

# Catholic Charities to begin managing Baltimore's homeless shelter July 1

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**UPDATED 5:30 p.m. May 23, 2013:** Catholic Charities of Baltimore will assume management of Baltimore City's homeless shelter and associated programs July 1. The city's Board of Estimates approved a yearlong, \$2.7 million contract between the Catholic social services agency and the city May 22.

Located along the Fallsway across the street from Our Daily Bread Employment Center, a Catholic Charities program that provides hot meals and employment and housing services, the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Housing Resource Center (WHRC) is a 24-hour homeless shelter with 275 beds. It currently offers breakfast, dinner, laundry and showers. Baltimore-based Health Care for the Homeless operates an area for convalescent care.

Catholic Charities was selected because of the agency's "robust internal infrastructure to support such an operation, their network of other services that can provide a vital link to the clients of the WHRC, and their extensive volunteer network," said Olivia Farrow, director of the Mayor's Office of Human Services, in a May 22 statement.

In 2012, Catholic Charities of Baltimore provided transitional and permanent housing for 961 homeless individuals and families. It served more than 370,000 meals; assisted more than 13,000 individuals and families with intake, casework and emergency services; and provided employment and training to 1,034 people.

Catholic Charities is still forming its plan for the operation of the WHRC, but sees it as an extension of its current efforts to reduce poverty in Baltimore.

"It's a natural fit for the integration of services and the continuum of services," said William J. McCarthy Jr., Catholic Charities executive director.

While WHRC's services will largely remain the same, the approach will change under Catholic Charities' management, he said.

"Catholic Charities' operating philosophy - recognizing the inherent dignity and worth of every person and cherishing the divine in every person - drives the why of

what we do and how we go about that work,” he said. “That respect and dignity of the person really starts at the door, and I think it’s a hallmark of how we go about our work and helps us deliver effective outcomes for the people.”

Funded in part by the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, the Weinberg Housing Resource Center opened in 2011 in a renovated, 30,000-square-foot transportation building and garage. It was previously operated by Baltimore-based Jobs, Housing, Recovery, Inc.

Catholic Charities expects the transition in management will create 50 new jobs.

According to the Mayor’s Office of Human Services, 4,000 people may be homeless in Baltimore on any given night. Baltimore City launched a 10-year plan to end homelessness in 2008.

Catholic Charities also expects to open Hosanna House in mid-June to provide supportive housing for homeless women in eastern Baltimore County.

“I really think we’re going to make a great difference,” McCarthy said of the agency’s plans for WHRC. “It’s what we’re called to do.”

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