

**ACHIEVING COORDINATED ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR TENANTS  
NEED, COMPONENTS, AND A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR RICHMOND, VIRGINIA**

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## AUTHOR INFORMATION AND METHODOLOGY

Talya Lockman-Fine is a third year law school student at Yale Law School. Lockman-Fine started research on evictions in Richmond in fall 2018 in collaboration with friend and colleague Olivia Rosenthal, a second year law school student at Stanford Law School. With the substantive support and supervision of Marty Wegbreit, Director of Litigation at the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society (CVLAS), and financial support from Yale and Stanford, respectively, Lockman-Fine and Rosenthal spent June, July, and August of 2019 in Richmond conducting extensive interviews and comparative research. Their work culminated in a report entitled *Evictions in Richmond: Overview, Current Responses, and Program Proposals*,<sup>1</sup> which they presented to relevant stakeholders in August 2019. They remained involved in ongoing work in Richmond throughout fall 2019, winter 2020, and spring 2020.

Lockman-Fine developed this report in response to a gap in the popular and academic literature around increasing coordinated access to services for tenants and to meet a specific, identified need for a feasibility study on improving coordinated access in Richmond, Virginia. It is based on research conducted throughout 2019 and 2020 and on interviews with tenants and providers in Richmond conducted in summer 2019 and spring 2020.

<sup>1</sup> *Evictions in Richmond: Overview, Current Responses, and Program Proposals* (August 2019), accessible at <https://vpm.org/sites/default/files/2019-08/Richmond%20Eviction%20Report.pdf>.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The scale and consequences of the current eviction crisis are staggering: 2.3 million evictions occurred in 2016,<sup>2</sup> with tremendous costs for individuals, for communities, and for the country. Growing awareness of the crisis has prompted a growing number of responses. So far relatively unaddressed, however, has been the issue of coordinating access to resources and services for tenants such that tenants are efficiently and effectively connected to the resources and services they need.

This report aims to begin to fill that gap. Part I discusses the issue generally, laying out the need and key components of possible solutions. Part II focuses on Richmond, Virginia, where particularly high eviction rates have received national attention and fueled action, including an ask for a feasibility study on improving coordinated access to services for tenants. The analysis in Part II is tailored to Richmond and does not necessarily provide a template for a scalable model. That said, the questions considered are generally applicable, meaning this report could be used as a model for feasibility studies for other jurisdictions, leading in turn to the development of solutions tailored to each jurisdiction.

Ultimately, the hope is that this report effectively makes the case for why coordinating access matters and what it should entail and lays out a vision in sufficient detail to move efforts in Richmond forward and prompt efforts elsewhere.

<sup>2</sup> The Eviction Lab, [evictionlab.org](http://evictionlab.org).

## PART I: BACKGROUND

### THE EVICTION CRISIS AND A RANGE OF RESPONSES

2.3 million evictions occurred in 2016,<sup>3</sup> a number that, already shockingly high, likely in fact significantly undercounts the number of evictions because it fails to take into account the vast numbers of evictions carried out informally.<sup>4,5</sup> The consequences of an eviction are dire for individuals and for families, ranging from, most directly, the loss of housing stability, to, less directly, disruptions to employment and schooling, to, over the long-term, persistent discrimination in accessing new housing and finance, with additional consequences for communities and for the country.

Thankfully, growing awareness of the eviction crisis—of its breadth and of its consequences, and due in large part to Matthew Desmond’s award-winning *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*—has prompted an increasing number of responses.<sup>6</sup>

Based largely at the state, county, and city levels, with little action to date from the federal government, the most common response has been the emergence of eviction diversion programs, which move tenants meeting certain eligibility criteria—typically, having already received an unlawful detainer and below a certain income level—out of formal court proceedings into mediation with their landlords and additionally provide access to financial resources, usually then disbursed in accordance with an agreed-upon payment plan.<sup>7</sup>

Alongside the launch of eviction diversion programs has come increased calls for eviction prevention, most commonly consisting of access to rent and utility assistance, and, particularly in

<sup>3</sup> The Eviction Lab, [evictionlab.org](http://evictionlab.org).

<sup>4</sup> There is widespread consensus that more needs to be done, nationally and locally, to track informal evictions, but also that doing so has so far proven difficult.

<sup>5</sup> The numbers are highly controversial. Countering arguments that the Eviction Lab numbers are too low because they do not include informal evictions, others have argued that the numbers are too high because they fail to take into account last minute arrangements between landlords and tenants that, even after a court has issued a judgment of possession, keep tenants stably-housed. Others have criticized various data sources, arguing, for example, that national efforts have failed to sufficiently engage with local groups that may have more accurate data.

<sup>6</sup> Until recently, there was no systematic effort to document types of interventions nor specific instances of them occurring across the country. Evictioninnovation.org now aims to collect and make this information available, providing an overview of interventions on its home page and more detailed descriptions of intervention types and profiles of current interventions on its “Innovations” page. Founders of the website are actively working to crowdsource as much information as possible through the form provided on the “Connect” page. Over time, the site aims to provide an increasingly comprehensive view of the interventions currently occurring and help those launching responses access key resources such as the still small but hopefully growing literature on best practices for city-level responses to eviction, including effective monitoring and evaluation plans and the results of completed evaluations.

<sup>7</sup> Two notable examples are programs in Durham, North Carolina and Richmond, Virginia. For detailed descriptions, see “Eviction Diversion Program in Durham, North Carolina,” <https://evictioninnovation.org/2020/01/28/diversion-durham/> and “Eviction Diversion Program in Richmond, Virginia,” <https://evictioninnovation.org/2020/01/26/diversion-richmond/>.

the context of nonprofit housing developments, integrated social services.<sup>8</sup> These efforts try to shift attention upstream, before a tenant receives an unlawful detainer, based on powerful anecdotal (and, increasingly, empirical) evidence that earlier interventions increase housing stability at lower cost.<sup>9</sup>

Other responses, largely isolated from each other and typically underfunded, include improving court communications (such as through providing information sheets attached to summons<sup>10</sup>) and a variety of new technological tools to assist tenants with various parts of the process: e.g., documenting issues, writing to their landlords,<sup>11</sup> and preparing answers.<sup>12</sup>

This is all alongside the responses on which the legal community has largely concentrated efforts: reforms to landlord-tenant law (including just cause policies limiting reasons landlords can evict tenants, evidence standards requiring landlords provide documentation, fixed numbers of days for each part of the eviction process, and masking or sealing eviction records<sup>13</sup>) and increasing access to legal support. Here, lawyers and tenant advocates have rallied around calls for right to counsel, which has progressed farthest in New York City, where it is being rolled out zip code by zip code.<sup>14</sup> Where right to counsel is a longer-term goal, or alongside it, lawyers and advocates have creatively

<sup>8</sup> Programs in Syracuse, New York provide one example of the power of eviction prevention, and in particular integrated social services. See “Eviction Prevention in Syracuse, New York,” <https://evictioninnovation.org/2020/01/26/prevention-syracuse/>.

<sup>9</sup> As is the case for other interventions, there have been few evaluations of eviction prevention programs. Programs run by nonprofit housing developer Homeport in Columbus, Ohio are a notable exception. As reported in *Evictions in Richmond*: “The program’s results ultimately showed that, for many residents, one-time financial assistance coupled with financial education and counseling represented a successful intervention: the program successfully prevented 149 households from experiencing eviction. Only 22% of the program participants (thirty residents) moved out of their homes, the majority of whom did so voluntarily, with only twelve program participants evicted. The program also succeeded in helping residents improve their on-time rent payments months after receiving the onetime financial assistance: more than twice as many residents (10.3% as opposed to 4.3%) paid every rent payment on time one year after receiving financial assistance than the year prior.” *Evictions in Richmond*.

<sup>10</sup> See work carried out by the Stanford Legal Design Lab in partnership with the Hamilton County Clerk of Court’s office and Hamilton County Municipal Court’s Help Center. “Eviction Summons Redesign in Cincinnati, OH,” <https://evictioninnovation.org/2020/01/28/summons-cincinnati/>.

<sup>11</sup> See Hello Landlord, [hellolandlord.org](http://hellolandlord.org); Dear Landlord, <https://justiceconnect.org.au/help/dear-landlord/>.

<sup>12</sup> See Massachusetts Defense for Eviction (MADE), Self-Guided Eviction Help, <https://www.gbls.org/MADE>.

<sup>13</sup> Laws related to evictions vary by state. There is not yet a comprehensive database of state-by-state laws, but several groups are working on collecting data with the goal of ultimately making it publicly available in such a database. The Policy Surveillance Program currently provides data for 51 jurisdictions on nine variables (including dwellings exempt from state landlord-tenant law, landlord and tenant duties regarding maintenance, and the maximum amount a landlord can charge for a security deposit). See “State Landlord-Tenant Laws,” The Policy Surveillance Project, <http://lawatlas.org/datasets/state-landlord-tenant-laws-1499878846>. Recently, a number of databases have emerged specifically to track developments (including legislative) related to housing and evictions in response to COVID-19. See, e.g., “COVID-19 Emergency Tenant Protections & Rent Strikes,” <https://antievictionmappingproject.github.io/covid-19-map/>; “COVID-19 and Changing Eviction Policies Around the Nation,” <https://evictionlab.org/covid-eviction-policies/>; “COVID-19 Local Action Tracker Preview,” <https://covid19.nlc.org/resources/covid-19-local-action-tracker/>; “COVID-19 Eviction Moratoria by State, Commonwealth and Territory,” <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/u/1/d/e/2PACX-1vTH8dUIbfnt3X52TrY3dEHQCAm60e5nqo0Rn1rNcf15dPGeXxM9QN9UdxUfEjxwvfTKzbCbZxJMdr7X/pubhtml#>.

<sup>14</sup> See “How Right to Counsel Works,” Right to Counsel NYC, [https://www.righttocounselnyc.org/how\\_rtc\\_works/](https://www.righttocounselnyc.org/how_rtc_works/); “All About the Right to Counsel for Evictions in NYC,” Civil Right to Counsel, [http://civilrighttocounsel.org/major\\_developments/894](http://civilrighttocounsel.org/major_developments/894).

pursued other solutions, including eviction legal helplines staffed by voluntary pro bono lawyers, representation by law school students through law school clinics, and more time-limited responses such as lawyer for a day programs.<sup>15</sup>

All of these responses, for the most part relatively recently launched and narrowly tailored to the current eviction crisis, also exist against the backdrop of ongoing, broader efforts to address the root causes of evictions: most importantly, efforts to increase the drastic shortage of affordable housing and to build tenant organizing capacity.

So far relatively unaddressed in the recent wave of responses, however, is the first step of directing tenants to them: to the aforementioned types of resources and services and throughout all stages of the eviction process, including pre-court access to legal guidance and emergency rental assistance, during court access to counsel, and post court access to additional legal guidance and assistance storing belongings, navigating disruptions to schooling and employment, and finding new housing.

Seen in one light, the failure to address coordinated access is an instantiation of a more general failure to coordinate resources and services for low income Americans, with federal and local government entities, nonprofits, and, when relevant, private sector actors often problematically siloed: at best, operating inefficiently, and, often, in fact working at cross-purposes.

Lack of coordinated access to services for tenants being a particular instance of a more general phenomenon, however, does not make addressing it futile. First, there is increasing recognition, especially in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, of the need for greater coordination generally, leading, among other responses, to the emergence of new government entities working across previously siloed thematic areas. These efforts can be built on and expanded. Secondly, there may be particular appetite to address lack of coordination in the context of evictions: because attention to evictions has been high, because many responses are still early, and because the impact of COVID-19 on housing instability has featured especially prominently. Increased coordination around evictions could then set a model for addressing other, similar coordination failures.

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., “Lawyer for a Day in the Boston Housing Court,” Boston Bar Association, <https://bostonbar.org/in-the-community/public-service/housing-court-lawyer-for-the-day-program>.

## AN UNDERADDRESSED PROBLEM

In cities across the country, tenants face the preliminary problem of not knowing what resources and services are available and how to access them. This is certainly not true everywhere—some cities, with efforts led by local government and/or active nonprofits and as profiled in the report appendix, have invested in building the necessary infrastructure—but it is true in many places.

In these jurisdictions, the problem is most easily apparent from the tenant’s perspective: tenants are uncertain about where to go for specific needs, such as legal aid, financial assistance, or social services. It is also blatantly apparent to providers, manifesting in an inability, when they cannot meet a particular need, to refer tenants to other providers or to a centralized system that can meet that need: e.g., legal aid organizations competently provide legal guidance but are unable to refer clients to providers for non-legal needs; financial assistance providers have knowledge of their own funding pots, eligibility criteria, and allocation processes but lack this information with respect to other providers; social service providers serve specific tenant populations (e.g., tenants in a particular public housing or nonprofit development) but cannot direct others (e.g., renters in the private market) to comparable services.

Put more precisely, the gap is not a complete lack of access to relevant services—tenants often do find some of the guidance they need—nor a complete absence of coordination—dedicated providers often collaborate on one-off bases in the context of providing support to specific clients, have partnerships with one to several other providers, or are co-members of city-level working groups and other efforts pushing for systemic change—but tenants cannot consistently identify and access relevant services, nor do providers systematically support this process, nor is there data to drive system-level improvements.

The reasons for this gap are relatively straightforward, a product of the barriers to efforts aimed at increasing coordination more generally: a lack of funding and institutional support for solutions involving ecosystem building (as opposed to “flashier” solutions such as new programs and policies); mixed incentives on the organizational-level (e.g., pressures to prioritize organizational targets and milestones that may seem to conflict with more collaboratively-oriented initiatives); and complicated dynamics and relationships among local actors. Often, action in places where there is widespread recognition that such efforts are needed and even relatively high interest in participating in them is additionally undermined by the absence of an actor with sufficient convening power and willingness to take charge and get it done.

Whatever the reasons, the consequences of lack of coordinated access are devastating. Tenants waste valuable, and often already scarce, time, money, and other resources trying to find the services they need, for example, missing work to take the bus across town, only to find they are not eligible for the assistance offered. This may sound anachronistic in a world where large quantities of information are available online and mobile phone penetration is high, but it is not: online information is often out of date, unclear, or not provided at all, and providers are often unresponsive by phone.

The current situation also poses problems for providers, exhausting their often also scarce resources fielding requests they cannot support and limiting their ability to capitalize on their



comparative advantage and serve those tenants whose needs best match the provider's capacities. Most frequently overlooked, or at the least insufficiently taken into account in cost-benefit analyses of the need for such efforts, are system-level consequences. On a systems level, the current situation means an inability to identify gaps, duplication, and opportunities for coordination that could in turn drive evidence-based improvements in service provision.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

There are a wide range of possible solutions to the outlined problem, from fully coordinated access systems with a centralized entry point for all relevant services to much more partial efforts, such as a publicly accessible database of all relevant resources. What solution should be deployed depends on the needs and capacities of each jurisdiction, taking into account factors such as the size of the jurisdiction (and, more specifically, the number of people experiencing housing instability), currently existing coordination systems, if any, and available financial resources and political will for new or expanded efforts.

Key components of possible solutions include<sup>16,17</sup>:

- **Tenant interface:** An accessible—meaning well-publicized, approachable, and easy to navigate—tenant interface, whether involving a physical location, a call-line, a website, or a combination of these forms.
- **Provider mapping and updating:** A mapping of all relevant resources and services and key information about each—collected, stored, and kept up-to-date.
- **Tenant-provider matching:** Policies and procedures for connecting tenants to relevant services, and dedicated resources (financial and personnel) to carry out these policies and procedures.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** Monitoring and evaluation systems to track the use of the system and determine its impact.
- **Driving improvements:** Mechanisms through which analysis of the system’s day-to-day operations and more extensive findings from monitoring and evaluation drive improvements in local services, e.g., by leading to identifying and addressing gaps, duplication, and opportunities for coordination in service provision.

The following sections discuss each of these components in greater detail.

<sup>16</sup> These components are based on the author’s own research and analysis, not on a widely-accepted literature of best practices. Along with the rest of this report, the discussion of key components aims to serve as a starting point for additional research and analysis that will hopefully lead to refining these components and adding others.

<sup>17</sup> Identifying these as key components is also not intended to suggest that additional components are excessive or unnecessary. To the contrary, better resourced jurisdictions with well-developed systems may consider a number of additional components to be key. For example, FHCS D’s Housing Navigation Center, included in the appendix, integrates technology that enables precise tracking of all visitors to its sites and coordinated appointment scheduling across providers and views these components as crucial to its effectiveness. Interview with FHCS D employee, April 2020.

## TENANT INTERFACE

Coordinated access systems (or more partial solutions) can take several different forms: physical locations (freestanding or within another entity already providing services to tenants), call-lines (freestanding or linked to other call-lines), or websites, or operate through a combination of these forms.

Each form varies along several key dimensions, including: accessibility (i.e. how easy it is to access), responsiveness (i.e. how capable the system is of meeting tenants' needs), and feasibility (i.e. the extent of requirements such as costs, staffing, and political will). How these factors play out are best evaluated and analyzed in the context of a particular jurisdiction. Broadly, however:

- **Physical locations** can provide crucial in-person interactions but can entail significant costs, from securing and maintaining space to heightened staffing requirements.<sup>18</sup>
- **Call-lines** can be more difficult to navigate and are often perceived as less reliable, but can provide much-needed support at lower cost.
- **Websites**, depending on design/extensiveness, typically have far less functionality in terms of guiding tenants to suitable services (and should in fact likely be understood as a “low-touch” alternative, as opposed to as in any way a substitute for a physical location or call-line), but are undoubtedly lowest cost.

Regardless of the form or forms they take, coordinated access systems must be well-publicized, approachable, and easy to navigate. Achieving this depends on employing general principles of human centered design, adapted to the specific needs and capacities of tenants in each jurisdiction.<sup>19</sup>

## PROVIDER MAPPING AND UPDATING

Coordinated access systems should include all providers of relevant resources and services, with how narrowly or broadly relevant is construed dependent on the needs and constraints of the jurisdiction and what other coordination mechanisms already exist.

<sup>18</sup> This analysis simplifies what is in fact a wide range of opinions on the relative efficacy (as well as other comparisons) of physical locations vs. call-lines, and of specific features of each. This is an area where building more of an evidence base is especially crucial.

<sup>19</sup> The Stanford Legal Design Lab, an interdisciplinary team based at the Stanford Law School and the Design School, describes itself as “working at the intersection of human-centered design, technology & law to build a new generation of legal products & services.” “Legal Tech Design,” <http://www.legaltechdesign.com/>. Their work “developing new models of user-friendly, accessible, and engaging legal services” showcases the principles and processes that can result in user-centered legal products and services and that should inform smart designs for coordinated access systems. For additional guidance on legal communication, *see* “Legal Comm Design,” <http://www.legaltechdesign.com/communication-design/>.

Most narrowly, the mapping of providers could be limited to those serving tenants at risk of eviction or in eviction proceedings, including legal aid organizations and emergency rental assistance providers, for example, but not organizations focused on identifying suitable rental housing. More broadly, providers could include all those serving renters, or, even more broadly, all those with a housing-related mission. Formulations that are even broader may involve potentially arbitrary line-drawing: given how inextricably housing is connected to other issues (e.g., employment, with stable employment crucial to the ability to continue to pay rent), jurisdictions must determine how to strike an appropriate balance between excluding crucial services and including so many services the system becomes unwieldy and unable to offer targeted support.

For each provider, the system must have access to all relevant information, including eligibility criteria (which tenants are eligible for the resource or service) and access information (how tenants can access the service, e.g., where to go or what number to call). Sometimes, providers themselves make this information easily accessible. In the many cases where they do not, however, collecting and making this information available, and ensuring it remains up-to-date, is crucial.

Obtaining and updating information depends on having efficient, user-friendly procedures in place. In smaller jurisdictions, where resources and providers are limited in number, or in jurisdictions where providers are already relatively highly coordinated, achieving this will be easier and could even be accomplished by a relatively low-effort initial push to gather organizations in one place and collect the relevant information, followed by regular meetings at which information is updated.

Elsewhere, i.e. in jurisdictions that are larger and/or less coordinated, both the initial push and updating may be harder, requiring more dedicated efforts to identify relevant providers and collect and update relevant information, likely through a combination of online research, follow-up calls, and online forms to be filled out by providers. These plans and procedures need to be developed early on and effectively communicated to gain buy-in from providers.

## TENANT-PROVIDER MATCHING

Alongside the tenant interface and detailed, up-to-date information on relevant providers and the services they offer, systems must have clear policies and procedures for how to match tenants with providers. For physical locations and call-lines, this also requires staff with relevant experience and/or sufficient training to operationalize policies and procedures; for websites, this requires, at a minimum, smart menus that guide tenants to the right options, and, if websites are to have anywhere near the functionality of physical locations and call-lines, likely more sophisticated intake and matching algorithms.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A well-designed and well-executed system must also include plans for monitoring and evaluation. This should involve tracking basic user metrics (e.g., number of users, needs identified, and tenants matched with providers) and, depending on capacity, also tracking longer-term outcomes, including the tenant's housing trajectory in the months and years following use of the system.

Evaluations should then seek to determine the contribution of the system (and specific components of it) to keeping a tenant stably-housed

#### DRIVING IMPROVEMENTS

As a final key component, data and results from monitoring and evaluation efforts as well as observations from “simpler” analyses of the range of providers and the services they offer should be used to improve services. Analyses can include identifying gaps in service provision, duplication of service provision (i.e. providers that provide the same services to the same population, though this is not necessarily a problem in and of itself unless uncoordinated), and opportunities for greater collaboration and coordination. Acting on these findings can entail mobilizing additional resources or reallocating existing resources and developing new programs and policies or reorienting existing ones.

In brief, the idea is that, as opposed to current efforts to secure resources or launch new programs related to evictions, which are often supported by scant evidence, new analyses can contribute to an evidence base on what is needed and what works that is then leveraged to drive continual improvements in services.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Alongside guidance on key components, several other considerations should influence whether a particular jurisdiction should create a coordinated access system and what it should look like.

### ROBUST SERVICES

A system is only as good as the resources and services it includes. As one provider with extensive experience running such a system put it, one “has to have services to refer them [tenants] to...There’s no point in having a call center if they can’t give you answers.”<sup>20</sup> While insufficient services may be the biggest problem, so too are unused services. As the same provider explained, “There’s no point in having an insurance provider [on site] if everyone has insurance or if you’re filling out 2 forms a week.”<sup>21</sup>

### LOW ADMINISTRATIVE FRICTION

Another consideration is whether increasing coordination increases administrative friction to the point that the benefits of coordinated access systems are significantly undermined. As one provider explained, layers of overlapping federal and state regulations meant that “It takes 26 pages of paper to open one case,” with these administrative frictions slowing and weakening coordinated service provision.<sup>22</sup>

### COMMUNITY BUY-IN

Providers currently involved with a range of different coordinated access systems emphasized how crucial buy-in is and the range of measures pursued to achieve it, including creating neighborhood advisory councils and committees (with stakeholders in one model including political leaders, healthcare professionals, and religious organizations, among others); creatively emphasizing how such systems benefit not only users but all community members; and the importance of not overpromising (i.e. not framing the system as “solving” all housing-related problems: “You can’t fix a neighborhood”<sup>23</sup>).

<sup>20</sup> Interview with provider, April 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with provider, April 2020.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with provider, April 2020.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with provider, April 2020.

## PART II: FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

### EVICTIONS IN RICHMOND AND INITIAL RESPONSES

Richmond made headlines in 2018<sup>24</sup> when the Eviction Lab data put the city's eviction rate at 11.44%, the second highest in the country among large cities and three to four times the national average.<sup>25</sup> Additional research carried out since by the RVA Eviction Lab provides more color to this topline number, showing high correlation between housing cost burden and eviction rates and significant variation by race, among other findings.<sup>26</sup>

As in other places, recognition of the scale and significance of the eviction crisis has prompted action, including the Richmond Eviction Diversion Program, a collaboration between the city, the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society (CVLAS), and Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) that launched in October 2019, and a tripling of funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (from \$1.0 million to \$2.9 million).<sup>27</sup>

In terms of coordinating structures, a big shift came in November 2019 when Mayor Levar Stoney appointed a twenty-five member Eviction Task Force comprised of representatives from government, legal aid, academia, property management, and social services. The Task Force has met several times and developed five strategy recommendations (with accompanying budget requests) that are intended to guide the city's response going forward.

<sup>24</sup> Emily Badger and Quoc Trung Bui, "In 83 Million Eviction Records, a Sweeping and Intimate New Look at Housing in America," *NY Times* (April 7, 2018), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/04/07/upshot/millions-of-eviction-records-a-sweeping-new-look-at-housing-in-america.html>.

<sup>25</sup> "Richmond, Virginia," Eviction Lab, <https://evictionlab.org/map/#/2016?geography=cities&bounds=-77.971,37.27,-76.971,37.77&type=er>. These numbers, as discussed above with regard to eviction numbers generally, are controversial but also remain the best currently available estimates.

<sup>26</sup> The RVA Eviction Lab, based at Virginia Commonwealth University's Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, has a number of ongoing research projects on evictions in Richmond. For the cited information, see Kathryn Howell, "Eviction and the Rental Housing Market in the Commonwealth," *accessible at* <https://cura.vcu.edu/media/cura/pdfs/cura-documents/EvictionandtheRentalHousingMarketintheCommonwealth.pdf>; Benjamin Teresa, "The Geography of Eviction in Richmond: Beyond Poverty," *accessible at* <https://cura.vcu.edu/ongoing-projects/rva-eviction-lab/>.

<sup>27</sup> There are also a large number of other ongoing efforts, some predating 2018 and some recently launched or recently expanded. For additional information on current responses and on proposals for additional responses (some of which have since been furthered), see *Evictions in Richmond: Overview, Current Responses, and Program Proposals* (August 2019), *accessible at* <https://vpm.org/sites/default/files/2019-08/Richmond%20Eviction%20Report.pdf>.

Figure 1: “Eviction Strategy Recommendations”<sup>28</sup>

Strategies	Annual Monetary Costs
<b>Objective 1:</b> Develop Tenant/ Landlord portal offering courses on education for both tenant and landlord. Certificates of completion issued after each course.	\$37,500
<b>Objective 2:</b> Conduct a feasibility assessment on opportunities to improve access to and coordination of tenant resources	\$26,250
<b>Objective 3:</b> Create the Richmond City Pilot Eviction Early Intervention Program RPEEIP would be a one-year pilot program administered by Area Congregations Together in Service (ACTS) that would provide financial assistance and support services to renters who are at risk of eviction.	\$1,050,000
<b>Objective 4:</b> Develop a pool flexible funding – targeted at RRHA tenants – to help households between 0 and 30% of AMI overcome a short-term crisis that directly impacts their housing stability.	\$112,500
<b>Objective 5:</b> Hire an upper-entry/early mid-level staff position focused on supporting the task force and implementation of recommendations and other policies to address Richmond's eviction crisis.	\$75,000
Total	\$1,301,250

The new emphasis on the need for increased coordination in responding to evictions is underscored by a push for coordination more generally, best seen in efforts by the Office of Community Wealth Building to gather local experts and in a push for greater coordination around emergency financial assistance (discussed *infra*).

In the context of Richmond’s increased focus on and commitment to addressing the eviction crisis, the more general push toward greater coordination, and, most directly, the specific objective to “conduct a feasibility assessment on opportunities to improve access to and coordination of tenant resources” (Objective 2 in the table above), Part II of this report focuses on the need for coordinated tenant services in Richmond and on what meeting this need could look like. At best, Part II is the feasibility assessment called for and allows the Task Force to move forward with next steps; at the least, it lays the groundwork for additional research and planning.

<sup>28</sup> Table included unaltered from the Task Force. City of Richmond Eviction Task Force, “Eviction Strategy Recommendations.”



## NEEDS IDENTIFICATION

The gap in Richmond is like the gap in many other cities—there is no coordinated access system serving tenants at risk of eviction<sup>29</sup>—but what exactly this looks like, for tenants, for providers, and for the system as a whole, is particular to Richmond.

From the tenant perspective, the issue in Richmond could best be characterized as an inability to identify and access desperately needed services.<sup>30</sup> As one provider interviewed bluntly stated, “[It is] definitely true that tenants don’t know where to go.”<sup>31</sup> As another, someone who interacts daily with tenants in eviction proceedings, explained in greater detail: “There is no initial assessment of potential needs,” meaning it “may take three stops or tries to address your needs, as opposed to the ideal scenario where you speak to someone and say where do I go.”<sup>32</sup>

These comments reflect the sentiments of many tenants. As an RVA Eviction Lab study conducted in 2019 and based on almost 50 interviews of callers to the Virginia Poverty Law Center’s Eviction Helpline who agreed to participate in follow-up research usefully summarizes: “Tenants interviewed found the available resources to be disconnected from other organizations who serve similar purposes, the process for obtaining them is not transparent, and there are often barriers that prevent the resources from being utilized by the community.”<sup>33</sup>

The report highlights particular challenges with accessing larger organizations—“Interviewees explained that when they reached out to more known or larger organizations, they were often turned away or unable to receive assistance. Several interviewees explained that no one answered the phone or, if there was an opportunity to leave a message, they never received a call back”<sup>34</sup>—and with responsiveness to phone calls: “Tenants have noted that they call multiple numbers only to be referred to another organization that either refers them to yet another organization, find that the organization has no available funds, or that they are ineligible.”<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> As is true in many places, access to services for those who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless are much better coordinated. For example, the Homeless Crisis Line, run by Homeward, is widely recognized as an extremely valuable resource, but mainly supports those three days or fewer away from becoming homeless. See “Get Help,” Homeward, <http://www.homewardva.org/get-help>. The analysis in this section on lack of coordination is focused on those who are at risk of eviction (or already in eviction proceedings) and who do not or likely do not satisfy Homeward’s eligibility criteria.

<sup>30</sup> The actual demand for a coordinated system, in terms of anticipated number of requests, is difficult to quantify. The Eviction Diversion program has received approximately 1,000 calls in its first five months of operation (an average of 200 calls per month), while the Homeless Crisis Line typically receives greater than 4,600 calls per month. This suggests an even more generally-oriented call-line would likely receive even greater volumes of calls (perhaps closer to 5,000 per month), while visitors to a physical location would likely be significantly fewer in number.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with provider, March 2020.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with provider, March 2020.

<sup>33</sup> Alexandria Ashe, “Eviction in Richmond: Pathways, Services and Next Steps,” RVA Eviction Lab, <https://rampages.us/rvaevictionlab/wp-content/uploads/sites/33937/2020/03/RVAEL-Eviction-in-Richmond-Pathways-Services-and-Next-Steps.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> Alexandria Ashe, “Eviction in Richmond.”

<sup>35</sup> Alexandria Ashe, “Eviction in Richmond.”

Eligibility issues came up especially frequently, both in the quoted study and in additional interviews, underscoring that efforts to coordinate and strengthen services to date have far from reached all tenants. As the study reports, “Requirements often include income to be significantly low or that the individuals are already homeless. The resources tend to be saved for families and do not include singles, or they have specific criteria that block them from the funding (i.e. only for individuals on substance abuse). There has been a unanimous voice that the resources available do not serve them and a concern that they are being cycled through a system that will keep them in poverty.”<sup>36</sup> Separate from this study, one tenant interviewed explained: “You go to social services...there’s no help for the working poor, they slam the door in your face, they don’t give you the same compassion as [they give to those who are] not working.”<sup>37</sup>

The current lack of coordinated access is also experienced as a burden on providers. As one legal services provider put it, “[T]here’s no coordinated efforts. The right hand doesn’t know what the left hand is doing. You have someone who social services/a case manager may refer to you. I say I don’t have money, I have legal assistance, this other program has money. Then they [the second program] say we don’t have any money. There is a breakdown in communication and no one working together.”<sup>38</sup> As another provider explained, “People say ‘I’m going to get evicted,’ and we say we can’t help. Ideally we’d say ‘go down the hall to x,’” i.e., a non-existent but wished for entity.

Others interviewees affirmed impacts at the systems-level, agreeing that the lack of a coordinated system leaves policymakers, advocates, and others without an evidence base from which to propose and push for new or realigned resources and programming.

Across tenants, providers, and others interviewed, there is also a clear consensus that current access points are insufficient, and not just for the previously highlighted reason of restricted eligibility. Dismissing two of the systems that arguably aim to play this role, one tenant explained: “Google is useless, you get a number of a different state. 2-1-1 Virginia is useless, you just get directed to a different number.”<sup>39,40</sup>

Like in other cities where coordinated access is minimal, there are many reasons for the current situation, with interviewees citing issues with territoriality and funding. As one interviewee put it, “Everyone is focused on their mission not the greater good, even if [they have] greater good intentions.”<sup>41</sup> A focus on individual missions is of course both caused and reinforced by systems, including funding structures and institutional constraints, that often insufficiently incentivize or in fact disincentivize collaboration, and by a lack of support, again both financial and otherwise, for ecosystem-building. There are also, several interviewees commented, “questions of capacity in terms of available organizations and reputation.”<sup>42</sup> And, and this in particular is not unique to

<sup>36</sup> Alexandria Ash, “Eviction in Richmond.”

<sup>37</sup> Interview with tenant, March 2020.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with provider, March 2020.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with tenant, March 2020.

<sup>40</sup> Including these quotations is not intended to affirm the conclusion of these interviewees that these systems are “useless,” but rather to emphasize that they are not widely perceived as meeting the identified need. As discussed *infra*, an effective response will require working with these systems, not deeming them useless and ignoring them.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with provider, March 2020.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with provider, March 2020.

Richmond, progress is additionally undermined by the lack of clear models for what coordinated access should look like and how to get there.

Reasons for the current situation aside, the consequences of it in Richmond, as elsewhere, are devastating. As one provider put it, “[the] biggest consequence or problem is delaying individuals to get the help they need and delay may be to the point they don’t get it at all or just too late.”<sup>43</sup> The current situation also limits providers’ ability to focus exclusively on the needs they are best equipped to meet and, finally, undermines the potential for evidence-based systems-level change.

In contrast, the benefits to putting in place some kind of coordinated access system are tremendous, though so far relatively unmeasured.<sup>44</sup> Discussions of possible benefits of such a system in Richmond have progressed furthest in the context of coordinating emergency financial assistance, specifically related to eviction prevention, where, as one provider emphasized, “We can save a lot of money if we do this,” anticipating savings both from better coordination and from intervening earlier on. In terms of systems-level change, as one interviewee put it, “A coordinated point of entry will provide critical data points for service providers and policy makers,” with this data, hopefully, driving better services and ultimately bringing Richmond closer to the holy grail of fewer evictions and greater housing stability.

Ultimately, then, there appears to be widespread consensus that this is a need<sup>45</sup>: as one interviewee, expressing conviction echoed by many, put it: “We need to bring these people [uncoordinated providers] in and say this is ridiculous”<sup>46</sup> and, as another interviewee emphasized, “Now’s the time to do it.”<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Interview with provider, March 2020.

<sup>44</sup> As highlighted *supra*, the hope is that a growing body of literature will address all key components of these systems and their impact on keeping tenants stably-housed.

<sup>45</sup> This is not to suggest that this is by any means the only need, or even the most important one, in terms of addressing evictions in Richmond. At least one interviewee was quick to emphasize in particular the importance of continuing to invest in and strengthen efforts targeting landlords, i.e. specifically efforts to document and expose landlords that consistently disrespect tenants’ rights, which has so far also been relatively underaddressed in Richmond.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with provider, March 2020.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with provider, March 2020.

## OVERALL VISION

In response to this identified need, the proposal is for a coordinated access system for tenants in Richmond. As opposed to the current situation described *supra*, in which tenants are unsure where to go for housing-related needs, tenants would know to go to a certain physical location, or call a certain number (or, in a much lower touch version, visit a website). They would undergo standardized intake procedures (if a physical location or a call-line, as opposed to a website, was established), and then be directed to the relevant resource or service (likely a particular program offered by a government or nonprofit provider).

Such a system would not replace or undermine any currently existing resources or service providers: tenants who already know of these resources would likely continue to access them directly, while the system would direct tenants who do not know of them to them, thereby in fact increasing use of them. It would also not replace the work of current coordinating entities: as discussed *infra*, it would be coordinated with current systems for which all Richmond tenants are not necessarily eligible (such as the Homeless Crisis Line) or that serve specific needs (such as the Eviction Legal Helpline) as well as with broader systems such as 2-1-1 Virginia, ideally in such a way that not only causes minimal friction but that in fact decreases the burden on these systems.

As the following pages demonstrate, building this system is not a pipedream, but a realistic vision, provided that a coalition of relevant actors make principled, strategic choices on what it should look like and mobilize the political will and financial resources to make it happen.

## KEY COMPONENTS

As with designing and implementing coordinated access systems generally, moving to operationalize an overall vision depends on making strategic decisions about each key component.

### TENANT INTERFACE

Coordinated access in Richmond could take any of several forms: a physical location, a call-line, a website, or a combination of these forms.

Any choice comes with tradeoffs. The table below provides Richmond-specific analysis of each form for each of the objective factors discussed in Part I: accessibility, responsiveness, and feasibility. The appendix provides additional information on existing models in other jurisdictions.

*Figure 2. Comparison of different forms for the tenant interface, Richmond, VA*

	<b>Physical</b>	<b>Call-Line</b>	<b>Website<sup>48</sup></b>
<b>Accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arguably difficult for tenants to access due to geographic disbursement of need and other constraints (e.g., work schedules)</li> <li>• However, tenants interviewed emphasized this would not be a big concern, specifically pointing to lunch breaks as during the work day time that could be used to travel (“You can go on your lunch break, shouldn’t take more than 20 minutes to fill out an application”)<sup>49</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Faster service with fewer barriers,”<sup>50</sup> especially given high access to mobile phones<sup>51</sup></li> <li>• “Can take remotely during winter, or a pandemic” and (according to one provider) would in fact specifically leverage new capacity around working remotely<sup>52</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variable levels of internet access across tenant population</li> </ul>
<b>Responsiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with Richmond tenants and providers showed relatively high</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Already a few hotlines,”<sup>57</sup> so worries that adding another</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consensus that a website just listing</li> </ul>

<sup>48</sup> As mentioned above, websites have much more limited functionality, and therefore should be understood as useful to support a physical location or call-line (i.e. through easing the burden on these services by meeting the small handful of needs that can be answered by an online resource directory) or, where physical locations or call-lines are not be viable, as a first step to increase coordinated access to services.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with tenant, March 2020.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with provider, March 2020.

<sup>51</sup> This is confirmed by Homeward’s Point-in-Time (PIT) count. “Why PIT Count Matters,” Homeward (July 6, 2018), <http://homewardva.org/news/blog/167-why-pit-count-matters>. (“A few years back, the PIT survey was updated to collect information about the accessibility of technology for people experiencing homelessness. The purpose of this update was to learn how people access resources and services. Based on the outcome of this survey, our community was confident that a majority of clients had access to a cell phone.”)

<sup>52</sup> Interview with provider, March 2020.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with tenant, March 2020.

	<p>consensus around the value of in-person interactions for tenants actually getting connected to the most appropriate services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Would be important to have a physical base so that people can speak to someone face to face and have wraparound support because that’s what doesn’t occur today”<sup>53</sup></li> <li>• “It makes you feel better to go to a place<sup>54</sup></li> <li>• “[Need a] physical place to go and physical people and people with expertise”<sup>55</sup></li> <li>• “There needs to be a place when you can go and sign up for what you need, a set place where you can go”<sup>56</sup></li> </ul>	<p>will just overcomplicate things</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worry that lack of in-person interaction will make it harder to appropriately identify needs</li> <li>• Tenant skepticism (based on experiences with existing call-lines) that they will actually be called back/be able to reach someone</li> </ul>	<p>resources could not play the same function as an in-person interaction (or possibly a call-line)</p>
<b>Feasibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More costly, but costs could be significantly reduced if the city could secure donation of a space and/or other materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very low cost</li> </ul>

On the whole, tenants and providers in Richmond revealed a consensus around a preference for a physical space, likely with an associated call-line, and possibly also supported by a website listing available resources. Few seemed to think a call-line alone would be sufficient, and the idea of a website alone was never viewed as offering anything close to similar functionality.

Whatever form the centralized access system in Richmond takes, effective publicity is key: ineffective publicity is a frequent barrier to access, while, one tenant advocate insisted, there would be few challenges to access “if it [the system] is marketed well, and the community comes to trust and know it.”<sup>58</sup>

Methods to effectively publicize such a system in Richmond would need to include strategic outreach in places tenants frequent, achieved by involving all relevant providers in publicity efforts. Those leading publicity efforts should learn from successes and failures of recent efforts in Richmond to reach tenants, including those used to publicize the Eviction Diversion Program (which involve collaboration with a range of providers as well as with the courts, who agreed to

<sup>53</sup> Interview with provider, March 2020.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with tenant, March 2020.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with tenant, March 2020.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with tenant, March 2020.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with tenant, March 2020.

include information about the program on summons to tenants) and the Eviction Legal Helpline (which has formed partnerships with 2-1-1 and the Department of Social Services offices, and has also used Craigslist, to publicize its services). As possible, publicity efforts should also seek to engage landlords: as one interviewee put it, “Landlords must know [when tenants are behind on rent] but might not think to say to a tenant ‘here’s the number you call in Richmond right now to discuss it.’”<sup>59</sup>

Part of effective publicity is managing expectations: providing clear information about what tenants can expect from the platform, including services provided and the likely timeliness of responses. As one provider interviewed emphasized, “Think about people leaving messages and getting called back, you have to manage expectations.”<sup>60</sup> Another tenant interviewed similarly explained, “You should know, we have a deadline, say 45 days, and we’ll get back to you.”<sup>61</sup>

### PROVIDER MAPPING AND UPDATING

The system must include all relevant providers, with up-to-date information about each. The table below provides a highly tentative initial list of relevant Richmond providers, roughly categorized by tenant need, to be confirmed and expanded through additional research, as well as an initial proposal for types of information needed, also to be confirmed and expanded.

*Figure 3. Tentative list of relevant providers and relevant information, Richmond, VA*

Providers	Information
<p><b>Legal assistance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Virginia Legal Aid Society (CVLAS)</li> <li>• Legal Aid Justice Center (LAJC)</li> <li>• Virginia Poverty Law Center (VPLC)</li> </ul> <p><b>Rent and utilities assistance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACTS</li> <li>• Capital Area Partnership Uplifting People (CAP-UP)</li> <li>• Commonwealth Catholic Charities</li> <li>• Community Foundation</li> <li>• Department of Social Services</li> <li>• Dominion Energy</li> <li>• Salvation Army</li> <li>• St. Vincent de Paul</li> </ul> <p><b>Homelessness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homeward</li> </ul> <p><b>Rapid Re-Housing and Transitional Housing</b></p>	<p><b>Organizational information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name</li> <li>• Address</li> <li>• Email</li> <li>• Phone</li> <li>• Website</li> </ul> <p><b>Point of contact for follow-up/updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name</li> <li>• Email</li> <li>• Phone</li> </ul> <p><b>For each program offered</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service provided (from list of categories at left)</li> <li>• Eligibility criteria (including any restrictions by: income / age / veteran status / sexual orientation (LGBTQ) / victims of domestic violence / family status (married or single) / residency status / event (e.g., received</li> </ul>

<sup>59</sup> Interview with provider, March 2020.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with provider, March 2020.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with tenant, March 2020.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CARITAS</li> <li>• Children’s Home Society</li> <li>• Dominion Youth Services</li> <li>• HomeAgain Richmond</li> <li>• Housing Families First</li> <li>• St. Joseph’s Villa</li> <li>• Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>unlawful detainer) / timing (e.g., limited to particular season)</li> <li>• How an individual can access services (e.g., call, visit in person, etc.)</li> <li>• Expectations (e.g., timeliness of response, likelihood of support, etc.)</li> </ul>
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Several considerations should be taken into account in refining the tentative list of providers in Figure 3:

- Of the types of services listed, emergency financial assistance is understood to be particularly important, both because of the importance of this assistance in terms of keeping tenants stably-housed and because of the especially grave consequences of lack of coordination.<sup>62</sup> As of March 2020, efforts are underway to increase coordination among current providers of emergency financial assistance, with the goal of ultimately establishing a centralized convener. If these efforts continue moving forward, they should ultimately be integrated with the rest of a broader coordinated access system.<sup>63</sup>
- Other providers, specifically those organizations focused less explicitly on housing-related needs (such as those working on employment) are not included in the table above, but could also be considered as within the scope of coordinated access.
- The list above also reveals gaps in current services, such as the lack of an organization charged with providing clear guidance on how tenants should address repairs and/or issues with housing conditions (though these issues are partially addressed by other organizations listed). In listing services it would be important for a coordinated access system to include, one interviewee emphasize that it would be useful “if people can come in or call and say here’s the issue and here’s what my landlord can do about it.”<sup>64</sup> Other issues emphasized as important for a coordinated access system to have capacity to address but not directly represented in the table above include tenant organizing, i.e. the possibility that the system

<sup>62</sup> The section on the need for an emergency rental assistance platform (which should be understood as actually referring to both emergency rent and utilities) in *Evictions in Richmond* provides additional information on the current situation in Richmond: “The overall pot of money is relatively limited, failing to meet the significant demand”; “The funding that does exist is skewed toward later in the process” (i.e. available as part of the Eviction Diversion Program as opposed to as part of prevention efforts); “Funding is not centrally administered, or even tracked, but is instead given out by different organizations with different eligibility criteria.” As the report explains, “This creates burdens, both for tenants, who must try to access multiple sources of funding, with no clear way to navigate among them, and for these organizations, which often only give partial funding once it is clear a tenant can come up with the full amount and therefore most coordinate with and get guarantees from other organizations.” Additionally, the report emphasizes, “Fragmented efforts prevent a comprehensive view into the overall need, the timing of requests, the average amount tenants ask for, the common reasons tenants are having trouble paying their rent, and what happens after tenants receive funding. They also prevent experimentation, such as the possibility of testing different financial arrangements to figure out how funds can be best used to help as many people, as well, as possible.” *Evictions in Richmond*. As one provider said in support of increasing coordination, “The people we’re helping, they don’t care which pocket of money it’s coming from.” Interview with provider, March 2020.

<sup>63</sup> This is also included in the Action Plan.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with provider, March 2020.



could play a role in coordinating tenant action, and housing availability, i.e. the possibility of including resources on identifying suitable housing, e.g., a virtual bulletin board of some sort.

- The system should also include resources not directly linked to specific service providers, that, in some (though likely rare) circumstances, could in fact reduce the need for a tenant to be connected to services at all. One tenant interviewed, for example, emphasized the need for more legal materials, wanting “as much legal stuff as possible...[which] could probably save time, [whereas] it wastes time if tenants don’t know.”<sup>65</sup> Relevant information should be collected from all providers with already developed public-facing handouts, and, when handouts have not already been developed, solicited from relevant providers as needed to meet tenant demand.

As with coordinated access systems more generally, the initial collection of relevant information in Richmond needs to be accompanied by an efficient system for ensuring information is up to date.<sup>66</sup> This depends on the form of the tenant interface (and the associated staffing structure), could include an individual tasked with reaching out to providers on a regular basis and/or a form through which participating organizations can update their own information, along with clear expectations on frequency of updates.

#### TENANT-PROVIDER MATCHING

Assuming the system takes the form either of a physical location or call-line or a combination, staff physically present, present on the phone, or both will need to follow established protocols for screening tenants’ needs and referring them to relevant providers.<sup>67</sup> In developing relevant protocols, the system can draw from protocols developed for comparable systems elsewhere (see the appendix) as well as on those currently used by relevant providers (such as procedures in place for Homeward’s Homeless Crisis Line).

#### MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The system will need to keep careful records of all of its activities, including key data. Important variables to track include: the number of visitors/calls received, type of requests made, and number of “matches” made, which will require at least minimal follow-up to ensure that the tenant connected with the provider. The system will also need to collect more granular information for specific types of requests, e.g., for emergency financial assistance (and possibly through

<sup>65</sup> Interview with tenant, March 2020.

<sup>66</sup> This was emphasized across interviews, with one provider emphasizing that “Everyone has agreed it [such a platform] would need to be updated.” Interview with provider, March 2020.

<sup>67</sup> A well-designed website would hopefully try to approximate this “matching” function, with a user-friendly interface allowing tenants to identify relevant providers and corresponding information. An even more sophisticated website could be designed that required a tenant to enter additional information and matched them with relevant providers through an algorithm, though such an algorithm would have to be sensitive to various privacy concerns.

collaboration with the to-be-established central convener), the amount of financial assistance provided.<sup>68</sup>

As possible, and possibly as the system's capacity grows over time, the system should also work to set up mechanisms for longer-term monitoring and evaluation, such as tracking tenants' outcomes over time and then attempting to determine the contribution of the platform to those outcomes. This will likely require partnerships with outside research entities.<sup>69</sup>

## DRIVING IMPROVEMENTS

Finally, but also crucial, the system should be used to drive improvements in service provision in Richmond. As discussed *supra*, those leading work around evictions in Richmond, as those elsewhere, should use the system to identify:

- **Gaps in service provision**, i.e. areas where there is tenant demand that cannot be met by a currently existing provider, either because no provider provides the needed services, or because the provider(s) that do do not have sufficient capacity;
- **Duplication of offerings**, i.e. areas where multiple providers seem to be providing the same service to the same population. While this is not a problem if overall need exceeds or meets the supply of services, it may signal opportunities for greater coordination; and
- **Opportunities for coordination and/or collaboration**, i.e. areas where providers do not sufficiently coordinate.

All analyses should be made available to relevant actors and used to inform requests for additional or new resources and the development and implementation of new programs and policies.

<sup>68</sup> For an example of the information collected (and annually reported out) by a current existing coordinated access system, see "CSP Trends" (FY 2018), <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/neighborhood-communityservices/sites/neighborhood-communityservices/files/assets/documents/coordinated%20services%20planning/cap%20trends.pdf>.

<sup>69</sup> The RVA Eviction Lab has previously partnered with the Center for Regional and Urban Analysis (CURA) to carry out evaluations.

## COSTS AND PERSONNEL

Whatever form it takes, the coordinated access system will require dedicated resources. The table below lays out very rough estimates by cost category. With the significant assumption that many of the costs can be met by leveraging already existing entities and resources, the most significant costs are a physical space and staff salaries.

Figure 4. Tentative cost estimates for coordinated access system, Richmond, VA

Cost Category	Estimate (Annual)	Notes
Physical space <sup>70</sup>	Highly variable	Highly variable based on location, owner/renter (i.e. the city or another entity), whether the space is purchased or rented, and the possibility for an in-kind donation of unused space (e.g., by a private sector actor). Ideally, Richmond would seek to convert an unused, already government-owned space and/or would seek to obtain an in-kind donation from a private entity.
Call-line	\$0.00	Assuming that the city or a non-profit can provide an in-kind donation of a call-line, as the Virginia Poverty Law Center has done for the Eviction Diversion Program.
Website establishment, development, and maintenance	Highly variable	Highly variable based on whether staff (city or non-profit) has existing capacity to devote to website development. If not, Richmond should consider minimizing costs by obtaining support through recently launched initiatives to provide cities with increased technological capacity/support, to which the city would likely have to apply.
Staff salaries	\$200,000	Assuming that, at a minimum, 5 staff would be needed for either a physical location or a call-line <sup>71</sup> and would be paid approximately \$40,000 each. <sup>72</sup>
Other	\$4,000	For materials, posting, marketing, publicity, outreach. <sup>73</sup>

Staff must also be qualified, i.e. they must have requisite experience and/or training. As one tenant interviewed lamented, call-lines can be frustrating and ineffective to the point of having

<sup>70</sup> Ideally, and as per the factors discussed *supra*, one would compare exact costs for a physical location vs. call-line as part of the decision-making process on which tenant interface is more feasible. That said, since costs for a physical location are so highly variable, it likely makes more sense for stakeholders in Richmond to determine which form is more likely to meet tenant needs, and then work to reduce costs for the selected form as much as possible, reverting to lower cost alternatives if sufficient resources cannot be mobilized. While demand would likely vary based on form as well (allowing one to in theory calculate a per tenant cost of each form), these numbers are also difficult to benchmark, and it likely again makes sense to choose based on other criteria and then work to serve as many tenants (at as low cost) as possible.

<sup>71</sup> The minimum number of staff estimated is based on the Eviction Diversion Program, which currently has a team of 3 people responsible for calls (as well as additional management capacity), but previously had 3.5 and is looking to hire an additional staff member (for a total of 4 staff answering calls), but emphasizes that as many as 7 staff would be well-utilized, and the Homeless Crisis Line, which currently has 5 specialists. A call-line with a broader scope would need to have at the least a similar number of staff; a physical location would ideally function with more.

<sup>72</sup> The salary estimate is roughly based on current salaries for Diversion Specialists at the Homeless Crisis Line and current salaries for specialists employed by HOME at the Eviction Diversion Program.

<sup>73</sup> Based on the Eviction Diversion Program's currently budgeted amount for similar activities.

no utility when staffed by “just volunteers” without relevant experience. Interview with tenant, March 2020.<sup>74</sup>

Costs and personnel estimates also implicate the larger question of how the system will be institutionally-positioned, and, more specifically, its relationship with local government. Interviews reflect a consensus that government has a major role to play, though what exactly that role is is undefined. As one interviewee put it, “I don’t see a structure within the city other than the city; at the least, the city must be a major partner.”<sup>75</sup> Others interviewed similarly emphasized that “Ideally [the platform would be] independent from the city but a partner with the city”; “The city should have a leadership role but not programmatic ownership”; and that the city’s role would be “not taking charge and running it but to be the convener and maybe facilitator.”<sup>76</sup> Still others emphasized the importance of fairness, specifically commenting that the system “needs to be somewhere for everybody”; “can’t be biased”; and must be “for everyone and fair no matter what,” with some voicing more specifically that this could require some nonprofit involvement in day-to-day management.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Interview with tenant, March 2020.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with provider, March 2020.

<sup>76</sup> Interviews with providers, March 2020.

<sup>77</sup> Interviews with tenants, March 2020.

## ACTION PLAN

Whatever form it takes, establishing a coordinated access system will be a process, with all interviewees emphasizing the need for a realistic action plan, including the possibility of progressive realization of the overall vision. One interviewee emphasized the need to think about “a doable model for the city of Richmond”<sup>78</sup>; another emphasized the need to “think...along a continuum,” and articulate the “goal” or “end game” and the “steps to get there.”<sup>79</sup>

In response to these comments, the following lays out a high-level tentative action plan for next steps, recognizing that the plan will adapt and change as the vision for a coordinated access system develops and solidifies.<sup>80</sup>

*Figure 5. Next steps for developing a coordinated access system, Richmond, VA*

<b>1. Secure space, staff, and other materials</b>
1.1. Confirm decision to secure a physical space, including through additional surveys/focus groups of tenants
1.2. Identify a suitable location, informed by input from providers and tenants (on ease of access) and supply issues (available spaces and corresponding costs)
1.3. Update/complete cost estimates
1.4. Secure required financial resources, from available federal and state funding, if any; from requests for city funding; and/or ideally through in-kind contributions from providers and others, including private sector actors with relevant resources, e.g., unused space
1.5. Purchase/rent identified location
1.6. Furnish/equip identified location
1.7. Establish call-line as needed
1.8. Build website as needed
1.9. Develop hiring process and hire necessary staff
1.10. Develop publicity materials and outreach plans
<b>2. Coordinate providers and resources</b>
2.2. Alter/expand list of relevant providers, leveraging input from providers and from current initiatives to better coordinate resources <sup>81</sup>
2.3. Secure provider buy-in/participation, likely through targeted outreach, including a series of meetings/calls
2.4. Collect all relevant initial information on each provider and on other available resources
2.5. Inform providers of procedures/mechanisms for keeping information up to date

<sup>78</sup> One interviewee specifically contrasted the vision for Richmond with programs currently existing in Arlington and Fairfax, explaining: “Arlington and Fairfax are for anyone, maybe [we] start smaller and then have some model for expanding. CAM [Catholic Assistance Ministries] started small and then expanded.” Interview with provider, March 2020.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with provider, March 2020.

<sup>80</sup> The plan’s development and implementation will also be heavily dependent on the progression and, hopefully, end, of COVID-19. In one view, COVID-19 will and should delay these, arguably less urgent, efforts. As one provider put it, “Long term, it’s a wonderful goal to have, but right now, [we’re] just preparing for the influx of volume [to existing services].” Interview with provider, April 2020. In another view, however, COVID-19, in highlighting the incredibly vulnerability of housing-unstable individuals and in families, and in making them even more so, should prompt efforts precisely like this one: capitalizing on this moment to invest in ecosystem building.

<sup>81</sup> Specifically, efforts related to emergency financial assistance and more general efforts to coordinate/list services, such as those being undertaken by 2019-2021 Equal Justice Works Fellows Palmer Heenan and Laura Wright.

<b>3. Develop necessary protocols</b>
3.1. Develop protocols for tenant intake
3.2. Develop protocols for matching tenants to providers <sup>82</sup>
3.3. Develop protocols for monitoring and evaluation
3.4. Develop protocols for driving improvements
<b>4. Launch operations</b>
4.1. “Open” physical location, call-line, and website
<b>5. Ongoing operations</b>
5.1. Conduct outreach to tenants
5.2. Connect tenants with relevant services
5.3. Track and evaluate key outcomes
5.4. Use analysis to drive ongoing improvements

<sup>82</sup> This will include developing strategic protocols for integrating with currently existing call-lines, specifically: 2-1-1 Virginia (most likely, just ensuring that 2-1-1 Virginia refers Richmond callers with housing-related needs); the Eviction Legal Helpline (likely handling some of the concerns currently addressed by the Helpline, and referring to the Helpline those requests that fall within its core competencies); the Homeless Crisis Line (to which all eligible tenants should continue to be referred); and any other currently existing coordination structures.

## CONCLUSION

Ultimately, Part I aims to demonstrate the need for increasing access to coordinated services for tenants generally and outline the key components of such systems. Part II focuses exclusively on Richmond, Virginia, aiming to answer the call for a feasibility study on what such a system could look like and how it could be established. The structure of the analysis, if not the content, is generally applicable, providing a model for feasibility studies in other jurisdictions. The content may also be relevant for some cities, i.e., most likely those whose characteristics are closest to Richmond, e.g., in terms of factors such as: the number of individuals who are housing unstable, existing coordination mechanisms, and available funding and political will. In brief, the hope is that this report accelerates efforts in Richmond and possibly also provides a blueprint for similar efforts elsewhere. The focus to date, and in many jurisdictions, on solutions such as Eviction Diversion programs is understandable and important, but depends in turn on having the structures in place to direct tenants to these responses in the first place, and also of crucial importance but often overlooked, to generate data and analysis that drives continual, evidence-based improvements in service.

On an even broader level, this report aims to contribute to what should be increasingly extensive efforts to collect and share information, across jurisdictions, on what works in terms of reducing evictions.

## APPENDIX. COMPARATIVE RESEARCH

Research for this report included examining a number of currently existing coordinated access systems focused on housing and evictions, also commonly referred to as “one stop shops” or “housing resource centers.”

The main takeaway from this research is that relatively few of these entities currently exist, as discussed *infra*. Coordination related to homelessness is much more common, in large part due to the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Continuum of Care (CoC) Program,<sup>83</sup> with many cities having coordinated access points for those who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Additionally, in larger cities, especially New York City, the need for a “one stop shop” is not met by one program or entity, but rather by an extensive array of typically government-supported initiatives.<sup>84</sup>

The table below includes comparative research on those programs that do exist and were found relevant.

Relevant programs were identified through:

- Research into programs that have come up through more general research on evictions and responses to evictions (which accounts for the majority of programs included);
- Systematic searches for currently existing programs in each of the “Top Evicting Large Cities in the United States”<sup>85</sup> (which led to the identification of several additional initiatives);
- Searches for programs in cities recognized as leading the way in terms of responses to eviction; and
- Searches of the websites/publication/guides of national organizations focused on housing.

Relevancy was determined by considering whether programs were loosely analogous to what would be considered in Richmond, looking to factors such as whether the program:

- Involves a coordinated point of access, whether a physical location, call-line, or website;<sup>86</sup>

<sup>83</sup> For extensive information, see “Continuum of Care (CoC) Program,”

<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/>.

<sup>84</sup> See, e.g., <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/housingportal/index.page>, which allows individuals to search a comprehensive database of housing-related resources, and Homebase, “a homelessness prevention network with 23 locations across the 5 boroughs of New York City.” “Homebase Frequently Asked Questions,” Human Resources Administration,” <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/homebase-faqs.page>.

<sup>85</sup> As ranked by the Eviction Lab. These are, in order from highest to lowest eviction rate: North Charleston (SC), Richmond (VA), Hampton (VA), Newport News (VA), Jackson (MS), Norfolk, VA, Greensboro (NC), Columbia (SC), Warren (MI), Chesapeake (VA), Tulsa (OK), Killeen (TX), Fort Wayne (IN), Indianapolis (IN), and Virginia Beach (VA). “Eviction Rankings,” The Eviction Lab, <https://evictionlab.org/rankings/#/evictions?r=United%20States&a=0&d=evictionRate&lang=en>.

<sup>86</sup> As opposed to even lower touch solutions, such as the Hampton Local Community Services Directory: Compiled by the Hampton Redevelopment and Housing Authority (HRHA). “Local Community Services Directory,” Hampton Redevelopment and Housing Authority, *accessible at* <http://www.hamptonrha.com/documents/HRHA%20Service%20Directory%2002032016.pdf>



- Involves a city entity or nonprofit that plays a coordinating/convening function;<sup>87</sup> and
- Seeks to match individuals with relevant housing-related services.

The table avoids including city entities or nonprofits that themselves provide a range of services but do not play a coordinating role in connecting individuals with a range of other providers. It also mainly avoids systems focused more narrowly on homelessness, though does include systems that are part of/linked to CoC structures when otherwise especially relevant.

After identifying a relevant program, research included perusing all relevant websites and online materials and, whenever possible, interviewing a program representative.

Note that programs included do not represent best practices: interviewees expressed a range of perspectives on program operations, emphasizing some aspects that work well and some that work poorly. In most cases, the lack of evaluations to date makes it difficult to capture more than anecdotal thoughts on successes and failures.

Both the difficulty of identifying programs and this inability to fully evaluate them further underscores the gap to which this report attempts to begin to respond. Hopefully, over time, a growing body of research will lead to identifying more relevant models and more information on each model, as well as, through a push for evaluations, building a growing evidence base on what works.

To contribute to this effort by providing information about a currently existing model or already included model, please submit information through [Evictioninnovation.org](https://evictioninnovation.org).<sup>88</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Greensboro Housing Hub, for example, is “a central location for six affordable housing related nonprofits all serving Guilford County residents,” but does not have an additional layer of coordination in directing tenants to relevant services). “Who We Are,” Community Housing Solutions, <https://chshousing.org/who-we-are/>.

<sup>88</sup> Complete the form on the “Connect” page: “Connect,” <https://evictioninnovation.org/connect/>.

	<b>FAIRFAX COUNTY COORDINATED SERVICES PLANNING</b>	<b>ARLINGTON COUNTY CENTRALIZED ACCESS SYSTEM<sup>i</sup></b>	<b>FAMILY HEALTH CENTERS OF SAN DIEGO (FHCS) HOUSING NAVIGATION CENTER</b>	<b>SHELTER OF FLINT ONE STOP HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER<sup>ii</sup> (MICHIGAN)</b>	<b>COMMUNITY HOUSING NETWORK HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER (HRC) (MICHIGAN)</b>	<b>VIRGINIA BEACH HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER<sup>iii</sup></b>
<b>STATEMENT OF PURPOSE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Connects Fairfax County residents to county- and community-based services and resources that promote self-sufficiency and enhance well-being”<sup>iv</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Provide one centralized intake process for households to utilize when they believe they are at risk of becoming homeless, have a housing need, or they are currently deemed homeless according to HUD’s definition”<sup>v</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Assists those who are experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness, by identifying immediate and long-term housing solutions, providing crisis management, accessing benefits that are important to housing stability, case management and housing navigation, and providing on-site access and referrals to medical, mental health and substance use disorder services”<sup>vi</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Collaborative program among non-profit organizations that provide comprehensive housing placement services for people who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless, or have special needs”<sup>vii</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “One-stop-shop to help people with their housing needs”<sup>viii</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “A one-stop shop of services for families and individuals experiencing homelessness or a housing crisis”<sup>ix</sup></li> </ul>

<b>TENANT INTERFACE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call-line and thorough online listing of “thousands of nonprofit and government services available to Fairfax County residents”<sup>x</sup></li> <li>• Publicized through information cards<sup>xi</sup></li> <li>• Video explaining operation<sup>xii</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical location “located across the street from a bus stop...easily accessible from public transportation,” call-line, and “intake in the community, (e.g., at a jail, hospital, etc.)<sup>xiii</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple physical locations: Housing Center is “mothership,” but additional outreach is conducted through other locations; associated call-line<sup>xiv</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical location (connected to Shelter of Flint)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call-line (with form that can be completed pre-call)<sup>xv</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical location<sup>xvi</sup></li> <li>• Also connected to Southampton Roads Housing Crisis Hotline (Four Kids)<sup>xvii</sup></li> </ul>
<b>PROVIDER MAPPING AND UPDATING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly updated/checked for accuracy, as well as encouragement to contact CCS with updates<sup>xviii</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small community and high degree of coordination enables relatively easy information collecting and updating<sup>xix</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FHCS D maintains relationships with 25 providers and makes use of highly coordinated referral system<sup>xx</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff solicited agencies they thought should be included<sup>xxi</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff update in response to seeing changed information and/or try to reach out to update as needed<sup>xxii</sup></li> <li>• Relationships among providers<sup>xxiii</sup> facilitated/strengthened by also being CoC partner<sup>xxiv</sup></li> <li>• Conduct regular consultations with all providers<sup>xxv</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses defined list of providers who are part of CoC<sup>xxvi</sup></li> </ul>

<b>TENANT-PROVIDER MATCHING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Specialist conducts broad based interview” and may request personal information including documentation (e.g., leases)<sup>xxvii</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed policies and procedures for each service provided, with clearly established eligibility criteria<sup>xxviii</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technically serves those who are homeless or at imminent risk, but imminence is broadly construed; about 80% of visitors are already in the system (compared to new clients)<sup>xxix</sup></li> <li>• On-site services include housing navigation and placement services, as well as mental health treatment, transportation and utilities assistance, documentation assistance, and employment training<sup>xxx</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff members conduct intake and connect tenants with relevant services<sup>xxxix</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Our specialists will figure out all options and connect you to the right programs and resources based on eligibility and circumstance”<sup>xxxii</sup></li> <li>• Follow set intake/workflow/triage process<sup>xxxiii</sup></li> <li>• Data sharing across providers is facilitated by a Client Informed Consent and Release of Information Authorization form<sup>xxxiv</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses developed CoC protocols</li> </ul>
<b>MONITORING &amp; EVALUATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collected includes: client service interactions data, call volume data, contact and case data, and outcome data<sup>xxxv</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Engages in evaluation of the CAS each year in February and makes ongoing adjustments to the processes described in this manual”<sup>xxxvi</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Center produces monthly reports, and conducts analysis comparing those reports to otherwise obtained data (i.e. from the HMIS system)<sup>xxxvii</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracks relevant metrics (number of calls, asks, referrals made)<sup>xxxviii</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of general CoC monitoring &amp; evaluation</li> </ul>
<b>COSTS &amp; FUNDING SOURCES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$2.8M (FY 2016 adopted budget)<sup>xxxix</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$900K from county; \$170K from state<sup>xl</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City issues funds to the housing commission that are then disbursed through RFPs ; ~\$1.6M annual budget<sup>xli</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City funding, more recently with a matching requirement from Shelter of Flint, which was forced operate the Center at a loss<sup>xlii</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funded by community mental health resources (as part of larger contract), as well as other funding sources<sup>xliii</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff mainly city-funded; services combination of city and federal funds<sup>xliiv</sup></li> </ul>
<b>STAFF &amp; MANAGEMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run by Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, staffed by 31 trained specialists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffed and implemented by Arlington County Department of Human Services (DHS)<sup>xlvi</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run by FHCS (day to day management), with support from the city (funding and property owner)</li> <li>• ~20 staff, including 7 dedicated housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run by Shelter of Flint with ~7 full time staff<sup>xlviii</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 full-time supervisors and 14-16 part-time housing specialist staff (initially started with 1 manager and 2 part-time staff)<sup>xlix</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ~7-8 staff for housing crisis (assessment, housing location, referral, placement), along with other</li> </ul>

	(including 8 supervisors, and 1 manager), with service available in 14 languages (and access to additional interpreters) <sup>xliv</sup>		navigators (and possibility of using time from other staff due to grant flexibility) <sup>xlvi</sup>			co-located services (including DHS branch) <sup>i</sup>
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- i The Arlington Country Centralized Access System is part of the Continuum of Care, but has a relatively broad scope of work (i.e. it includes funding for prevention). Arlington’s DHS is also notable for the so-called Arlington “wiki,” which is “currently used by both government agencies and approximately 180 nonprofit staff members, and includes information on resources for a vast array of needs, including: behavioral health, budgeting, clothing, education, employment, food, health, and housing. Information is crowdsourced from providers, and a point person for each page is tasked with ensuring the listed resources remain up-to-date. Arlington now also makes the program directory publicly available, with options to filter by need or search by keyword.” *Evictions in Richmond*.
- ii The One Stop Shop in fact relocated to Commonwealth Catholic Charities in early March, i.e. it is no longer run by the Shelter of Flint. Interview with Shelter of Flint employee, March 2020.
- iii The Virginia Beach Housing Resource Center, in contrast to the other resources profiled, does focus more narrowly on those homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. It is included as a powerful example of government-supported coordination and a high degree of buy-in from a large number of partners.
- iv “Coordinated Services Planning,” <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/coordinated-services-planning>.
- v “Centralized Access System (CAS) Arlington County, VA, Prevention, Diversion, Housing and Homeless Programming,” <https://publicassistance.arlingtonva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2018/02/CAS-Policies-and-Procedures.pdf>.
- vi “Housing Navigation Center Key Facts,” Family Health Centers of San Diego,” <https://www.fhcsd.org/navigation-center-key-facts/>.
- vii “One Stop Housing Research Center,” <https://www.shelterofflint.org/onestophousing.html>. Shelter of Flint is also the designated Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (HARA) for Genesee County.
- viii “Housing Resource Center (HRC),” <https://communityhousingnetwork.org/services/housing-resource-center/>. Housing Resource Center is also the designated Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (HARA) for Oakland County.
- ix “Housing Resource Center,” <https://www.vb.gov/government/departments/housing-neighborhood-preservation/homelessness/Pages/housing-resource-center.aspx>.
- x “Service Search Results: Housing,” Human Services Resource Guide (HSRG), <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/HSRG/Pages/ServiceSearch.aspx?servicename=housing>.
- xi “Coordinated Services Planning Information,” <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/coordinated-services-planning/information>.
- xii “Coordinated Services Planning.”
- xiii “Centralized Access System (CAS) Arlington County, VA.”
- xiv Interview with FHCSA employee, April 2020.
- xv “Housing Resource Center (HRC).”
- xvi The employee interviewed emphasized the importance of having a physical location, explaining that the Center is “talked about as a place where community can focus its efforts - that wouldn’t happen without a physical location” and emphasizing that colocation has in fact “enhanced the ability to support existing efforts.” The employee also commented that a “one stop shop really does make a difference. [It’s] just unbelievably easier for the person.”, however, that the Virginia Beach Housing Resource Center provides not just a coordinated access point, but a wide range of co-located services, including shelter beds, apartments, and a branch of the Department of Human Services that does rapid assessment. Interview with Virginia Beach Housing Resource Center employee, March 2020.
- xvii Interview with Virginia Beach Housing Resource Center employee, March 2020.
- xviii “About HSRG and FAQ,” <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/HSRG/Pages/AboutUsFAQ.aspx#6>.
- xix Interview with Arlington County CAS employee, July 2019.

xx This system is highly sophisticated, involving a “tap in system” for all visitors and a portal through which partners can log in and see their daily schedules. All collaboration occurs through formal agreements/Memorandum of Understanding. Interview with FHCS D employee, April 2020.

xxi Interview with Shelter of Flint employee, April 2020.

xxii Interview with CHN employee, March 2020.

xxiii Interview with CHN employee, March 2020.

xxiv It took several years to get everyone on board, but relevant providers (including representatives from the school system, domestic violence organizations, and mental health providers) now consult as a group once a week. Interview with CHN employee, March 2020.

xxv Interview with CHN employee, March 2020. It took several years to get everyone on board, but relevant providers (including representatives from the school system, domestic violence organizations, and mental health providers) now consult as a group once a week.

xxvi Providers also coordinate through regular (every other month) meetings. These meetings are the outgrowth of a “history of collaboration,” starting with “a bunch of churches [that] said they wanted to be more coordinated,” prompting a call for a meeting by the Mayor. Interview with Virginia Beach Housing Resource Center employee, March 2020.

xxvii “Coordinated Services Planning.”

xxviii “Centralized Access System (CAS) Arlington County, VA.”

xxix Materials provided by FHCS D employee, April 2020.

xxx Non-exhaustive. Services also include case management and referrals; outreach and engagement; peer support; medical care and care coordination; health, wellness, and life skills education; substance use disorder services; HIV & Hepatitis Services; Benefits Determination and Streamlining Access; Legal Services; Family Reunification Opportunities; Veterans Administration; Documentation Assistance; and self-image/empowerment/coping skills. Materials provided by FHCS D employee, April 2020.

xxxi Interview with Shelter of Flint employee, April 2020.

xxxii “Housing Resource Center (HRC).”

xxxiii Interview with CHN employee, March 2020.

xxxiv The form lists all partners who are part of a Coordinated Services Agreement, and specifies that “information provided and shared [by the client] will be used to coordinate services, link with other available programs, and help to document homelessness history.” A client signing authorizes release of this information for a period of one year. These agreements “make everything easier,” allowing for the secure transfer of information even when (and especially crucial if) providers are not linked to the Homeless Management Information System. Interview with CHN employee, April 2020.

xxxv Department of Neighborhood & Community Services Coordinated Services Planning, “CSP Trends” (FY 2018), <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/neighborhood-communityservices/sites/neighborhood-communityservices/files/assets/documents/coordinated%20services%20planning/cap%20trends.pdf>.

xxxvi “Centralized Access System (CAS) Arlington County, VA.”

xxxvii The fact that FHCS D is primarily a health provider enables it to carry out analysis that other providers not routed in the health field would not be able to. “[We’re] the only healthcare entity that’s doing it, there’s something special about that.” Interview with FHCS D employee, April 2020.

xxxviii Interview with CHN employee, April 2020.

xxxix Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, Coordinated Services Planning, [https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/sites/budget/files/assets/documents/fy2016/lobs/lob\\_160.pdf](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/sites/budget/files/assets/documents/fy2016/lobs/lob_160.pdf).

xl Interview with Arlington CAS employee, January 2019.

xli Report to the Housing Authority of the City of San Diego and the San Diego City Council” (December 4, 2019), *accessible at* [https://www.sdhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Revised-1.9.2020\\_HAR19-047-Housing-Navigation-Center.pdf](https://www.sdhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Revised-1.9.2020_HAR19-047-Housing-Navigation-Center.pdf).

xlii Interview with Shelter of Flint employee, April 2020.

xliii Interview with CHN Employee, April 2020.

- xliv Interview with Virginia Beach employee, April 2020.
- xlvi “Coordinated Services Planning”; Interview with Fairfax CSP employee, July 2019.
- xlvi “Centralized Access System (CAS) Arlington County, VA.”
- xlvi Interview with FHCSD employee, April 2020.
- xlvi Interview with Shelter of Flint employee, March 2020.
- xlvi Interview with CHN employee, April 2020.
- l Interview with Virginia Beach Housing Resource Center employee, March 2020.