

DC Convening to Increase Access to Services for Vulnerable Populations



Photo 1: DC Councilmember Robert White kicking it off; Photo 2: Kristy Respress, Executive Director, Pathways to Housing DC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 7, 2018

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As treacherous winds howled outside that forced the federal government in DC to close, committed local leaders from over 20 DC housing, career, and social service organizations came together to fight homelessness. The event, co-hosted by At-Large DC Councilmember Robert White, the DC Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs, and the volunteer HopeOneSource DC team, gave attending service providers a unique opportunity to learn about available housing, career, and social services in the District and how HopeOneSource DC is working to help all service providers achieve their missions more effectively and efficiently with its unique technology.

The HopeOneSource DC platform is a Twitter and Craigslist hybrid to increase access to services. It provides a real-time, multilingual, collaborative messaging tool that uses geolocated text messages to connect DC's most vulnerable residents to housing, career, and social services. Service providers post short messages about their available services on the HopeOneSource web platform, and these messages are then sent out as text alerts to the phones of nearby DC residents who have registered to receive them. Mobile and desktop-friendly maps and lists of available services based on demographic characteristics are also available through the HopeOneSource DC platform, which is free-to-use for both local service providers and DC residents.

"We're very thankful that representatives from so many important local service organizations were able to attend our convening, and we're excited to continue supporting these organizations to help them connect with the people they are trying to help more easily," says Tim Underwood, Executive Director of Hope With Love, the organization behind HopeOneSource DC.

DC government agencies use HopeOneSource to send important information to DC's most vulnerable residents. Over the course of the winter, the DC Department of Human Services has sent numerous emergency weather alerts along with information to access emergency shelter, including a text alert that was sent out during the recent windstorm to many unsheltered DC residents experiencing homelessness.

"We can't spend our way to success, but we can partner our way to success by registering more DC residents experiencing poverty for HopeOneSource, which provides 24/7 real-time outreach. This will let them know how to connect to many collaborative DC government and non-government service providers that offer housing assistance, gainful employment, medical services, transportation options, clothing giveaways, food resources and many other essential services. I thank HopeOneSource for their work to increase access to services for vulnerable populations within our community," says Councilmember White.

High Def Photos: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1MYuhJO3-uo5bTBdY8wjbkTRWXf2QBI-?usp=sharing>

Featured in Photos: Screenshot of Emergency Windstorm Text alert sent to unsheltered residents experiencing homelessness through HopeOneSource; Andre Strickland, Director of Constituent Services, Office of Councilmember At-Large Robert White; Robert White, At-Large DC Councilmember; Kristy Respress, Executive Director, Pathways to Housing DC; Maggie Kilbride, Volunteer Integrations and Community Partnerships AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), HopeOneSource DC