

Q&A

ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN THE DISTRICT

Replacing DC General With Short-Term Family Housing

Q: Why is the city building short-term family housing facilities in every single ward?

A: Every neighborhood and every resident has a stake in ending homelessness in the District – as homelessness affects all of us, either directly or indirectly. The plan to open a short-term family housing facility in each Ward allows all of us to play a role in the solution.

Q: How did the District identify the sites for the short-term family housing facilities?

A: The District's Department of General Services looked for sites that have a minimum of 30,000 square feet. in order to accommodate between 30 and 50 families. Once we considered all available District-owned properties, we searched for private properties to either lease or purchase. We were especially focused on finding sites that have access to services and public transportation.

Q: Why can't we just renovate DC General?

A: DC General Family Shelter is out of date and its size, scale and current condition create an environment ill-suited for providing effective programming and services to support families back into stability. Housing families at this facility does not reflect the values that we share for how to serve and support our most vulnerable residents, especially families with children. Best practices suggest that children and families do best when emergency housing is provided in smaller-scale, service-enriched, community-based settings.

Q: How will you ensure that the facilities and its residents act as good neighbors to the community

A: We will work with each neighborhood to develop a 'Good Neighbor Agreement.' These voluntary agreements between the District, the housing provider and the community will address issues like property maintenance, neighborhood codes of conduct, community safety, and communication.

Q: What is the city doing to create affordable housing, so that people don't fall into homelessness?

A: Mayor Bowser and her Administration are committed to producing, preserving and protecting affordable housing. In her first budget, the Mayor invested an historic \$100 million in the Housing Production Trust Fund. And the District is putting those dollars to work - financing 35% more affordable housing units in 2015 than the city financed in 2014. In addition, the Mayor launched a Preservation Task Force to identify ways to preserve more affordable housing in all 8 wards.

Q: When will the city close DC General?

A: The short-term family housing facilities must be in place and open before we can close DC General. All of the buildings secured by the District will need to be renovated or built from the ground up. The new sites will be open and able to accommodate families in 2017 and 2018. Once the final one is in place, the District will close the DC General Family Shelter.

Q: What are you doing to make DC General livable for residents, until the new facilities are built?

A: The Bowser Administration has been investing resources in DC General to improve the living conditions as much as possible, without doing a total overhaul and renovation of the entire facility. Because the facility is so old and was not intended to serve as a shelter, it is extremely expensive to maintain.