

# DHS News

Newsletter of the Allegheny County  
Department of Human Services



February 2019

## **Housing Navigator unit brings landlords and tenants together**

The Department of Human Services (DHS) has recently created a new unit to support landlords who are currently working with, or would like to work with, Allegheny County's housing assistance programs.

Launched on January 1, the Housing Navigator unit is comprised of two full-time staff members. The Navigators do not work directly with clients; instead, they match provider agencies that need units for homeless clients with landlords who have available units. Once matched, the Navigator serves as a neutral point of contact to address grievances and ensure consistent communication.

"Often, case managers do not have experience in real estate, and landlords don't necessarily understand human services," said Chuck Keenan, administrator of the Bureau of Homeless Services in the Office of Community Services (OCS). "The Housing Navigators are available to answer questions, offer support and facilitate communication so everyone is comfortable throughout the process."

In November, the Navigators hosted a forum to introduce local landlords to the program. The forum educated landlords in attendance about the various housing programs that DHS offers, showed how partnering with DHS could benefit their business, and encouraged them to work with the Housing Navigators and DHS-funded housing programs in the future. Seventy people attended the event, with 58 of those attendees being landlords.

"This program can be an appealing option for landlords. We match them up with ready-to-rent tenants who have subsidies to cover costs and will pay their rent on-time. Additionally, case managers keep an eye on the apartment to make sure that everything is in good repair and kept clean," said Chuck. "This program is truly a win-win for everyone involved."

To learn more about the Housing Navigator unit, contact Chuck at [Charles.Keenan@AlleghenyCounty.US](mailto:Charles.Keenan@AlleghenyCounty.US).