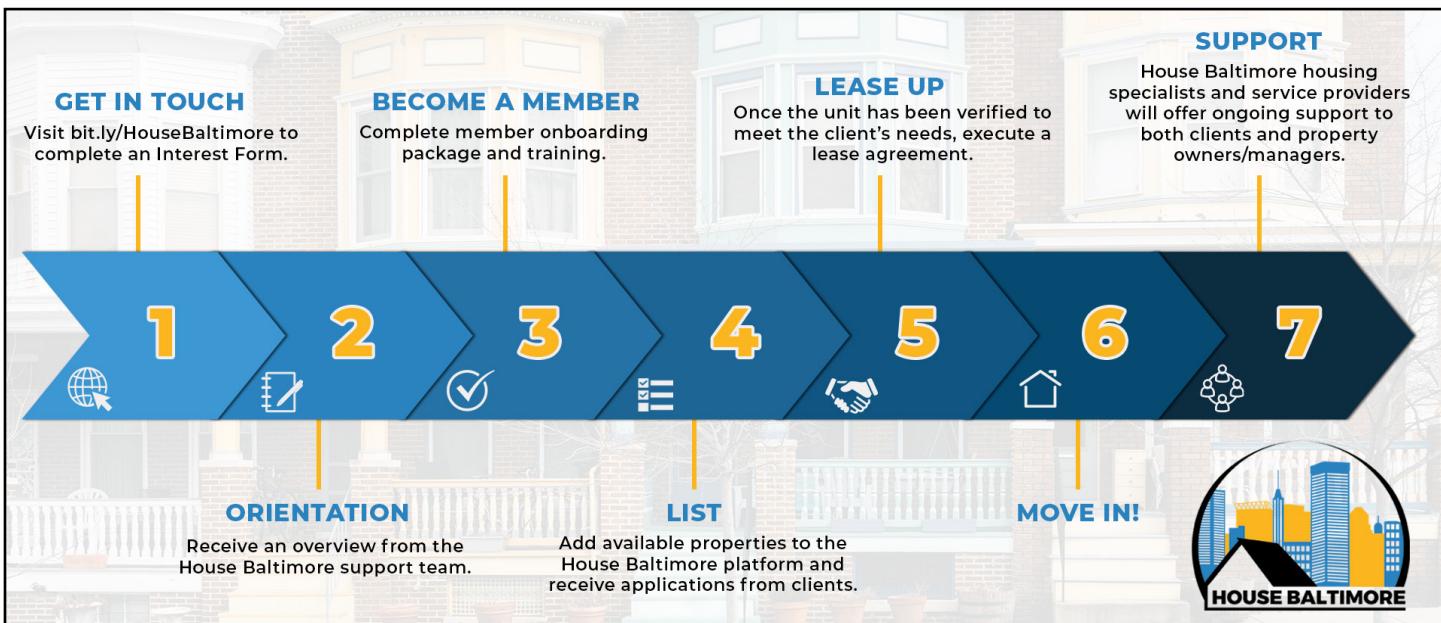
Landlord Engagement & Incentive Fund

The House Baltimore initiative is a collaboration between property owners and managers, community members, and homeless service providers in Baltimore City. Through this initiative, housing partners can become House Baltimore members and receive a variety of benefits for renting to households exiting or at risk of homelessness.

BENEFITS

- A dedicated team of housing specialists to support property owners and managers.
- Access to a free, easy-to-use listing platform exclusively accessed by local homeless service providers.
- A \$2,000 incentive payment per new lease agreement (for the first five units leased, with a possibility for additional incentives if the housing partner offers flexible screening criteria).
- Ability to file a claim for damage and vacancy reimbursement – up to \$5,000 – per unit for expenses caused by the tenant.
- Wraparound and support services from local homeless services agencies to help ensure housing stability.

How It Works



Flex Fund

The Flex Fund for Diversion and Rapid Resolution offers short-term financial assistance to people at imminent risk of homelessness or those who have recently become homeless. Eligible households can receive direct financial assistance to cover rent, security deposits, relocation costs, and other specified housing-related costs. The fund is specifically targeted to individuals and families who do not need extensive support services, can self-resolve, and fall into four eligibility categories that align with the [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's \(HUD\) definitions for homelessness](#).

Flex Fund Eligible Expenses

Rental Assistance	Security Deposit
Utility and Rent Debt	Relocation Assistance
Minor repair costs and cleaning as deemed necessary by a health professional for housing stability	

Flex Funds will allow households to resolve an episode of housing instability rapidly. Through flexible, person-centered interventions, households will break the cycle of homelessness and obtain or retain permanent housing.

MOHS launched the Flex Funds initiative in November 2023 and looks forward to begin distributing payments in Q1 of 2024.

Housing Accelerator Fund

MOHS partnered with the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to receive **\$30 million - \$15.2 million** from the City's American Rescue Plan Act State and Local Recovery funds (SLFRF) and **\$14.7 million** from the Home Investment Partnerships Program American Rescue Plan Act (HOME-ARP) – to create a Housing Accelerator Fund.

In October 2023, this funding was made available for the creation of both permanent supportive and extremely affordable housing. The Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) proposed late stage pre-development, in addition to maximum awards for the construction of affordable housing of up to **\$250,000** per unit for permanent supportive housing and up to **\$100,000** per unit for traditional affordable housing. Additionally, six teams will be selected to participate in the Supportive Housing Institute offered by the Corporation for Affordable Housing (CSH). Teams that successfully complete the Institute will be eligible to apply for awards for early pre-development funding up to **\$150,000** per team, for a total of **\$900,000**.



CONCLUSION

In 2023, MOHS advanced the agenda of the Scott Administration's Clean and Healthy Communities pillar by focusing efforts on connecting people experiencing homelessness to available affordable housing units and securing funding to support the implementation of support services needed for homelessness diversion.

Under the leadership of Executive Director Ernestina Simmons, MOHS seeks to strengthen relationships with residents and deepen its impact in the community. By leveraging grant funding and strategic public-private partnerships, MOHS is increasing the cross-agency collaboration and cohesion necessary to develop a multi-faceted response to homelessness that provides residents with security, stability, and support services that align with their self-identified needs to promote long-term success.

This year, MOHS will continue building upon its progress in addressing the needs of Baltimore's most vulnerable residents through engagement and providing access to vital services that aid in making homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

Join the Collective Effort to End Homelessness

Everyone plays a role in ending homelessness, and it will take the entire community coming together to be successful. If you are interested in being involved, please reach out to Baltimore City's Continuum of Care (CoC). Become a member, join a committee, donate to, or volunteer with the CoC.

Get Involved with Baltimore City's CoC

-  Visit journeyhomebaltimore.org
 -  Email info@journeyhomebaltimore.org
-

Connect with MOHS for Homeless Services

-  Visit bit.ly/MOHSGetHelp
-

Baltimore City Shelter Hotline

-  Call 443-984-9540 or 2-1-1
-

Baltimore City Outreach Teams

-  Call 410-545-1862
 -  Email HomelessOutreach@baltimorecity.gov
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