

Dear Friend,

I am writing today to update you on our process to create a new 5-year plan for Philadelphia's homeless assistance system. We started in July 2017 and will release the new plan in June 2018.

Philly's homeless assistance system is comprised of an impressive network of homeless services, legal, housing, physical and behavioral health providers, and governmental entities, all working toward the same goal of making homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring. The Office of Homeless Services (OHS) provides support, leadership, funding, coordination and administration to this network, which is called the Continuum of Care.

The goal of the new plan is to amplify the impact of our work by focusing on a shared set of measurable strategies that together reduce the number of people who experience homelessness, make the experience shorter and less traumatic for those who do, and reduce the number who cycle back through our system.

We boldly claim that we will work together to have the strongest, most effective homeless assistance system in the country. We know success is possible. It is how we reached an effective end to Veteran homelessness in 2015.

We have established principles for the new plan. It will:

- **Build on past success.**

[Our last 10-Year Plan](#) (written in 2005 and updated in 2008) provided a platform for progress: Philadelphia achieved an effective end to Veteran homelessness in December 2015 and increased our supply of Permanent Supportive Housing by 98% from 3,118 beds in 2005 to 6,179 beds in 2017. This increase includes housing made available through a partnership between OHS and the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA). To read a report on the 10-year plan, [click here](#).

- **Be guided by the Housing First approach.**

Housing First means only once people are housed can they begin to stabilize their lives, think about and plan the future, seek and hold a job, sustain recovery, get healthy. Fundamentally, we believe that we can most efficiently and most effectively address homelessness by providing access to safe, decent and affordable places to live - first.

- **Be driven by both qualitative and quantitative data, including significant community input.**

The OHS Planning Staff, together with our national consultant, the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), and three volunteer committees, have compiled all the preliminary data needed to begin developing recommendations.

Today I would like to share with you the results of the past several months of data gathering. Six large themes have emerged as priorities for the plan's recommendations:

1. Resources – There simply need to be more places for people to live safely and affordably to resolve and prevent their homelessness;
2. Collaboration across Systems – the need for data sharing, coordination and system alignment to improve the participant experience, get better outcomes and reduce the flow of people into homelessness;
3. Accountability and Performance – clear goals and protocols, investing in approaches that get results, but not at the expense of innovation;
4. Training and Technical Assistance – the need to set clear expectations and then support providers and staff throughout our system to deliver the highest quality, person-centered services;
5. Communication – the strong and consistent desire of all to know more about what's going on, and to have a say in the decisions that affect them;
6. Employment – broad recognition that paving the way to the dignity and income of work is key.

We invite you to [click here](#) to read the full summary of qualitative data from the input sessions, charrette, and survey that will be honed into recommendations.

The quantitative data so far has been compiled into a preliminary Unit Needs Assessment. This plan does not seek to address the totality of the city's affordable housing shortage. The Division of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is doing a complementary affordable housing needs assessment and plan. Our "slice" is the specific area of homeless assistance. Click [here](#) for more detail about the table below.

| Homeless Housing Intervention | Estimated Additional Units Needed |
|--|--|
| Permanent Supportive Housing for Families with Children | 200 |
| Permanent Supportive Housing for Adults without Children | 1,800 |
| Rapid Re-Housing for Families with Children | 250 |
| Rapid Re-Housing for Adults without Children | 4,500 |
| Prevention for Families with Children | 700 |
| Prevention for Adults without Children | 2,100 |

**Please note that the unmet need for Transition-Aged Youth (Adults ages 18-24, also known as TAY) is included within the Individual and Family totals above. Office of Homeless Services and Corporation for Supportive Housing are working with youth providers to assess the specific needs of TAY experiencing homelessness.*

What's Next?

The specific goals and strategies that will comprise the substance of the new 5-year plan will be derived from all this qualitative and quantitative data gathered. As you might suspect, the problem we face today is one of having so many fabulous ideas that we will have to narrow down and make tough choices together about what we can really accomplish.

Here is our proposed timeline with opportunities for input:

| Month | Activities |
|--------------|---|
| February | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconvene Steering, Charrette, and Unit Projections committees to draft narrowed list of actionable recommendations • Assess system gaps and overlaps to avoid system duplication • Gather any additional input from stakeholders missed in December • Work on population-specific recommendations |
| March | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather stakeholder input to prioritize draft recommendations |
| April | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share draft plan with community stakeholders for additional input |
| June | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of Plan by Continuum of Care Board • Public release of Plan |

We thank the over 300 volunteers who have given their time and expertise - so far. I would especially like to thank the Homeless Services staff who have worked tirelessly to make this process fair, comprehensive, and productive: Gina Ruggieri, Leah Staub, and Lauren Whiteleigh. **The passion, generosity, and commitment of this community inspires us all to persevere. Thank you. And as always, please don't hesitate to reach out if you have questions.**