



Norfolk Community Services Board: Homelessness Program

November 14, 2023

City of Norfolk
Office of the City Auditor

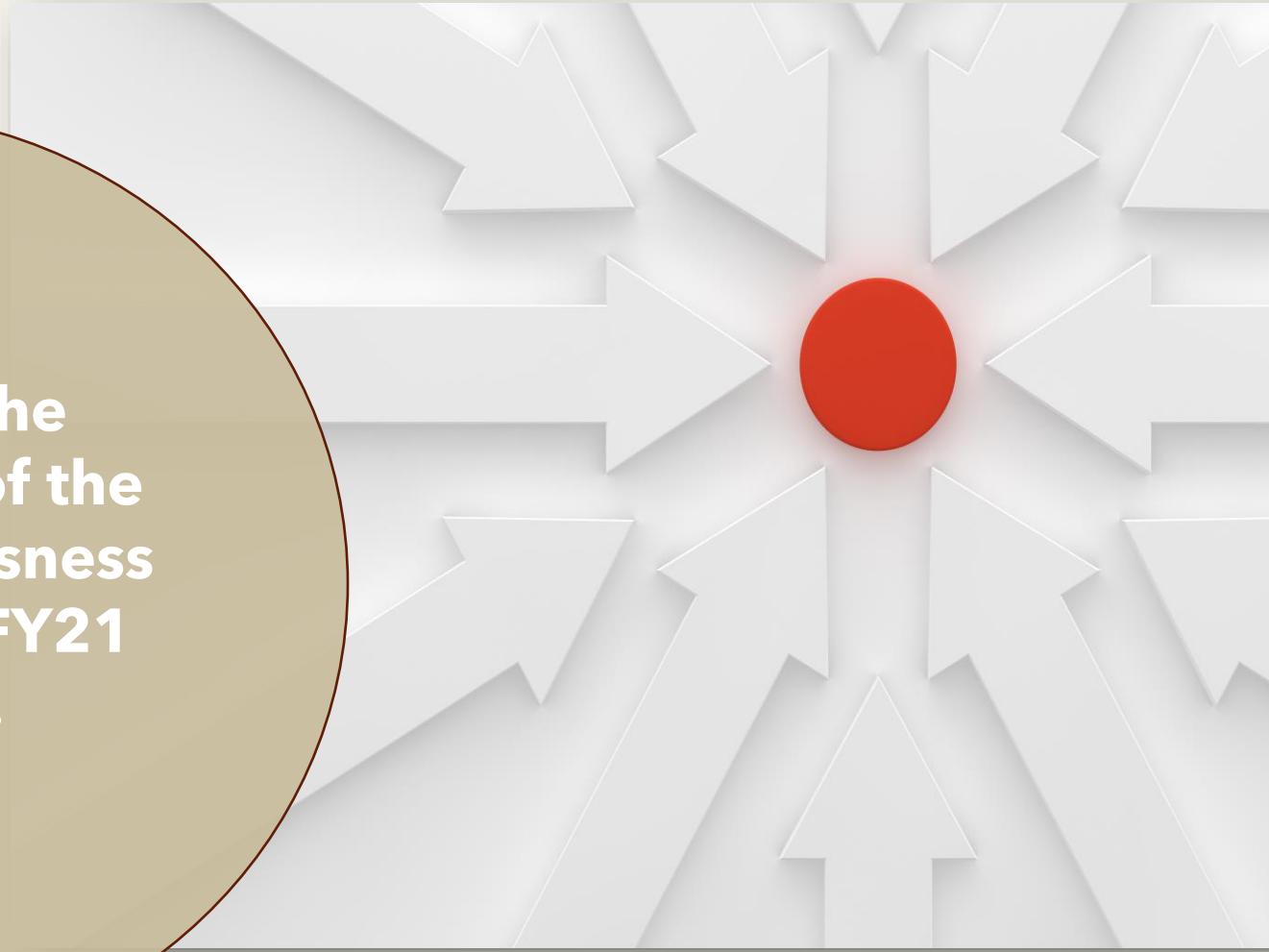
Report No. 23-07

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Purpose/Objective/Scope

Determine the effectiveness of the City's Homelessness programs for FY21 and FY22.



Introduction/Overview of CSB Homelessness Division

1

Programs

- Community Services Board (CSB) Homelessness provides an array of programs and interventions to address and end homelessness in the City of Norfolk. This division also provides employment programming, policy development, and community engagement towards the mission of making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.

2

Services

- Street Outreach services are designed to meet basic human needs while providing case management and advocacy to assist the individual in moving out of homelessness and into appropriate housing.

3

Assistance

- Services and resources assist persons in exiting homelessness including tenant based rental assistance for persons needing a temporary place of shelter and a large permanent supportive housing program with over 200 units of housing for persons needing long-term support.

Homelessness Programs

CENTER

Provides 100 beds year-round emergency shelter for single adults experiencing homelessness. The CENTER provides day services such as meals, access to outreach, case management staff, and assistance with housing and benefits.

PATH (Project for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness Program (Street Outreach))

A federal grant that funds services for people with serious mental illnesses (SMI) and co-occurring substance use disorders (SUD) who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

TBRA (Tenant Based Rental Assistance)

Financial Assistance program to help formerly homeless individuals work towards financial and housing stability at the end of the initial assistance period. It currently services 40 households funded by HUD (Housing and Urban Development).

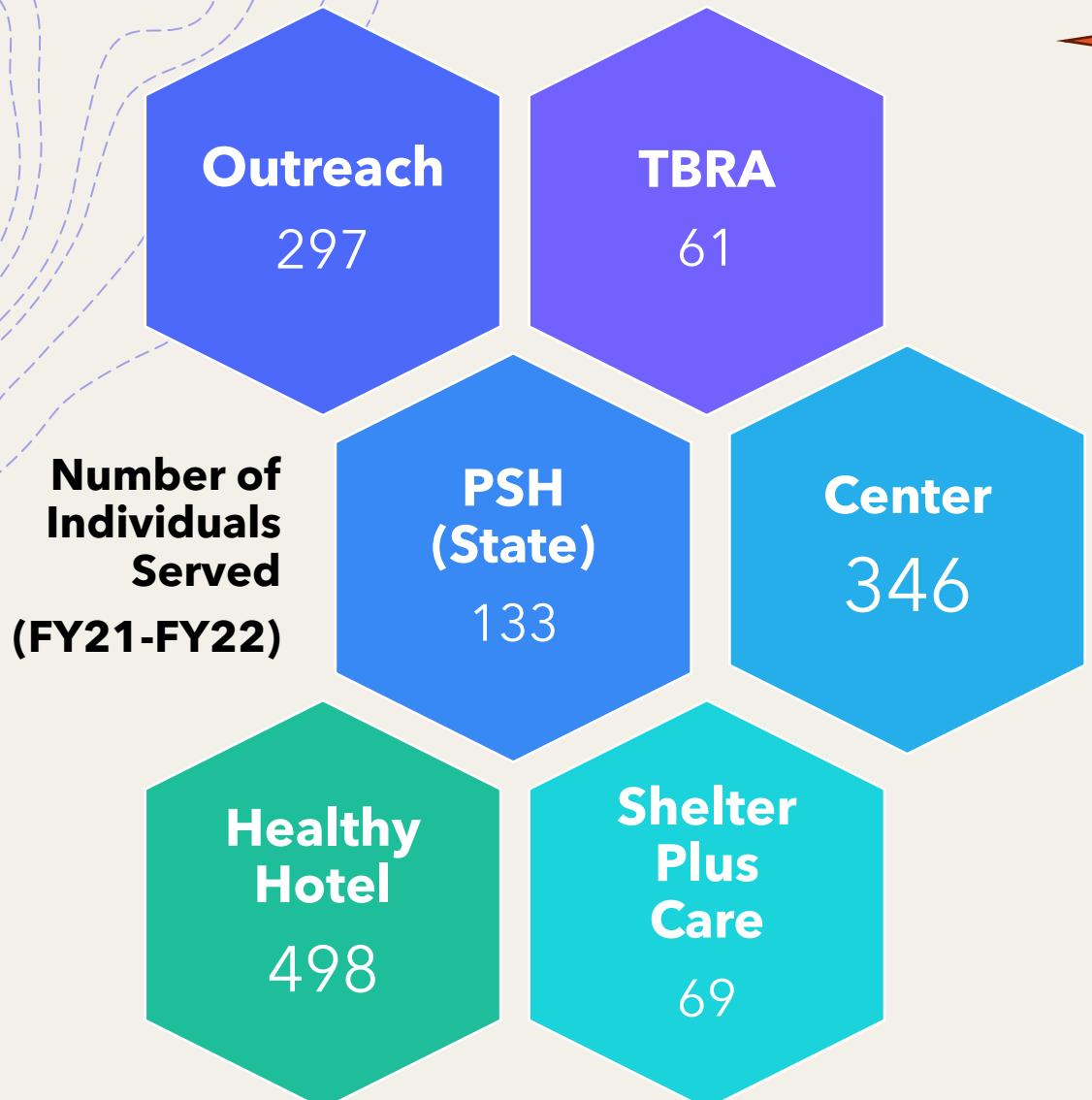
Shelter Plus Care

Provides 50 + housing subsidy vouchers for homelessness with disabling conditions funded by HUD.

State PSH (Permanent Supportive Housing)

Provides 161 housing subsidy vouchers for homeless individuals with Serious Mental Illness and those exiting the state psychiatric hospital system. It is funded by the DBHDS (Department of Behavioral Health and Development Services).

Homelessness Accomplishments



CSB opened a 100-bed homeless shelter in FY22, expanding the number of shelter beds to serve all individuals. Since its inception, CSB has served 346 individuals and provided case management services onsite to assist both residents and day guests with housing, planning and access to benefits and employment.

The *Healthy Hotel operation, provided safe space to isolate and reduce their risk of contracting COVID-19 for over 500 vulnerable individuals. 21% of those individuals exited to housing, through a subsidized program, higher level of care (such as an Assisted Living Facility) or reuniting with families.

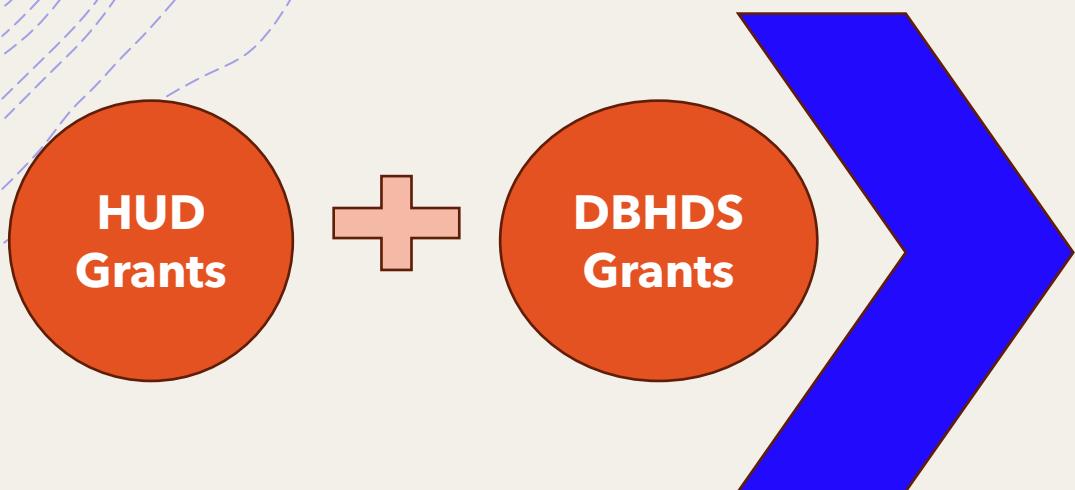
Staff's dedication represents CSB's biggest accomplishment. Throughout the pandemic, the outreach and housing program staff continued to serve their consumers in person, helping to link them to available shelters and other support to remain successfully housed during an uncertain time.

*Healthy Hotel funds expired in July 2022 via the Covid Cares Act approved by Congress in 2020

How are CSB Homelessness Funds being spent?

Revenue

FY21 = \$2.7 million



**FY22 = \$1 million
(decreased by \$1.7 million)**

Expenses



CSB Homelessness Revenue & Expenses

Homelessness Funding	Revenue		Expenses	
	FY21	FY22	FY21	FY22
Homelessness Project PATH	\$110,211	\$108,430	\$195,218	\$225,759
Shelter Plus Care Grant	559,926	560,802	523,103	477,250
Shelter Plus Care Grant	1,600	-	-	-
Permanent Supportive Housing	2,022,218	330,931	1,775,575	1,625,554
SAMSHA-CABHI-Road 2 Home Grant	-	450	5,911	5,919
Office to End Homelessness-Street Outreach Program	29,345	11,522	27,343	-
Total	\$2,723,300	\$1,012,135	\$2,527,150	\$2,334,482

NOTE #1: Although we noted a significant decrease in revenue from FY 21 to FY 22, the program was sustainable due to the scope of previous state funded grant agreements that extended over multiple fiscal years.

Are
individuals
that are being
served
through
Homelessness
graduating
from the
programs?

Graduation Rates	2021	2022
Individuals Served through Planning Council*	4,857	8,725
Graduated - Exited from homelessness into permanent housing	477	598
Percentage	9.8 %	6.8 %

* Planning Council: partners across jurisdictional boundaries to offer homelessness solutions

How many Homelessness individuals are waiting to be served?

SVHC* Prioritization List (waiting list)	2021	2022
Norfolk Families	214	170
Norfolk Adult Only Households	922	975

How many Homelessness individuals deceased due to homelessness/ complications?

# Deceased due to Homelessness/Complications	2021	2022
Norfolk	31	23
Total Southeastern Virginia Homeless Coalition	39	26

*SVHC - Southeastern Virginia Homeless Coalition

Conclusion

Through observation and inquiry with management:

- + Homelessness in Norfolk **increased** from FY21 to FY22. However, through CSB's programs and services, more individuals are benefitting from Street Outreach to Housing Services through state funded grants. To ensure management continues to remain effective, we provided some recommendations to assist with their current internal controls.

Observations

#1 Intake and Discharge Process

Condition #1: CSB inconsistently adhered to the record requirements of the intake and discharge process, failing to ensure compliance with its programs.

Recommendation #1:

#1a: We recommend that CSB create a checklist to guarantee proper documentation of program requirements.

#1b: We recommend CSB establish a process for monitoring and tracking the intake and discharge process.

#1c: During the review of HMIS (Homeless Management Information Systems) discharge assessments, we noted various reasons consumers were removed from a program or never returned without acknowledgment. We recommend when program management removes a consumer from a homelessness program, they provide their signature of disclosure for a reason(s) for the discharge to ensure the accuracy of the consumer records in HMIS.

#1

Intake and Discharge Process

- **Management's Response:**
- Response to Recommendation 1a: We will create a checklist to ensure that program requirements are completed for all consumers.
- Response to Recommendation 1b: Program supervisors will complete quarterly monitoring of processes and will review monthly data reports in HMIS (Homelessness Management Information Systems) to ensure completion of documents.
- CSB Manager's comment: *“Though the recommendation to gain signature from consumers makes sense in theory, HMIS purposefully builds out a number of program exit reasons to reflect the fact that it is often not appropriate/possible to meet with consumers when they exit our programs. It is common for our consumers to leave without notifying staff, and at times engage in behaviors that do not lend themselves to a review of paperwork. When individuals do leave for positive reasons (moving in with family, gaining housing of their own), we will complete a final review of their information to ensure accurate recording and closeout.”*

Observations

#2

CSB Gift Cards

- **Condition:** We observed gift cards in the total amount of \$1,500 without supporting documentation or authorization forms in accordance with the City's gift card policy.
- **Recommendation:** We recommend CSB complies with the *City's Gift Card Policy 10.11*.
- **Management's Response:** A review of the gift card policy will take place in the October 2023 supervisor meeting.

Observations

#3

Vendor Input and Internal Controls

- **Condition:** AFMS (Advantage Financial Management System) Vendor expenses appear to have the incorrect object code for "food." We noted the department did not post ten expenses for food to the appropriate object code in AFMS. CSB Finance stated the Budget Office only provided a few object codes to choose from.
- **Recommendation:** We recommend CSB Finance reach out to the Budget Office to ensure the appropriate object codes are available and documented accurately in AFMS.
- **Management's Response:** : Discussed with the Finance team. Many of our budgets are created at the City Finance level and then given to our department for fund disbursement and management. Therefore, specific budget line items are built without our input. To the best of our ability, our finance team will work with City Finance to request adjustments as appropriate.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Obtained an understanding of CSB Homelessness programs and reviewed relevant requirements used to govern the programs.	Performed walkthroughs of CSB Shelter camps and hotels and documented the process flow of CSB Homelessness.	Requested and obtained management reports used to monitor and track data for CSB Homelessness.	Evaluated the programs effectiveness for reducing Homelessness.	Calculated the amount of funding provided for Homelessness.	Selected a Sample and Performed Testing of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Intake and Discharge Process- Vendor Expenses- CSB Homelessness Internal Control Processes

Methodology

Government Auditing Standards

Compliance w/GAGAS

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Data Reliability

We relied on data from the AFMS (Advantage Financial Management System) system for accuracy and HMIS (Homelessness Management Information Systems) when conducting this audit. The extent of our evaluation was dependent upon the expected importance of the data to the final report, the strengths or weaknesses of any corroborating evidence, and the anticipated level of risk in using the data. We determined the information provided to be reliable and, therefore, the level of risk from using this information to be low.

Internal Controls

We obtained an understanding of significant internal controls within the context of the audit objective. We assessed whether internal controls were properly designed and implemented and performed procedures to obtain enough evidence to support the effectiveness of those controls. The extent of our assessment was dependent on the CSB Homelessness program internal controls and compliance with state and federal grant agreements. Our results indicated some opportunities for improvements, but none of the deficiencies are considered material weaknesses.

**We thank the members
of the CSB
Homelessness division
for their cooperation
and responsiveness to
our requests during the
audit.**

Please contact
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for any questions

