

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

CoC Bi-Monthly Meeting

November 24, 2020; 10:00AM to 12:00PM

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Purpose: The Homeless Advisory Board (HAB) is a public/private partnership formed to assist and recommend to Allegheny County, the City of Pittsburgh, the City of McKeesport and the Municipality of Penn Hills on public policy, programs, activities, data and all other efforts that will eliminate homelessness and improve the wellbeing of persons and families who are homeless.

HAB Members¹

Frank Aggazio	Knowledge Build Hudson (P)	Lea Etta Rhodes (P)
Meg Balsamico (P)	Joe Lagana (P)	Jessica Smith Perry
Jane Downing (P)	John Lovelace (P)	Gale Schwartz (P)
Laura Drogowski (P)	Jennifer McCurry (P)	Kyona White (P)
Stuart Fisk (P)	Michael Murray	Kellie Wild
Pete Giacalone (P)	Susie Puskar (P)	Bethany Wingerson (P)
Abigail Horn (P)	Christy Pietryga	

In addition to the below notes, [the meeting recording can be accessed here](#).

Minutes

1. Welcome—John Lovelace

July and September Meeting Minutes were approved by the HAB

HAB Membership

- Nomination forms for terms starting after the January 2021 meeting are requested to be submitted to John Lovelace by end of day. The HAB Executive Committee will review the nominations in December and January, and will recommend a slate to be voted on by the full HAB at the January meeting.
- HAB Leadership positions also need to be filled. In particular, Chair and Secretary. Christy Pietryga is currently serving as Vice Chair, which she is willing to do a second, 2-year term of, but if anyone else is also interested in that role they could consider it. As such, asking sitting HAB members, particularly those who do not represent provider agencies or a government entity, consider the opportunity to serve as Chair or Secretary.
- Distinct from the nomination of new members, the HAB Executive Committee has approved the appointment of Stuart Fisk to the HAB. Stuart will finish the remaining 2 years of Annette Fetchko's term, since Annette moved from AHN to Bethlehem Haven. Stuart is Director of Strategy, Center for Inclusion Health; Principal Investigator, Ryan White Grant/Positive Health Clinic; Department of Medicine, Allegheny Health Network

Annual Governance Charter Review Period

- The CoC Governance Charter is also reviewed annually. A public comment period was open this month to collect any suggested revisions. No comments were received but wanted to open this opportunity to comment. The HAB Executive Committee will review in December and January, and any revisions will be shared for public comment in January. The HAB will then vote on the Charter at the January meeting.

¹ (P) indicates HAB members who were present for the meeting.

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2. IO Updates—Cynthia Shields

- On the day of the meeting, the 200th person was being served at the Safe Haven shelter; the shelter has mostly served individuals from the homelessness system, but also first responders and others who have needed isolation or quarantine space.
- The Winter Shelter is up and running, with adaptations in response to COVID, including:
 - Smithfield Street Church capacity has been reduced, so women are staying at Shepherds Heart and McKeesport Shelter remained open as a winter space
 - Surveillance testing at Smithfield St Church and all results were negative
 - Mercy team doing symptom checks
 - ACCESS is helping with transportation between Winter Shelter and Safe Haven
- As part of the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP), Allegheny County was selected to be part of a cohort to receive technical assistance, with support from the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE). In addition, DHS and AIU have been partnering around cross-system partnership strategies outlined in the CoC's YHDP Coordinated Community Plan (CCP). The week of November 17th, DHS, NCHE and AIU held a virtual convening around transition age youth, including a youth voice panel, cross-system discussion, and review of the referral systems to new YHDP programs. The 2-day meeting had 90 participants the first day and 50 participants the second, and in addition to robust system discussions there were several immediate service connections made.
- Regarding YHDP, the new YHDP programs will be starting, including a new mobile case management service for youth, a new RRH program for youth and the CoC's first Host Homes program.
- For the past several months, DHS has been working with the County Health Department, FQHC and shelters around access to high quality, continuous health care at the shelters. With these partnerships, the linkage between shelters and FQHC has been made and the next step is installing telehealth workstation on wheels at each shelter so that shelter residents can connect to FQHC staff on site. The telehealth workstations are loaded with the FQHC platforms, but the ability to connect other health systems platforms will be explored.
- Flu shots have been administered at shelters
- The County Rent Relief program was still running, and at the time of the meeting \$5.08 million had been paid out to assist 1,500 clients. A little over 500 applications were in the queue, waiting to pay out before the December deadline.
- Administrative Updates:
 - A series of waivers from HUD that allowed for flexibility in the provision of service delivery, including allowing for virtual case management, flexibility with paperwork and inspection processes, is set to run out.
 - HUD conducted fiscal monitoring and has asked the CoC to implement activity-based timesheets for providers to submit with the monthly invoices, so DHS will be coordinating with providers around this update.
 - There has not been any guidance on the annual NOFA, but preliminary guidance recently came out regarding the annual PIT count what DHS is reviewing now.

3. Committee Updates

CoC Analysis and Planning Committee—Pete Giacalone

- The current Performance Measures Report, with data through September 30, 2020, is posted on the DHS website.
- The Committee has been reviewing data for people dying while placed in permanent housing. The purpose of this review is to explore what might be happening around these deaths and if different supports need to be considered.
- The Committee has also been reviewing and discussing updates on the Winter Shelter, Warming Centers and NOFA planning.

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Communication and Education Committee—Jennifer McCurry

Jennifer McCurry reported that with the HAB's approval of the new website proposal, the Committee is in the early phases of collaborating with DHS on website design and development, and is exploring collaborating with the other Committees to identify website content and outreach plans. The first Committee they are connecting with is the HOCC.

- It was suggested that the Committee also connect with the Analysis and Planning Committee to highlight Performance Measure successes
- Additionally, it was suggested that accomplishments related to the Strategic Plan be also be highlighted

Homeless Outreach Coordination Committee (HOCC)—Laura Drogowski

Laura Drogowski shared that the HOCC is continuing to explore the best meeting schedule and approach to accommodate partners doing street outreach work, including seeking to balance front line staff experience input and leadership planning input. In October, the Committee meeting included representatives from the Health Department to talk to staff about how things have been going well and what to anticipate with winter approaching. In addition to questions about COVID rates, the discussion included mental and behavioral health challenges, as well as COVID testing plans.

Provider Committee—LeaEtta Rhodes

The Provider Committee elected their new Provider Representative, Diana Reichenbach, Director of Supportive Housing at Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania, who will be starting her term along with the new membership slate after the January 2021 meeting. Over the past few months, the Provider Committee meetings have included speakers and resources around LIHEAP and safety, including establishing partnerships with local police. In December the Health Department is scheduled to attend.

4. Housing Mobility in Allegheny County—Colleen Cain, Nicholas Carter

Please see Appendix A for the slides presented on Housing Mobility in Allegheny County.

5. Eviction Cases in Allegheny County—Jane Downing, Michael Yonas

Please see Appendix B for the slides presented on Eviction Cases in Allegheny County.

6. Public Comment

- No comments.

Next CoC Meeting

January 26, 2021 from 10:00am to 12:00pm
Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Appendix A

**Segregated Moving Patterns among HCV
and RRH Families in Allegheny County and
our Mobility Counseling Intervention**

Presentation to CoC/HAB

November 24, 2020

**Presentation will answer the following
questions:**

- 1) Why do we need an intervention to help families move to low-poverty, opportunity rich areas?
- 2) What is mobility counseling and how does it reduce barriers for families who want to move to low-poverty, opportunity rich areas?
- 3) Where are we at regarding implementing and studying a mobility counseling program in Allegheny County?

Introduction: Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Rapid Rehousing (RRH) Programs

- HCV: eligibility based on income, long-term rental subsidy, and percent of rent paid by tenant is generally the same for participants
 - 30,000 annual participants on average in Allegheny County
 - 80% Black, 85% female
 - about 2/3rds of households have children (per those with 2017 move-in dates)
- RRH: housing first approach for street or shelter homeless individuals, rental subsidy tapers down over maximum period of two years and rent paid by participants varies
 - 900 annual participants on average in Allegheny County
 - 61% Black, 60% female
 - 2/5ths of households have kids (per those with 2017 move-in dates)
- Despite key differences, both programs:
 - Provide rental subsidy assistance for eligible households
 - Use private landlords, who must agree to rent to participants
 - Allow geographic mobility

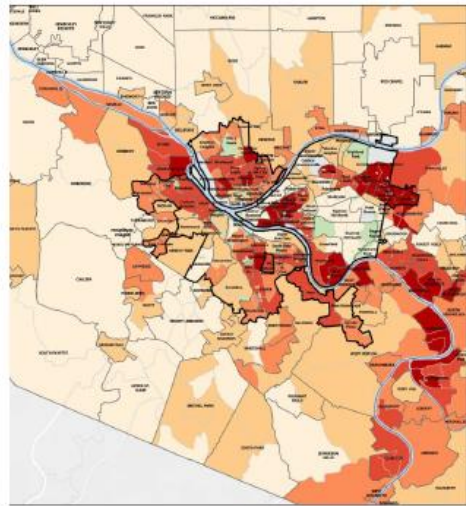
Why is Geographic Mobility Important?

HCV goals:

- stabilizing low-income families through rental assistance
- promoting geographic choice to combat concentration of poverty

Place matters and place matters because race matters:

- Moves to low poverty neighborhoods have a significant positive effect on children's long-term outcomes regarding income, college attendance and health ^[1]
- White versus Black neighborhoods tend to be different in conditions and opportunity because of discriminatory housing and lending policies, exclusionary zoning, White flight, urban renewal, and the disparate impact of deindustrialization on Black communities ^{[2] [3] [4]}



Census Tracts by Need 2014-2018 Estimates

- Very Low Need
- Low Need
- Moderate Need
- High Need
- Extreme Need
- Pittsburgh City Boundary
- Allegheny County Municipalities
- Pittsburgh Neighborhoods
- Pittsburgh Parks
- No data or did not meet conditions

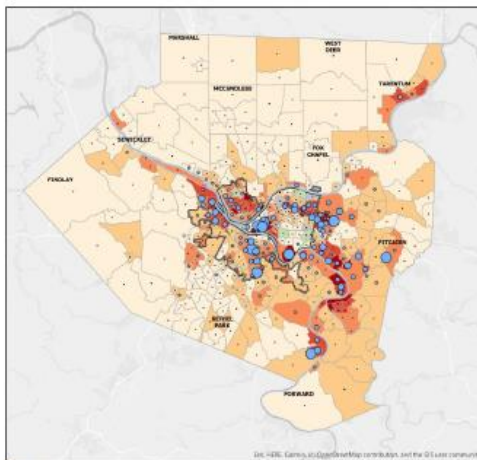
HCV and RRH Analysis: Moving to Opportunity or Disadvantage? ^[5]

Primary research questions:

1. What sort of census tracts do households in Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program tend to move to?
2. Are there disparities in moving patterns between certain groups?
3. Do these moving patterns and disparities persist over time?

To answer, geospatially analyzed moving patterns for households in the RRH and HCV programs in 2010 and 2017.

- Sorted census tracts into five levels of need/disadvantage using method similar to DHS's prior mapping of community need



Level of Concentrated Disadvantage

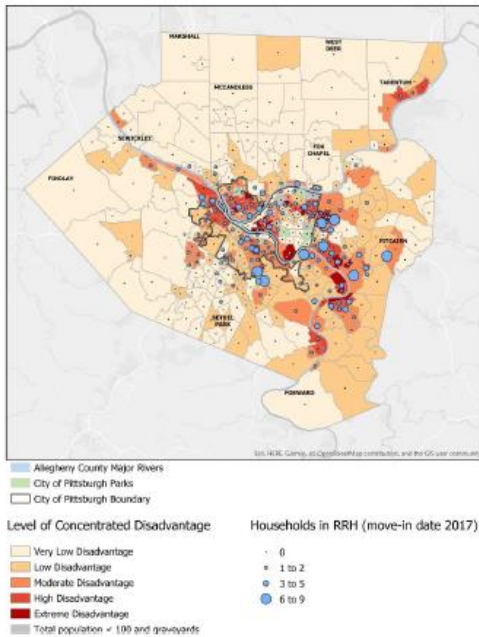
- Very Low Disadvantage
- Low Disadvantage
- Moderate Disadvantage
- High Disadvantage
- Extreme Disadvantage
- Total population < 100 and are over 65

Households in HCVP (move-in date 2017)

- 0 to 4
- 5 to 12
- 13 to 24
- 25 to 42
- 43 to 61

Findings: Majority of HCV Households Highly Segregated Overall and by Race (n = 2,429, 2017 move-in date)

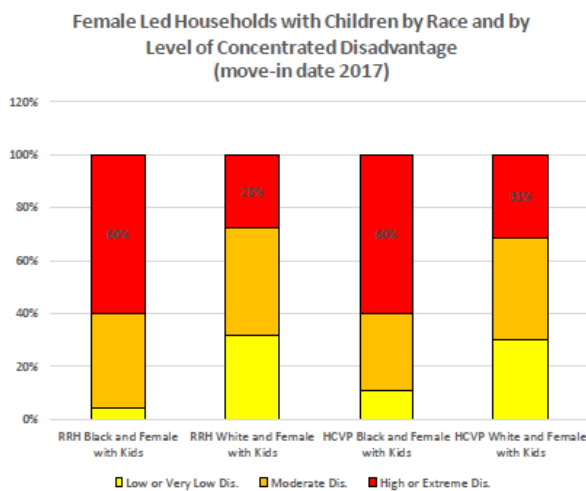
- 54% of total households moved to highly or extremely disadvantaged tracts
- Only 17% moved to opportunity tracts (low or very low disadvantage)
- 60% of Black households moved to highly or extremely disadvantaged tracts vs. 29% of White households



Findings: RRH Households Highly Segregated Overall and by Race (n = 295, 2017 move-in date)

- 41% of total households moved to highly or extremely disadvantaged tracts
- Only 25% moved to opportunity tracts (low or very low disadvantage)
- 50% of Black households moved to highly or extremely disadvantaged tracts vs. 23% of White households

Race is Most Statistically Important Factor Regarding Where People Move



Black and female headed households with kids were twice as likely as White and female households with kids to move to highly or extremely disadvantaged tracts in both programs.

One Solution: Mobility counseling coupled with administrative policy changes

- Mobility Counseling includes:
 - Pre-move assistance
 - Housing search assistance
 - Landlord engagement and recruitment
 - Financial assistance
 - Post-move supports
- Changes to public housing authorities' administrative policies regarding payment standard methods, portability and inspection timelines

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A Both/And Approach

Helping families move to low-poverty neighborhoods is one method to reduce concentrated poverty and increase social mobility but should not replace place-based or other people-based anti-poverty efforts.

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Mobility Counseling: Promising Evidence

- **Seattle-King County:**
 - HCV households who received mobility counseling were 40% more likely to move to opportunity tracts than those in control group ^[6]
 - Inability to move to low-poverty areas primarily result of barriers, not preference
- **Baltimore:**
 - Pre- and post-mobility counseling improved retention in high-opportunity areas ^[7]

Allegheny County Housing Mobility Program

- **Program Partners:**
 - Allegheny County Dept. of Human Services (management/coordination, data analysis, data tool development, fundraising)
 - City and County housing authorities (voucher admin, enrollment)
 - Contracted provider (TBD) (pre- and post-move services, landlord recruitment)
- **Technical Assistance:**
 - Opportunity Insights of Harvard University
 - Mobility Works
 - Dr. Anita Zuberi, Duquesne University
- **Funding:**
 - Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (awarded \$300K for year one)
 - The Pittsburgh Foundation (awarded \$75K for year one)
 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (currently applying)
- **Priority Population:** HCV families with children under 13

Evaluation: Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)

- Questions:
 - Is there a significant difference in moving patterns between voucher holders with children who receive mobility services and those who do not? Are there discrepancies in moves to opportunity by race?
- Treatment group will receive mobility counseling services; control group will receive standard voucher services
- Study participation and decision to move = voluntary
- HUD approach vs. “local” approach:
 - Sample size of nearly 2000 over 6 years vs. 400 over 2 years

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Evaluation: Qualitative Methods

- Questions:
 - What are the experiences of Black versus White voucher families who move to opportunity-rich areas and how can the program best support their transition?
 - Which incentives tend to bring landlords in areas of high opportunity into the program and how can the program retain participating landlords over time?

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What We Hope to See

- Reduced barriers to high-opportunity areas for HCV families and more families with children moving to those areas
- Neighborhood satisfaction and persistence for those who move to high-opportunity areas
- Higher lease-up rates for the HCV program, as more landlords are recruited and as families receive personalized housing search assistance

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References

- [1] Raj Chetty, Nathaniel Hendren, & Lawrence Katz. 2015. "The Effects of Exposure to Better Neighborhoods on Children: New Evidence from the Moving to Opportunity Experiment." The National Bureau of Economic Research
Greg Duncan & Anita Zuberi. 2006. "Mobility Lessons from Gautreaux and Moving to Opportunity." Northwestern Journal of Law & Social Policy
- [2] William Julius Wilson. 2012. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- [3] Richard Rothstein. 2018. *The Color of Law*. NYC: Liveright Publishing Corp.
- [4] Jessica Trounstein. 2018. *Segregation by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [5] Nicholas Cotter. 2020. *Moving to Opportunity or Disadvantage?* Allegheny County Analytics
- [6] Peter Bergman, Raj Chetty, Stefanie Deluca, Nathaniel Hendren, Lawrence Katz, & Christopher Palmer. 2019. "Creating Moves to Opportunity: Experimental Evidence on Barriers to Neighborhood Choice"
- [7] Jennifer Darrah & Stefanie Deluca. 2014. "Living Here Has Changed My Whole Perspective: How Escaping Inner-City Poverty Shapes Housing and Neighborhood Choice." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*

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Questions?

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Colleen Cain, PhD, Allegheny County DHS

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Appendix B

Eviction Update

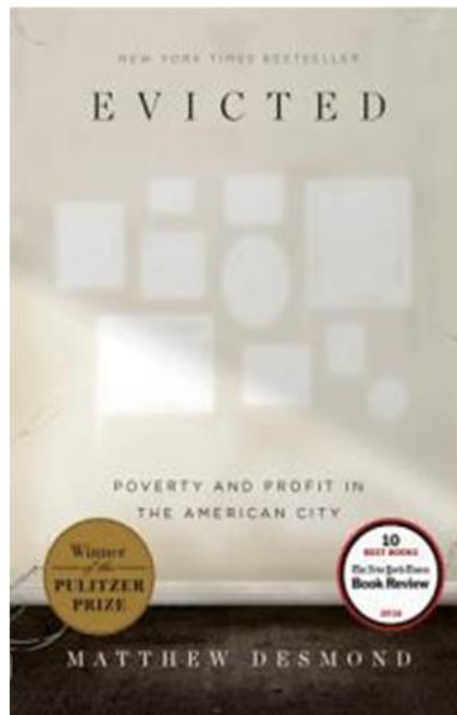
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Director of Research and Special Initiatives



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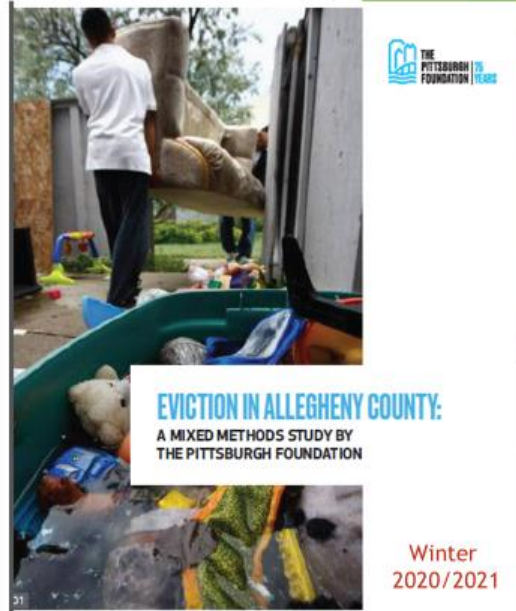


Eviction Research - Process and Report

- ▶ **QUANTITATIVE Research**
 - ▶ Eviction and court-related data from 2012-2019

- ▶ **QUALITATIVE Research**
 - ▶ Tenants and Landlords
 - ▶ Housing Authorities

- ▶ **FINAL REPORT**
 - ▶ **Goal:** Combine data with the lived experience of the people closest to the problem –to illuminate the systems and policies that affect individuals’ lives and to inform how providers, advocates, the courts and foundations respond.
 - ▶ Findings from both phases and recommendations

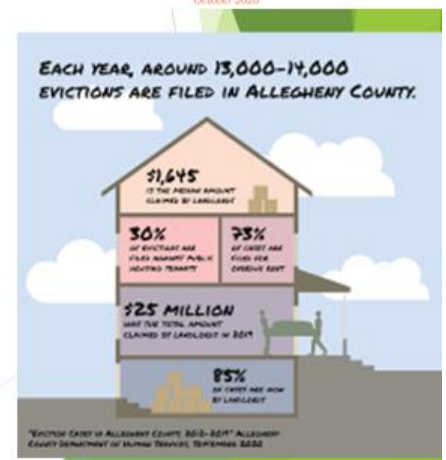
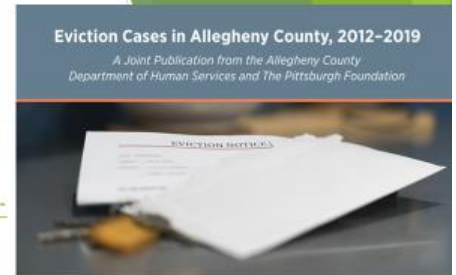


EVICTON - Quantitative Research

- ▶ **DHS Eviction Brief** - October 2020 (Rachel Rue, Policy Analyst, DHS)
https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/20-ACDHS-19-Eviction_v5.pdf

Summary:

- ▶ 13,000 to 14,000 residential eviction cases are filed each year in Allegheny County.
- ▶ In 2019, the average amount claimed by landlords was \$2,029.
 - ▶ Claims increased 35% from 2012-2019
- ▶ A disproportionate number of cases are filed against low-income tenants living in publicly subsidized housing.
- ▶ Fewer than 1% of tenants have attorneys in landlord-tenant cases.



EVICTION: Reasons

LANDLORDS:

- ▶ Accusations of greed and cold-heartedness are largely unfair. *“They look at us as the villain. We’re not the villain,”* one landlord shared. *“We’re the guys who are giving you the property. We’re the guys hanging in there with [tenants’] low income and trying to make it work and give decent housing.”*
- ▶ Several landlords described their efforts to work with struggling tenants while also paying bills of their own: mortgages, maintenance costs, taxes, leasing fees and more. *“I don’t believe there’s any landlord out there that’s snickering, laughing, saying, ‘I love this’”*
- ▶ Landlords also described their challenges with navigating the Housing Choice Voucher program, the courts system and eviction process.
 - ▶ *“The law is totally against our side,”* said one. *“Our tenants just decide not to pay, and I have no backing,”* said another. *“I try my best to help them, but the court system is not on our side as landlords.”*
- ▶ Others shared that it is business, said one landlord, *“I’m not your mother. I’m not your nanny. I’m not your best friend. I’m your landlord. I’m going to provide you with good, clean housing and I’m going to provide maintenance and I’m going to work with you the best I can.”*

EVICTION: Recommendations

- ▶ **Recommendation # 1: Work with Partners to Create a Coordinated Eviction Prevention/Diversion Program in Allegheny County.**
 - ▶ Rental assistance, mediation, legal representation, education and resource access.
- ▶ **Recommendation #2: Increase the Supply of Affordable Housing Units.**
- ▶ **Recommendation #3: Revise/Evaluate/Revisit Court Policies and Procedures.**
- ▶ **Recommendation #4: Reform Public Housing Administrative Processes and Procedures, including the Housing Choice Voucher Program.**
- ▶ **Recommendation #5: Advocate for Policy and Legislative Changes.**

- ▶ Eviction denies basic rights to the very people who've been denied them in the first place.
 - ▶ Low-income tenants and their families *already* face higher rates of social, economic and environmental stress, preventable illness, and other hardships that poverty creates.
 - ▶ Housing insecurity compounds and amplifies the impact of these social, emotional and economic problems on individuals, families and communities.



EVICTON IS A LEGAL PROCESS

SEVEN STAGES of EVICTION

The Eviction Process in Western Pennsylvania

This guide provides a general walk-through of how a Tenant can be removed from their private rental home through a court eviction process. This provides a basic case scenario for the Tenant, in which they are not able to stop the eviction at any of the phases.

It does not cover all situations, including:
 - if the Tenant is in public housing (not private);
 - if the Tenant and Landlord work out a settlement or use a diversion program, to end the case;
 - if the Tenant is able to stop the process by filing for insolvency (i.e., declaring bankruptcy), or successfully defending themselves in court.



1. Problem
 The Tenant violates the lease, or the Landlord notices an act which may result in the Tenant being evicted from the property. If they don't immediately resolve the issue, the Landlord may file a lawsuit to end the lease & remove the Tenant.



2. Notice
 The Landlord gives a notice warning of a possible eviction. The Tenant knows the Tenant is evicted. They can stop the eviction process by paying the amount owed, or they can move to court. If they don't move to court, the Landlord can file a lawsuit to end the lease & remove the Tenant.



3. Lawsuit
 The Landlord files a lawsuit against the Tenant. If the Tenant does not show up to court, or if the Tenant's attorney is not able to file the lawsuit, the Landlord can win the lawsuit. They must then file the lawsuit with the court for a judgment. The Tenant can then file for insolvency to stop the eviction.



4. Hearing
 The Court holds a hearing to make a judgment on the case. The Tenant can show up to court with their own attorney, or they can hire an attorney. The Magistrate will rule on the case. The Tenant can then file for insolvency to stop the eviction.



5. Order
 The Court may rule that the Landlord can evict the Tenant. The Magistrate can also order the Tenant to pay the amount owed. If they don't, they can file for insolvency. The Landlord can then file a lawsuit to end the lease & remove the Tenant.



6. Set-Out
 The Sheriff physically removes the Tenant from the property. If the Tenant has not paid the amount owed, the Sheriff can file a lawsuit to end the lease & remove the Tenant.



7. Money
 The Landlord tries to recover money from the Tenant. If the court ruled that the Tenant owes the Landlord money, the Landlord can file a lawsuit to end the lease & remove the Tenant.



EVICTION PREVENTION PROGRAMS

- ▶ LANDLORD/TENANT EDUCATION
 - ▶ TOWN HALL MEETINGS WITH MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT JUDGES
 - ▶ LANDLORD/TENANT HANDBOOK
 - ▶ DHS LANDLORD WORKING GROUP
- ▶ HOUSING
 - ▶ DHS HOUSING NAVIGATION UNIT
 - ▶ DHS LANDLORD MITIGATION FUND
- ▶ COURTS
 - ▶ MDJ "SLATE CARDS" - LEGAL, HOUSING, RENTAL ASSISTANCE INFORMATION
 - ▶ HOUSING COURT WITH HELP DESK - APPEALS
 - ▶ **DISTRIBUTION OF CARES RENT RELIEF PROGRAM INFORMATION**

CARES ACT EVICTION PREVENTION PROGRAMS

- ▶ **JUST MEDIATION PITTSBURGH**
- ▶ Pre-Eviction Filing - ACTION Housing; Brandywine; TREK; HACP
- ▶ Training Community Mediators
- ▶ **RESOURCE NAVIGATORS**
- ▶ Community Justice Project; Hill District Consensus Group; Pittsburgh Hispanic Development Corporation
- ▶ **LEGAL ASSISTANCE**
- ▶ Neighborhood Legal Services
- ▶ **HOUSING COURT**
- ▶ Emergency Rental Assistance for Appeals

EVICTION PREVENTION PROGRAMS - RENTAL ASSISTANCE

- ▶ **CITY OF PITTSBURGH**
- ▶ **\$2 million CDBG-COVID and 2020/21 CDBG**
- ▶ **\$2 million URA -Housing Stabilization Program (HOF)**
- ▶ **\$400,000 Emergency Action Fund- Common Pleas Housing Court**
- ▶ **CITY AND COUNTY**
- ▶ **\$10 million ESG COVID & 2020/21 ESG (portion)**
- ▶ **ALLEGHENY COUNTY CARES RENT RELIEF PROGRAM**
 - ▶ **\$22.5 MILLION - PENNSYLVANIA HOUSING & FINANCE AGENCY**
 - ▶ **\$14 MILLION - ALLEGHENY COUNTY CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND**

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO PREVENT AN EVICTION?



QUESTIONS?