

# EMPOWER THE HOMELESS



**SAMARITAN**  
**MINISTRY**  
*of Greater Washington*



## What is Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington?

Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington (SMGW) is a faith-based community partnership – bringing together our neighbors who face poverty, homelessness or other challenges – with partner leaders, donors, volunteers and staff in a shared ministry that improves the lives of all throughout the Washington area, one next step and neighbor at a time. Inspired by the Parable of the Good Samaritan, we are called to practice compassion, transformation, dignity, and community. Specifically, we seek to –

- Empower our participants to develop capacities and address barriers they face in order to live sustainable purpose-driven lives, guiding them to set goals, and take “next steps” to meet those goals.
- Engage our partner churches and schools to share in this ministry by offering their time, talent and treasure, cultivating relationships that nurture both their missions of community outreach and the mission of the Samaritan Partnership as a whole.
- Identify the basic, systemic and unmet needs of our community that underlie poverty – and engage in organized, collective education and action to address those needs.



We offer our *Next Step* Program services for no charge at:

- Anacostia/Southeast DC (1345 U St SE, Washington DC 20020, T: (202) 889-7702),
- Church of Our Saviour/Silver Spring (1700 Powder Mill Road, Silver Spring MD 20903, T: (301) 439-5944),
- Northern Virginia (2207 Columbia Pike, Arlington VA 22204, T: (703) 271-0938),
- Northwest DC (1516 Hamilton St NW, Washington DC 20011, T: (202) 722-2280), and
- Skyland Workforce Center/Southeast DC (2509 Good Hope Road SE, Washington DC 20020, T: (202) 793-2141).

## Did You Know?

On a typical night in Greater Washington, 9,794 of our neighbors are homeless.<sup>1</sup> While this is a 7% decrease from 2018, tonight homelessness will be a reality for far too many of our neighbors.

There are different ways to be homeless. People living or sleeping on the street, in the parks, in cars, or in abandoned buildings – all places not meant to be lived in – are unsheltered. People living in transitional housing, with family or friends for a short time, or in a shelter are sheltered. In either situation, a person is considered to be chronically homeless if they have been homeless – sheltered or not – for over a year or has had four or more episodes of homelessness over the past three years.

For most people, employment is essential to having a stable and secure home. The lack of affordable housing, poverty, unemployment and low wages are the top causes of homelessness. Domestic violence experience is common among youth, single adults and families who become homeless and for many it is the immediate cause of their homelessness. At least 67,000 DC residents – about 10% of the population – are estimated to have a criminal conviction record, and approximately 2,800 are released from incarceration annually.<sup>2</sup> Without intensive assistance, these individuals are unlikely to find work due to significant employment barriers. Without support, the likelihood of homelessness and returning to jail for these neighbors is great.

Even if a person has a job, how much you earn is important. The living wage (the amount of hourly income a single adult working 40-hours per week needs to meet their basic needs) in the Washington-Alexandria-Arlington area is \$16.90. The minimum wage in Virginia is \$7.25, in Maryland is \$10.10 and in DC is \$13.25 an hour.

<sup>1</sup> Much of this information is taken from the “Homelessness in Metropolitan Washington: Results and Analysis from the Annual Point-in-Time (PIT) Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness” May 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Robin Selwitz, “Obstacles to employment for returning citizens to D.C.” [https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/publications/barriers-to-employment-for-returning-citizens-in-d-c/#\\_ftnref2](https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/publications/barriers-to-employment-for-returning-citizens-in-d-c/#_ftnref2).

## Quiz: Homelessness in Greater Washington

1) What is homelessness? Check all that apply:

- A. Living in transitional housing
- B. Living in safe havens/halfway housing
- C. Living in vans/cars
- D. Living on camping grounds
- E. Sleeping on family or friends' sofa (doubling-up)
- F. All of the above

2) Rank the areas you believe had the most homeless individuals in 2018 from 1 (most) to 6 (least).

- Alexandria (City)
- Washington (DC)
- Fairfax (County)
- Montgomery (County)
- Arlington (County)
- Prince George (County)

3) For persons experiencing homelessness, the average life expectancy decreases by how many years?

- A. 6
- B. 16
- C. 26
- D. 36

4) Most single homeless adults are what age?

- A. 18-24
- B. 25-34
- C. 35-44
- D. 45-54
- E. 55-61
- F. 62+

5) The leading cause of homelessness is addiction to alcohol and/or drugs.

- True
- False

6) What are the major reasons people become homeless?

- A. Long-term unemployment
- B. Sudden loss of income/unemployment
- C. High cost and/or lack of affordable housing
- D. Domestic violence
- E. Lack of savings
- F. All of the above

7) Of all the persons experiencing homelessness in the Washington metro area, what percentage are families?

- A. 8%
- B. 22%
- C. 41%
- D. 59%

8) What percentage of all homeless persons in the DC area are children (18 years old or younger)?

- A. 15%
- B. 25%
- C. 35%
- D. 45%

9) What percentage of all homeless adults in the DC area are employed?

- A. 1%
- B. 11%
- C. 21%
- D. 31%

10) Imagine, you are a single person living in the Washington metro area and earn minimum wage working at a fast-food restaurant or hotel. On average (between Maryland, Virginia and DC), how many hours a week do you need to work to meet your basic expenses?

- A. 75
- B. 98
- C. 103
- D. 136

11) What remains the most significant obstacle to ending homelessness in our region?

- A. Lack of affordable, permanent housing
- B. Inability to secure employment
- C. Physical and mental health issues
- D. Lack of education
- E. Extremely low income

Bonus Question: Can we overcome the obstacles to ending homelessness?

- True
- False

Your score: \_\_\_\_\_

## What Do We Do?

- Empower our participants to live sustainable, purpose-driven lives, guiding and supporting them to set goals and take “next steps” to meet those goals.
- Organize faith-based and community events to meet neighbors, raise awareness, recruit volunteers, and invite financial support for Samaritan Ministry.
- Identify, explore, and discuss the issues facing our neighbors in need and then discern ways to respond to those needs individually, as a church, as a neighborhood, as a city, and as a region.
- Promote community needs through educational opportunities and resources, social media, and our website.
- Collaborate with other service providers, corporations, and local governments to end homelessness in our neighborhoods.

## Quiz Answers

1) F. All of the above. 2) (Most to least): Washington (6,521), Fairfax (1,034), Montgomery (647), Prince George (447), Arlington (215) and Alexandria (198). 3) C and D. The average life expectancy of a person experiencing homelessness is estimated between 42 and 52 years, compared to 78 years in the general U.S. population. 4) D. 45-54 years old. This was also true in 2018. 5) False. Addiction may be a contributing factor, but it is rarely the cause. 6) F. All of the above. 7) C. 41%. As of January 23, 2019, a total of 1,242 family households were homeless, a decrease of 12 percent from 2018. 2019 marks the third in a row of recorded declines in families experiencing homelessness. 8) B. 25%. Children account for 61 percent of all people in homeless families and represent a quarter of all persons experiencing homelessness in the metropolitan Washington region in 2019. 9) C. 21%. Among all adults experiencing homelessness – both single adults and adults in families – 21 percent are employed. 10) C. An average 103 hours a week to make \$51,245 a modest yet adequate standard of living. (This cost estimate is from the Economic Policy Institute’s Family Budget Calculator.) In Virginia you’d need to work 136, in Maryland 98 and in DC 75 hours per week. 11) A. Lack of affordable, permanent housing. **(Bonus)** Most certainly false. / Most answers come from the May 2019 Annual Point-in-Time Count.

## What Can You Do?

- Participate! Visit our website for a list of upcoming events – or work with your partner rep to create your own! Invite your family, friends and neighbors, church leaders, and community members on a journey to help Empower The Homeless!
- Organize an event! Collaborate and work with your partner rep(s) to use your creativity and passion to make community happen!
- Volunteer! Samaritan Ministry volunteers are vital. You can be a part of transformation through any of our program volunteer positions or our special projects.
- Invest! Samaritan Ministry depends on your donations to fulfill its mission and help participants take their own next steps. Your support makes that possible!
- Engage! Don’t be afraid to acknowledge and encounter our neighbors whom you pass by every day who are struggling to get by. Introduce yourself, pray for them, and invite them to visit any of our offices to start a life-changing journey by giving them a participant card.



Top: St. Luke’s Episcopal Church and St. Thomas’ Parish in DC welcomes guest to their ETH event. Above: Runners and walkers at the 2018 5K in Bluemont Park, Arlington, VA.

## What is the Empower The Homeless Campaign?

Empower The Homeless (ETH) is Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington's campaign to raise awareness, friends and funds to end homelessness in Greater Washington. How?

- Bringing together our neighbors who do not have a home or a job with those of us who do, in an effort to build community and find solutions to homelessness and joblessness.
- Raising our awareness of the daily struggles that homelessness and joblessness cause.
- Learning about the issues that result in homelessness and joblessness in Greater Washington.
- Cultivating a collaborative partnership that works together to end homelessness and joblessness, one next step and neighbor at a time.
- Supporting Samaritan Ministry in its vital role to help find permanent affordable housing and living wage work for our participants who needs a home or a paying job.



Above: During a Samaritan Ministry Sunday, a Speaker's Bureau member speaks at Church of the Epiphany in DC. Cover: Participants at the NW Winter Warm-Up.



Visit us online at [samaritanministry.org](http://samaritanministry.org) to learn how you can get involved!



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