

Transforming Philadelphia's Homeless System: Our City's Strategic Plan

Inside Cover (to be added in final production):

Message from Liz Hersh, Director, City of Philadelphia Office of Homeless Services

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary (to be added in final production)

Introduction

We are a stronger city when our residents have a place to call home. Philadelphia's homeless assistance system, known as the Continuum of Care (CoC), includes an expansive network of homeless and housing services, physical and behavioral health providers, community institutions and governmental entities, all working toward the shared goal of making homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring. We want our system to be well-coordinated, easily accessible, and comprised of a network full of caring and dedicated supports that quickly and effectively prevent and resolve experiences of homelessness. This plan describes strategies that will guide our collective efforts to **build a more comprehensive and coordinated response that puts the resources, partnerships, and systems in place to make sure all people facing homelessness get the help they need.**

We pledge to ground our work in the Housing First approach, knowing that only when people are housed can they begin to stabilize their lives, plan for the future, address their physical and behavioral health needs, seek and hold jobs, address the needs of their children, and resolve issues that may impact landlords' willingness to rent to them in the future. As such, we will invest new resources in programs that adopt housing first approach and evidence-based solutions: prevention assistance, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing, all of which provide financial assistance (as needed) and supportive services.

Since our last community-wide planning process in 2005, we have made tremendous progress as a city to prevent and address homelessness and have learned a great deal about what works. We've invested in solutions that produce meaningful results; redesigned how people access homeless assistance resources; implemented a more sophisticated data management system; and created numerous collaborative cross-sector partnerships. Despite all the progress we've made, united by the conviction that we are better off working together than in isolation, there is much more to be done and explored. Ultimately, in building this plan, community members have committed to taking leadership over the next five years in adapting to the changing needs of people experiencing homelessness and adopting new and innovative ways of doing business, at both the system and program levels.

Our agility and adaptability to changing policy landscapes and emergent population, system, and provider needs will determine our success. Homelessness is a complex social problem that anyone can face, with a variety of contributing factors, and our community must be flexible in our approach, testing innovation and evidence-based models in Philadelphia, and changing course as we learn from our experiences.

A newly-formed Philadelphia Intergovernmental Council on Homelessness, comprised of City leaders, will oversee this plan and commit to deploy their staff to engage actively in strategic efforts. The first

charge of the Council will be to reconfigure the governing body of the Philadelphia (CoC), so that it can drive implementation and monitor progress. The Office of Homeless Services (OHS), the public entity in Philadelphia charged with addressing homelessness and the Collaborative Applicant for the CoC, will provide support, coordination and administrative oversight.

Our community is only as strong as our partnerships. City government cannot solve homelessness alone; it relies on the enduring dedication of partners to engage collectively, across sectors and across the entire city and region, to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. Anyone who has a stake in the work of the homeless assistance system has a role to play in implementing this plan.

Where Do We Start?

Among the 10 largest cities in the United States, Philadelphia had the lowest number of people without shelter in 2017, despite having the highest poverty rate. A glance at the streets of Philadelphia, however, shows that this number is not zero. No one knows this better than the homeless street outreach teams who respond to hotline calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and who canvass the city to build relationships with people staying on the streets, which helps them accept supports. The city's latest count shows more than 1,000 people are without shelter on a given night. The number has been growing since 2014, in part due to a deepening local opioid crisis and in part due to reduced availability of federal housing vouchers. As unsheltered numbers and hotline calls have increased, the City has invested in a multi-faceted response that includes both the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS), which funds and oversees street outreach, and OHS, which coordinates emergency, temporary, and permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness.

Poverty, coupled with physical or behavioral health issues, barriers to securing and maintaining a living wage, and/or traumatic life experiences put people at great risk for homelessness. Public perception is often shaped by interactions with men and women on the street, many of whom may be panhandling; but most people experiencing homelessness are not staying on the streets or panhandling, and many panhandlers are not experiencing homelessness¹. **There is diversity within experiences of homelessness.** Survey results show 15% of sheltered adults reporting mental illness and 15% reporting substance use disorders, while close to 50% of unsheltered adults report these behavioral health concerns. On any given night, a quarter of the nearly 5,800 people experiencing homelessness in Philadelphia are children. Another eight percent are youth ages 18-24. Even though we've improve the accuracy of our counts, we know that many young adults remain hidden from our view. More than 40% of the youth counted are parents themselves.

¹ Shared Public Spaces January 2017 Panhandling Survey Results, <http://www.philadelphiaofficeofhomelesservices.org/shared-public-spaces/panhandling/>

Over 80% of people experiencing homelessness on a given night in Philadelphia are staying in emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing programs. While these programs help people stay off the streets and out of the elements, they are not **permanent places to call home**. Nearing 40 years from our roots in emergency shelters, created to address a new social problem and transitional housing designed to help people prepare for permanent housing, **we have shifted towards an ever-deepening focus on helping people secure and maintain permanent housing as the first priority**, moving ever closer to system-wide implementation of the Housing First approach.

Over the past dozen years, **Philadelphia has significantly expanded our homeless housing inventory, in number of units and breadth of options, currently allowing us to provide more than 11,000 people a place to sleep at night, with additional resources dedicated to preventing people from the trauma of losing their home**. More than half of the inventory is permanent supportive housing - providing long-term rental subsidy and services to people with disabilities, with an average 90% success rate in keeping the population served in these programs housed. Short-term subsidies and supports are available through transitional and rapid re-housing to help others get on their feet, with transitional programs targeted to youth ages 18-24, people in recovery from substance use disorder, and persons fleeing domestic violence or other life-threatening situations. More than 15,000 people annually are served in Philadelphia's emergency housing programs.

Yet, demand for what people really want and need—affordable permanent housing—continues to far outpace supply. **The community recently launched a Coordinated Entry and Assessment-Based Housing Referral System (CEA-BHRS, pronounced “sea breeze”) to ensure that the system uses its limited resources as effectively as possible**, by matching assistance to household needs and prioritizing the most vulnerable for referral. We also expect this shift to reduce the extended shelter stays that result from households waiting their turn in a first-come, first-served line to access limited permanent housing resources. Still, maximal use of our limited homeless-dedicated resources could still not get us to the goal of making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Success requires partnerships between the systems that each serve some facet of people's lives, and Philadelphia has a strong foundation on which to build. Philadelphia knows from experience how partnerships and collaboration can produce transformative results. *Our Way Home: A Blueprint to End Homelessness in Philadelphia*, published in 1998, served as a national model for 10-year plans to end homelessness. We effectively ended Veteran homelessness in 2015 and have built robust coalitions focused on other specific needs through initiatives such as the Philly Homes 4 Youth Coalition, 100K Homes, 100-Day Challenge to End Street Homelessness, and Shared Public Spaces. As people seeking homelessness assistance more frequently have much more serious medical and/or behavioral health needs than our current system is equipped to handle, the urgency to strengthen our cross-system strategies only intensifies.

Why Plan?

1. To maximize the impact of our efforts by committing to a shared vision and goals.

While people and organizations across Philadelphia have long been engaged in efforts to address and prevent homelessness, input from the planning process reflected deep desire to do it in a more strategic, systematic approach to better support one another.

2. To capitalize on the collective wisdom, energy and experience of all our partners.

Implementation of the plan's ambitious goals and strategies requires using our collective experience and expertise to implement programs that meet the varied needs of our community - specifically the needs of parents and their children, veterans, youth 18-24, and those experiencing chronic homelessness.

3. To comply with federal requirements – and take advantage of the opportunity that requirement presents.

The Philadelphia Continuum of Care receives nearly \$39 million in Federal funds annually. Federal government requires its grantees to establish a community-wide plan for addressing homelessness, to coordinate efforts, reduce duplication, increase efficiency, and guide the distribution of Federal funding streams that are specifically targeted for addressing homelessness. We seek to align our use of resources, including:

- Local government funding designated for addressing homelessness, including levies, general funds, and other locally-guided sources, including the Housing Trust Fund (HTF)
- Philanthropic and other private sector funding
- Faith-based assets, including volunteers, physical units and funding
- Federal sources from participating U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) departments, especially HUD, Health and Human Services (HHS), Veterans Affairs (VA), and Labor
- Related systems funding, including behavioral and physical health, criminal justice, affordable housing, veterans, workforce development, and education

4. To align with, coordinate, and complement the work of other public systems.

Local plans for other systems include Philadelphia's [Assessment of Fair Housing and Consolidated Plan](#), [Fueling Philadelphia's Talent Engine: A Citywide Workforce Strategy](#), the Health and Human Services Cabinet's plan: [Together We Thrive](#), the [Final Report and Recommendations](#) of The Mayor's Task Force to Combat the Opioid Epidemic, [A Running Start Philadelphia](#) and other [Shared Prosperity Philadelphia](#) work, the [Building Early Links to Learning Initiative](#), the final Report of the [Mayor's Taskforce on Eviction Prevention and Response](#), and the Department of Planning & Development's forthcoming Housing Action Plan.

How Did We Develop This Plan?

Looking to develop and implement a new 5-year plan to make homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring in Philadelphia, the Office of Homeless Services (OHS) and a Steering Committee of community leaders engaged a national expert, the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), adapting CSH's experiences working with communities across the country to **embark on a 12-month planning process to "Re-Envision Philadelphia's Homeless Assistance System."**

OHS convened a Stakeholder Workgroup to guide the process. The workgroup focused on (1) examining data on homelessness in Philadelphia and national and local trends on housing and service needs and **(2) engaging the community in the planning process.** Through these efforts, **more than 350 stakeholders** [shared their perspectives and suggestions](#) about what they think works well in the homeless assistance system, what opportunities we have to improve the system, and recommendations for deepening our shared, community-wide commitment to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring in Philadelphia.

Members of the stakeholder workgroup and OHS explored, categorized, and synthesized the tremendous community input into an update for the broader community in February, and brought a draft of the plan to the broader community for comment in late May. **The plan articulates strategies that address the core substance of what we heard from the community during this planning process.**

What Will Guide Us Forward?

Going forward, the following principles will guide decision-making, including resource allocation and targeting, for the homeless assistance system:

- **Housing First** – housing people quickly, without conditions or participation requirements
- **Housing Focused** – services focused on moving to and maintaining permanent housing
- **Prioritization** – assistance prioritized based on vulnerability and severity of service needs
- **Person-Centered** – a dignified, safe, trauma-informed approach allowing participant choice

As we take collective action over the coming five years, we will demonstrate our communal commitment to using an approach to implementation that is:

- **Trauma-informed** – recognizing, understanding, and providing services that are sensitive in responding to the trauma experienced by people who have nowhere to live
- **Person-centered** – partnering with people to develop accessible, easy-to-navigate solutions for meeting needs, with consideration of human desires, values, family situations, social circumstances, and lifestyles
- **Data-driven** – making decisions based on systematic attention to data on needs and outcomes
- **Efficient** – using innovative, evidence-based, collaborative, holistic, and non-duplicative program models to serve more people more effectively

- **Flexible** – continuously assessing and improving quality and consistency of services, supported by adequate training for staff at all levels
- **Transparent** – with ample communication around inclusive decision-making processes that solicit and give weight to community input

What Are We Trying to Achieve?

The Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness defines [ending homelessness](#) as establishing a comprehensive community response that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible and that experiences of homelessness are rare, brief, and non-recurring.

The strategic initiatives outlined in our plan reflect the community’s input about focus areas for the next 5 years, align with the federal strategic plan, and share the following ultimate goals:

GOAL 1	Prevent homelessness to the greatest extent possible
GOAL 2	Resolve experiences of homelessness as quickly as possible
GOAL 3	Support people to achieve and maintain stable housing so that they do not fall back into homelessness

We know that different subpopulations experience homelessness differently, need different supports, and have access to different resources. We will consider the full range of needs for the people we serve, monitor system performance for these varied populations, and adjust our strategies accordingly. As a system, coalitions such as Philly Homes 4 Youth, the Family Service Provider Network, Philly Vets Home, and the Chronic Team created through the 100-day challenge inform our direction with their expertise on subpopulation-related considerations and opportunities. We will continue to work together in our shared interests, strengthening partnerships and building new ones, as we cannot achieve our goals for Philadelphia without achieving them for Philadelphians of all backgrounds in all types of households.

What Actions Will We Take to Achieve Our Goals?

Community input included numerous proposed strategies and action steps. We distilled the suggestions into actionable strategies that we will take to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. In implementing this plan, we will:

1. Improve **Coordination** Across Systems
2. **Communicate** More Effectively
3. Expand Homeless Housing **Resources**

4. Establish a transparent and inclusive **Quality Improvement Process**
5. Connect people to **Employment** and Workforce Development Services

Action #1: Improve Coordination Across Systems

The Challenge: To meet their multiple needs, people experiencing homelessness and the providers serving them have to navigate multiple systems, each with its own set of procedures and policies. Despite best efforts to align service delivery, community input gathered for this plan indicates that City agencies remain problematically siloed when it comes to meeting the needs of people experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness. **When intersecting systems' processes and policies do not align, people can fall through the cracks into homelessness or face unintended roadblocks when working to secure housing.**

Our Plan: To prevent people from falling into homelessness in times of transition and to streamline the process of supporting people move out of homelessness, we will:

- **Establish a multi-level, collaborative, cross-system leadership structure** to ensure ongoing partnership and community engagement in implementing strategies that advance us towards our collective goals and shared vision
- **Identify points of greatest impact in preventing entries into the homeless assistance system and revise system policies and/or processes** that produce serious obstacles to securing housing and frequent exits into homelessness
- **Build relationships that enable swift response to urgent and emergent crises** as they arise
- **Identify and analyze specific needs of subpopulations** across systems by expanding data sharing agreements and improving connectivity between care providers.

Action Steps

- Establish **Intergovernmental Council on Homelessness** for leaders of City agencies to stay abreast of plan implementation and to prioritize work to address the needs of people experiencing or at great risk of homelessness within their systems
- Reconfigure the **Philadelphia Continuum of Care governing structure** to advance the strategies in our plan
- Follow the lead of the Philly Homes 4 Youth Coalition efforts to:
 - Develop a **coordinated community response to address youth homelessness**
 - Assist the **Department of Human Services (DHS) to adopt system changes to improve housing stability for youth exiting the child welfare or juvenile justice systems** and reduce the number exiting these systems of care into homelessness
 - Advise the **School District of Philadelphia on increasing access to McKinney- Vento education resources**

- Implement a pilot of the **evidence-based [Frequent Users Systems Engagement \(FUSE\) Model](#)** to house people with extensive histories in the criminal justice, behavioral health, and homeless assistance systems
- Pilot **Rapid Re-Housing for Reunification**, a partnership of OHS and DHS, with assistance targeted to parents and children remaining separated primarily because of difficulty securing housing
- Launch Client Snapshot, a **data-sharing tool for City Departments and their contracted providers**
- Connect **street outreach data with the data on the rest of the homeless-dedicated assistance system** to expedite eligibility determinations and improve referrals

Action #2: Communicate More Effectively

The Challenge: As we continually learn more about homelessness and how we can most quickly and effectively prevent or end people's homelessness experiences, we have made and continue to make changes to the homeless assistance system. During the planning process, stakeholders of all backgrounds stressed the importance of clear and consistent messaging throughout the system about changes. For anyone - City agency staff, non-profit service providers, people seeking assistance, or the community at large - to stay current about the assistance that our system provides and how it works, **we must develop a strong communication strategy that ensures practical access to clear, reliable, and timely information.**

Our Plan: In response to the input of community stakeholders, we will identify and execute mechanisms to improve how we communicate with people who need homeless assistance and the providers and communities supporting them so they can access the information they need. **To build accurate community understanding of what the homeless assistance system is doing, how we are doing it, and why, we will:**

- **Develop and implement consistent messaging using a targeted marketing campaign** to increase public understanding of homelessness and the system of resources available and build community engagement in supporting the plan's strategies
- **Institute an Office of Homeless Services multi-channel communication strategy** targeting various stakeholder groups, including assisting stakeholders to share with each other
- **Organize and share resources** in an effective way to meet the unique needs of subpopulations

Action Steps

- Follow the lead of the Shared Public Spaces Communication Subcommittee to:
 - Collaboratively **identify and secure resources to support development and execution of a marketing campaign** to improve public understanding of homelessness, the available solutions, and the community's strategies to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.

- Implement **revamped Office of Homeless Services’ communication strategy**
- Launch **Coordinated Entry and Assessment Based Housing Referral System (CEA-BHRS) marketing campaign**
- Work with the City’s Office of Open Data & Digital Transformation **to improve publication of homeless assistance system data, specifically subpopulation, CEA-BHRS, and system performance data**
- Research existing **platforms for centralized resource-sharing**

Action #3: Expand Homeless Housing Resources

The Challenge: People experiencing homelessness need housing, first and foremost. Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, and Prevention assistance all provide rental subsidy and supportive services, each targeted to households and subpopulations requiring a specific level of service. Limited resources make “rapid rehousing” less rapid, the availability of permanent supportive housing openings scarce, and people entering emergency shelter who could have otherwise remained where they were staying. The demand for these homeless-dedicated housing and services far exceeds the supply. **We need new resources to expand our supply of homelessness prevention, rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing.**

Analysis by members of the stakeholder workgroup estimates that Philadelphia needs:

Estimated Local Housing Needs ²		
Housing Intervention	Household Type	Additional Need (Estimated Units/Households)
Prevention: <i>rent/utility assistance to keep people at imminent risk of homelessness in their homes</i>	Households with Children (heads of household ages 25+)	500
	Households with Children (heads of household ages 18-24)	200
	Households without Children ages 25+	1,800
	Households without Children ages 18-24	200
	TOTAL Prevention	2,700

² The projected estimated need for additional units is based on the following assumptions:

1. the system continues operating as it has;
2. households are matched to the intervention that best meets their level of service need;
3. a percentage of households self-resolve their homelessness without requiring an intervention

These projections do not represent exact or final figures on community need, but provide an empirical foundation for community conversation on resource allocation and unit creation, based on available local and national data.

Rapid Re-Housing: <i>Medium-term rental assistance and supportive services to stabilize and relaunch lives</i>	Households with Children (heads of household ages 25+)	100
	Households with Children (heads of household ages 18-24)	20
	Households without Children ages 25+	4,800
	Households without Children ages 18-24	600
	TOTAL Rapid Re-Housing	5,520
Permanent Supportive Housing: <i>long-term housing subsidy with supportive services, for people with disabilities</i>	Households with Children (heads of household ages 25+)	140
	Households with Children (heads of household ages 18-24)	50
	Households without Children ages 25+	1,700
	Households without Children ages 18-24	600
	TOTAL Permanent Supportive Housing	2,490

Our Plan: We will continue to invest resources strategically to meet our city’s needs and goals. As we continuously improve our system’s ability to get people housed and keep them housed, we hope the need for new homeless-dedicated housing declines. **Exploring a range of options and approaches for bringing supply in line with demand, we will:**

- **Target, prioritize, or repurpose resources** based on analysis of population and subpopulation needs and financial and program performance data to improve system impact
- **Expand partnerships and cultivate relationships** with stakeholders to increase investment in innovative, cost-effective solutions that align with multiple systems’ core purposes
- **Increase the number of landlords** engaged with homeless assistance system providers to facilitate program expansion when new funding is secured

Action Steps

- Conduct and use **annual analysis of gaps between population needs and inventory** of housing and services **to drive funding decisions**
- Develop a public-private **funding collaborative** aimed to address the increased demand and expansion of homeless housing resources
- Continue to support efforts of the Shared Public Spaces Chronic Homelessness Subcommittee to **create a private investment pool to fund supportive housing units** for individuals experiencing street homelessness
- Design and implement a **landlord engagement strategy** to increase database of landlords renting to people exiting homelessness

- Research and implement **effective diversion strategies**, including how to train community members and landlords to divert households from entering shelter or sleeping on the streets
- Expand **OHS shallow rent pilot** to serve additional households on fixed disability incomes to afford their rent
- Cultivate **relationship with major healthcare systems**, to leverage resources used to fund additional permanent housing units

Action #4: Establish Transparent and Inclusive Quality Improvement Process

The Challenge: Philadelphia's homeless assistance system is transforming from shelter-based to housing-focused, prioritizing resources to the most vulnerable with longest histories of homelessness, and increasingly basing funding decisions on performance. When faced with multiple change directives, providers may not feel equipped or supported in making the changes to help the people coming to them for assistance. We heard clearly that providers want fair, transparent expectations and so do people being served by the homeless assistance system. **To reap the benefits of system changes, we all have to support one another and hold each other accountable to established expectations.**

Our Plan: For providers to successfully transition to new ways of doing business, they need strong and transparent expectations; robust training and technical assistance; and the opportunity to provide input into the development of standards and performance measures. **To cultivate a culture of excellence, strengthen plans for policy development and implementation, and instill expectations of success throughout the system, we will:**

- **Establish an inclusive quality improvement process** that gives providers and people with lived experience of homelessness a say in standards of performance and accountability, including with funding decisions
- **Create and implement a training curriculum** to equip providers to effectively deliver culturally competent, trauma-informed services, targeted to the specific needs of subpopulations, and give them the opportunity to share with and learn from each other

Action Steps

- Seek **provider input** when establishing annual program performance targets
- Establish CEA-BHRS Subcommittee, consisting of community stakeholders, to **develop and refine an annual CEA-BHRS evaluation strategy**
- Revisit mission and goals of the **CoC's Quality Improvement and Evaluation Subcommittee (QIES)**
- Hold **regular convenings with people who've experienced homelessness** for their recommendations on assessing and responding to program outcomes and quality of service
- Identify **resources to expand trainings** offered to City staff and providers, specifically training on our guiding principles - Housing First, Housing Focused, Person Centered, and prioritization; and

training to improve cultural competency, such as, but not limited to – trauma informed care, LGBTQ inclusivity, domestic violence, substance use disorder, and mental health first aid

- Implement **OHS training plan**, to include forums for provider-level peer to peer learning and support

Action #5: Connect People to Employment and Workforce Development Services

The Challenge: Despite recent job growth rates surpassing the national average, Philadelphia remains the poorest of America's 10 largest cities. Most of the people experiencing homelessness to whom we spoke during the planning process have a strong desire to get a job - or a higher paying one if they are already working. Front line provider staff shared serious challenges to helping people achieve this goal, including, but not limited to lack of childcare or transportation, gaps in employment history, criminal records, and low literacy. **With subsidized housing opportunities becoming more and more scarce, many people experiencing or formerly experiencing homelessness need a pathway to a living wage to maintain housing stability.**

Our Plan: We will work to ensure that people served by the homeless assistance system are connected to opportunities to increase their incomes, which will both reduce their risk of falling behind on rent or mortgage payments in the future and help drive positive growth in our city. **To support people realize their full potential and ensure our workforce development system is prepared to address the unique barriers they face, we will:**

- **Establish a strategic partnership between homeless assistance and workforce development systems** to draw upon each other's expertise in connecting people experiencing homelessness to opportunities for career advancement and/or education.
- **Identify opportunities to create new jobs** targeted to the specific needs of the populations experiencing homelessness.

Action Steps

- **Locate satellite CareerLink site** at a CEA-BHRS Access Point
- Create a working group to **assess the workforce development needs of people experiencing homelessness**
- Establish and implement a plan to **increase coordination between homeless assistance and workforce development systems**
- Investigate and advocate for opportunities to **address childcare and transportation barriers to employment**
- Work with **First Step Staffing** to connect people experiencing homelessness to employment opportunities
- Explore the potential to **create a day labor program** for people experiencing homelessness

How Will We Track Progress?

Annually, we report to the Federal government on the performance of our system on the measures of success listed below. The actions we will take over the next five years to improve coordination across systems, communicate more effectively, expand homeless housing resources, establish a transparent and inclusive quality improvement process, and connect people to employment and workforce development services, will facilitate access to needed resources to make people’s experiences of homelessness, rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Goal	Measure of Success
<p>1. Prevent homelessness to the greatest extent possible by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working together to keep people from exiting from public systems into homelessness; and ● Providing financial assistance and supportive services to keep people from ending up on the streets or in a shelter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fewer people on the streets or in temporary housing programs ● Fewer exits from institutional settings - such as prison, foster care, or hospitals - directly into homelessness ● Fewer first-time entries into the homeless assistance system
<p>2. Resolve experiences of homelessness as quickly as possible by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working together to speed identification of people experiencing homelessness; and ● Facilitating access to low-barrier housing, followed by linkage to ongoing supports and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shorter experiences of homelessness ● Less time from housing assessment to referral and from referral to permanent housing move-in
<p>3. Support people to achieve and maintain stable housing so they do not fall back into homelessness by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working together to make connections to community-based services and supports; and ● Matching assistance to household needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● More moves from homelessness to permanent housing ● More people with increased income ● Fewer people falling back into homelessness

When Do We Begin? Now!

Public sector leaders, Commissioners and Directors, who hold responsibility for major systems that serve people experiencing homelessness, will serve on Philadelphia’s **Intergovernmental Council on Homelessness (ICH)**, endorsing the vision, goals, and strategies outlined in this plan; deploying the

appropriate staff to actively participate in the work of implementing the strategies outlined in the plan; and meeting semi-annually to hear from stakeholders and review progress.

Since 2014, Philadelphia's Continuum of Care (CoC) has had a governing Board, charged with implementing a comprehensive system to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness. To preclude duplication of efforts, we will reconfigure the current CoC Board to form a **new governing body** that will not only fulfill the specific mandated duties of a CoC Board, but also operationalize this plan's strategies, establish policy priorities, coordinate implementation, review data on outcomes and system gaps, and produce annual public progress reports. This Board will also oversee the efforts of subcommittees and workgroups and identify learning opportunities for the groups both to help each other build upon successes and to make course corrections as necessary.

The exact membership of this governing body will be identified during early implementation of the plan. It will include representation of:

- government agencies (designees of the Intergovernmental Council on Homelessness)
- homeless service providers
- people with lived experience of homelessness
- public and private systems outside the City structure that play a key role in advancing our efforts
- resident, neighborhood, and community development organizations
- business, hospitality, philanthropy, and civic leaders

Subcommittees and workgroups will use the perspectives of a cross section of stakeholders to define and direct execution of many of our strategies. Standing subcommittees will play an ongoing role, by providing a forum for input from certain stakeholder groups or designing and refining continuous quality improvement processes. Some ad hoc committees and working groups will be created to assist with certain stages of implementation. Membership in these groups will be based on their objectives; members may be recruited for their expertise, solicited for their interest, or designated by ICH or Board members.

Community Commitment

It's time to roll up our sleeves. We hope you'll join in our efforts! We will ask community members to pledge their commitment to align their work with this plan and play a role in achieving these goals. Information about implementation of our strategies and a list of community members who've pledged their support will be posted on the [Office of Homeless Services' website](#).