Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

CoC Bi-Monthly Meeting
January 31, 2023; 10:00AM to 12:00PM
Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting *and*
1 Smithfield St, Pittsburgh, 15222 (HSB, Lower Level)

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 Members[1]

Nicole Anderson	Devon Goetze	Gale Schwartz (P)
Breanna Benjamin (P)	Andy Halfhill (P)	Katie Stohlberg (P)
Damian Butler-Buccilli (P)	Brian Knight	Jeffrey Upson
Laura Drogowski	Dan Palka	Kyona White
Chase Archer Evans (P)	Christy Pietryga (P)	Bethany Wingerson (P)
Melissa Ferraro (P)	Raymond Prushnok (P)	Michael Yonas (P)
Pete Giacalone (P)	Susie Puskar (P)	

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

Minutes

- **Welcome—Gale Schwartz**
  Gale Schwartz welcomed all HAB members and CoC participants. Ms. Schwartz noted that the meeting would begin with the annual overview of the CoC, followed by a few procedural items for HAB vote. While one of the areas for vote is the new membership slate, there are two HAB members who have been appointed since the last meeting. Raymond (Ray) Prushnok is the Executive Director of UPMC's Center for Social Impact. Ray will be serving the remaining 2 years of Kevin Progar's term, as Kevin left UPMC at the end of 2022. Melissa Ferraro is the CEO of Sister's Place, and will be serving the remaining year of Diana Reichenbach's term.

- **Allegheny County Continuum of Care (CoC) Overview**
  The CoC Overview is updated and provided every year to give foundational context on the homelessness system, Allegheny County CoC and the Homeless Advisory Board (HAB). The full slides are provided in Appendix A, along with corresponding notes, comments and questions from the meeting.

- **Current HAB Votes—Gale Schwartz**
  November Meeting Minutes
  There has been a delay with the November meeting minutes and they will be made available to the HAB and full CoC when completed.

  Allegheny County CoC Governance Charter
  The Charter is reviewed and approved annually. While we can make necessary changes to the Charter at any time, with a HAB vote, this annual review builds in a recurring opportunity to check

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

in on it.

No revisions from last year's version were identified.

HAB member Chase Archer Evans noted that the submitted Plan did not include any language around decriminalizing homelessness and spoke to repeated finding that moving people around, whether as sweeps or as not allowing people to stay in locations, does not help.

The Allegheny County CoC Governance Charter was approved with all participating HAB members voting in favor.

Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures
The Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures are reviewed and approved annually. The updated version that was shared includes the following two substantive revisions:
- o Accessing Coordinated Entry—Introduction—Page 6: Have added foundational expectations when accessing Coordinated Entry
- o Allegheny County Homeless Continuum of Care—Additional Considerations for Eligibility—Page 22: for clarity and ease of documentation purposes, this page has been added, but does not reflect a change in any policies or procedures

The Allegheny County CoC Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures was approved, with one participating HAB member voting against, and the remaining participating HAB members voting in favor.

HAB Membership
Each Fall, the CoC opens a nomination period to seek new HAB members. Nominations are received and the Executive Committee proposes a slate of members to be voted on by the full HAB at the January meeting. The shared document puts forward the slate being recommended by the Executive Committee. Additionally, the HAB Executive is recommending Ray Prushnok to serve as Vice Chair. Christy has dutifully served in this role for a number of years, and we thank her for her contributions.

The HAB Membership Slate and appointment of Ray Prushnok as Vice Chair was approved, with one participating HAB member abstaining from the vote, and the remaining participating HAB members voting in favor.

- **Consortium of Recognizing Experience (CORE)—Chare Archer Evans**
  Chase Archer Evans addressed the HAB and meeting participants regarding the decommissioning of the encampment near Stockton Avenue in December. Mr. Evans categorized the experience as a criminalization of homelessness and called on the decriminalization of homelessness as the most pressing issue of the CoC. In regards decommissioning of encampments specifically, Mr. Evans demanded the following:
  - o Every encampment closing be planned, presented, and voted on by the HAB so that everyone knows the details of the closure
  - o Presented and agreed upon plans must be inclusive of representatives from every department that will be involved in the closure
  - o Plans must detail what equipment is used and processes to be carried out
  - o Plans must include all services that be offered and processes for service refusal
  - o Plans must detail what will be done with the space after the closure
  - o The City, County and HAB must make a consistent effort to present all information to all residents of the encampment

Gale Schwartz stated that a meeting with leadership would be made to discuss encampment decommissioning. There would also be action taken to reconvene the Homeless Outreach Coordinating Committee (HOCC).

On behalf of Michael Yonas, Ms. Schwartz made the following statement regarding future planning for CORE: *I would though like to share with the HAB our efforts in 2022 to convene CORE, and the need to include ALL of the HAB Committee's in outreach and community engagement efforts…and to implement an approach that is authentically community engaged and supported. From this, I'd like to ask for a volunteer from each of the other HAB Committees to meet with us in the coming month to discuss and develop a plan for community outreach and engagement for 2023, to support and strengthen the impact of the CoC, and to also inform community-informed changes, and sustainable changes to be reflected in the next 2024 HUD COC application.*

- ***All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*—Hilary Scherer**
  At the end of 2022, All In was released as a federal blueprint to prevent and end homelessness. This multi-year, interagency federal plan sets a national goal to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness by 25% by January 2025. The challenges and opportunities cited in the plans development echo strongly the experiences and discussions that have been raised in the Allegheny County CoC. The plan is organized around 3 foundational pillars, speaking to how to do the work of preventing and ending homelessness, and 3 solution pillars, speaking to the strategies and solutions needed. Across these 6 pillars are 30 strategies and 180 actions to be taken. While established from a federal perspective, many of the strategies and actions have relevant applicability at the local level. Implementation documents will be developed over the coming years and will be reviewed for CoC planning.

- **Public Comments/Announcements**
  Housing Alliance is hosting a webinar, tomorrow, Wednesday, February 1st, 2-3pm, with Joe Savage, Senior Regional Advisor, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) about the Plan. More information and registration for that webinar is here: https://housingalliancepa.org/upcoming-events/

Next CoC Meeting
March 28, 2023 from 10:00am to 12:00pm
Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting *and*
1 Smithfield St, Pittsburgh, 15222 (HSB, Lower Level)

Appendix A
Allegheny County CoC Overview Slides

Allegheny County Continuum of Care Overview

January 2023

Overview Agenda

Framing the homelessness response system

- Service array
- System capacity
- Individuals served
- System performance

Allegheny County Continuum of Care

- What is the CoC
- Roles and responsibilities
- Work in practice

Homelessness Response System

Homelessness System Services

- **Homeless Prevention** programs assist people at imminent risk of losing their housing by assisting with past due rent, utility bills or mortgage payments. It can also help address eviction through access to mediation or legal assistance.

- **Street Outreach** programs reach out to unsheltered individuals and families, meet them where they are, and offer care and help with basic needs, while also connecting them to emergency shelter, housing and critical services.

- **Emergency Shelter** programs, located throughout the county, provide temporary refuge for those experiencing homelessness. The goal is to have stays of 30 days or less.

- **Bridge Housing** programs offer shelter and supportive services to individuals and families for approximately three to 12 months, with the goal of returning clients to the most self-sufficient situation possible. PennFree Bridge Housing is the same but has a focus on drug, alcohol, or dual addiction or dependency issues.

- **Rapid Re-Housing** programs help people move from homelessness to permanent housing in the community through housing search assistance, rental assistance, and service coordination. The rental assistance can last between 1 and 24 months with a goal of 9-12 months.

- **Supportive Housing** programs are available for homeless individuals living with disabilities, for families with a family member living with a disability, and individuals who would otherwise be experiencing unsheltered homelessness (chronic street homeless). Households may remain as long as it takes to assist them in achieving their goals of independent housing. Each program offers supportive services to help participants become more independent.

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System Capacity

Program Type	# Active Projects	# Units HH w/children	#Beds HH w/o children
Emergency Shelter (year-round)	23 (3 DV)	152 (344 beds)†	387
Emergency Shelter (winter/overflow)	3	0	198‡
Bridge Housing	11	4 (14 beds)	147
Rapid Rehousing*	25 (3 DV)	187 (526 beds)	359
Supportive Housing	26	392 (1108 beds)	687**

*includes ESG funded beds, which are calculated by use
† Includes 8 units (27 beds) from AVAC shelter that has not yet opened (expected to open in January 2023)
‡ 150 at Smithfield, 40 at 2AC, 8 at EECM
**Does not include ~350 HUD -VASH beds active in the county

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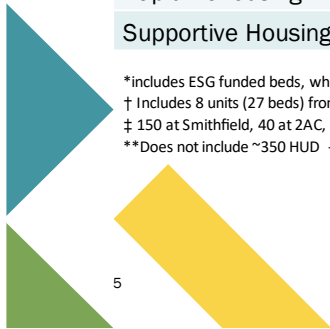
In 2017, when the CoC committed to Housing First, Transitional Housing units/beds were shifted to RRH and Supportive Housing. Since then the capacity of RRH and Supportive has remained relatively constant. That said, the CoC lost 2 programs that werent funded by HUD last year, but are looking to replace those units through other funding applications (State Medicaid funded PSH beds; expanded RRH and PSH in the most recent CoC Program application).

Emergency Shelter capacity was increased in November 2022 with the opening of Second Avenue Commons.

Served ~10,300 individuals in 2022*
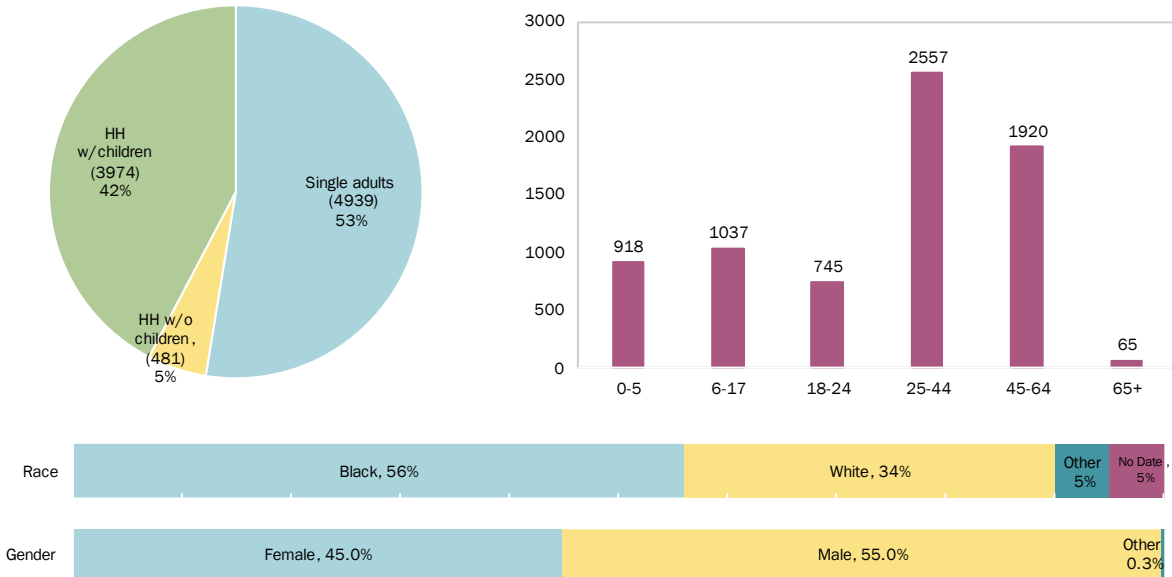
*This includes data from ~1000 clients in domestic violence programs, which is not included in the demographic breakdown.

In reviewing demographic information of individuals served, noting the racial disportortionality that is present. Whereas the County population is 13.5% Black, 56% f the individuals served in the homeless system ion 2022 were Black. This disportortionality is seen in national data as well.

One meeting participant noted surprise regarding the number of individuals served who were over the age of 65. While they did not expect it to make up a large portion of the homeless population, they did expect the share to be larger as they have seen a growing number of older adults in the system.

Homeless System Performance: Making Homelessness Rare

CoC Annual Point In Time (PIT)

	Total Count	Sheltered Count	Unsheltered Count

(Total Count: 2018: 783, 2019: 774, 2020: 887, 2021: 692, 2022: 880)
(Sheltered Count: 2018: 727, 2019: 726, 2020: 724, 2021: 627, 2022: 775)
(Unsheltered Count: 2018: 56, 2019: 48, 2020: 163, 2021: 65, 2022: 105)
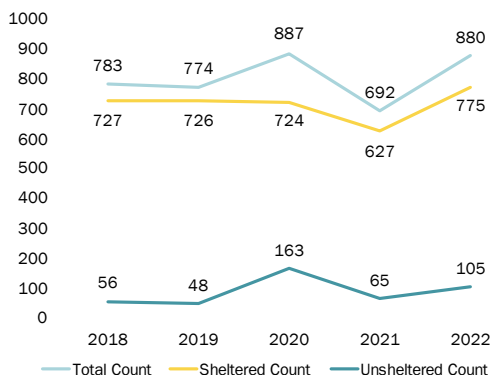
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Percent Served that are "Newly" Homeless

90% of those served in 2022 were accessing services in the CoC for the first time in 24 months

- Had dipped to 87% in 2020, but had been 88% for the 2 years before the pandemic

PIT is the data HUD uses to reflect homeless numbers—sheltered is inclusive of ES, SH, transitional and bridge programs, as those are places where people are inside, but not in a location they can remain (i.e., does not include the individuals housed in RRH and PSH programs)

The sheltered count shows a flat line, a dip in 2021 and then an increase last year (CY2022)
The dip in 2021 is consistent with what we have seen across most human services. Within the homelessness system there are also a number of relevant factors to contextualize the data with:

- Huge surge in availability of homeless prevention, particularly rental assistance, through pandemic funds. For example, with the Emergency Rental Assistance Program we paid out utility and or rent assistance to 3084 households served in ERAP in calendar year 2022; 18,903 households served since ERAP launch in March 2021
- Covid response measures impacted the space ES had to house to people. We saw a significant drop in the number of individuals served in ES in 2020—while we also saw reductions in the number of individuals served in RRH and PSH programs, it was not to the level we see for ES

One meeting participant recommended removing PIT data as a measure referenced, expressing a belief that the data lacks validity. They believe the unsheltered data is under-reported, while the sheltered data reflects a capacity marker. Other participants suggested that it was important to understand data definitions and limitations for all data points used, but that the data presented was meaningful to planning.

Homeless System Performance: Making Homelessness Brief

Length of Time (days) in Shelter
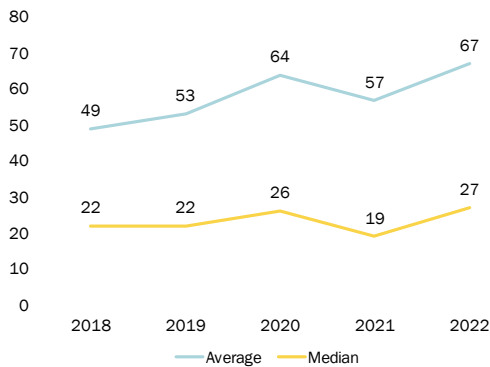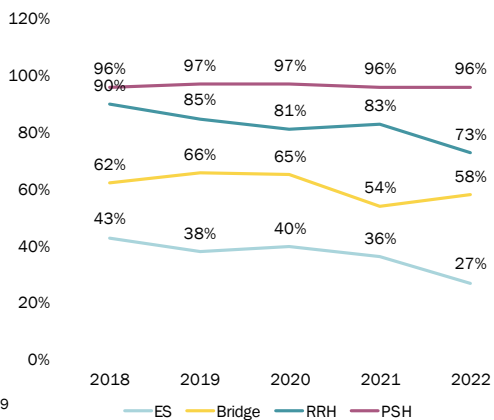

Housing Flow Trends

- RRH: Days from enrollment to move -in had been decreasing from 2018 (35 days) to 2020 (28 days), but we've seen an increase since then —32 days in 2022.

- Average LOT in RRH had been steadily increasing from 2018 (335 days) to 2021 (453) days. But saw a significant reduction in 2022 (363 days)

- Number of exits from PSH had significantly reduced in 2020 and 2021, but we saw a return to pre - pandemic numbers in 2022 (510)

Length of Time in Shelter has seen an upward trend overall, believed to be connected to the lack of flow into housing programs, as we saw increases in the time in those programs and reductions in exits from Supportive Housing. Further, median time is consistently below the average, speaking to the impact of long stayers in the shelter system.

Regarding System Flow: The trend in days to move-in for RRH is a positive one, with people getting housed quickly after program enrollment. The increases we were seeing in average LOT in RRH and the decrease in exits from PSH are important system considerations because they reduce the optimization of impact of our services in terms of number of people who can be served.

Homeless System Performance: Making Homelessness Non-Recurring

Percent of Exits to Permanent Destinations

- 2018: ES 43%, Bridge 62%, RRH 90%, PSH 96%
- 2019: ES 38%, Bridge 66%, RRH 85%, PSH 97%
- 2020: ES 40%, Bridge 65%, RRH 81%, PSH 97%
- 2021: ES 36%, Bridge 54%, RRH 83%, PSH 96%
- 2022: ES 27%, Bridge 58%, RRH 73%, PSH 96%

Legend: ES, Bridge, RRH, PSH

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Percent of Exits to Permanent Destinations that return within 24 months

- Of clients who exited programs between 2016-2020 to HUD-defined "permanent housing destinations" the percentage who began new enrollments in homelessness programs within 24 months of their exit ranged from a low of 15.7% in 2016 to a high of 20.7% in 2017.

Unsheltered Homelessness

- Quantifying the number of people living unsheltered is challenging
- Our CoC has several professional street outreach teams that meet weekly for coordination and case conferencing
- Data sources used to estimate unsheltered population:
  - Point in Time (PIT) Count (generally annual, sometimes also in summer)
  - HMIS
  - Weekly Street Outreach Case Conferencing shared list
- Unsheltered homelessness seems to be more prevalent in summer than winter
  - Previous Summer PIT counts
  - Winter shelter programs traditionally open in November (~300 shelter beds added to system in November 2022)
- 2023 PIT count occurred on 1/24/23
- Street outreach case conferencing shared list currently identifies ~150 people currently engaged with street outreach teams that are typically living unsheltered, with predominant focus on downtown and adjacent locations
- Information sharing: DHS is developing a new public dashboard to provide daily sheltered and weekly unsheltered count information

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Allegheny County CoC
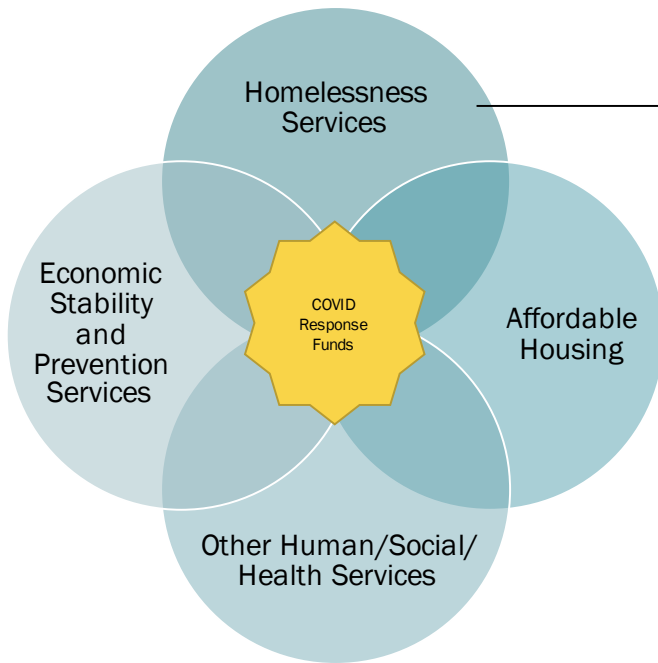
CoC Program– $23 million

HUD: PSH, RRH, YHDP, some HMIS, some CE

HAP – $6 million

State: Bridge housing, Case management, rental assistance, ES, Innovative Support housing

City and County ESG–$2.4 million

HUD: Street Outreach, ES, Prevention, some HMIS, some CE

Housing Stabilization Program (HSP)–$.5 million

URA: Rental and mortgage assistance

HOPWA– $1.2 million

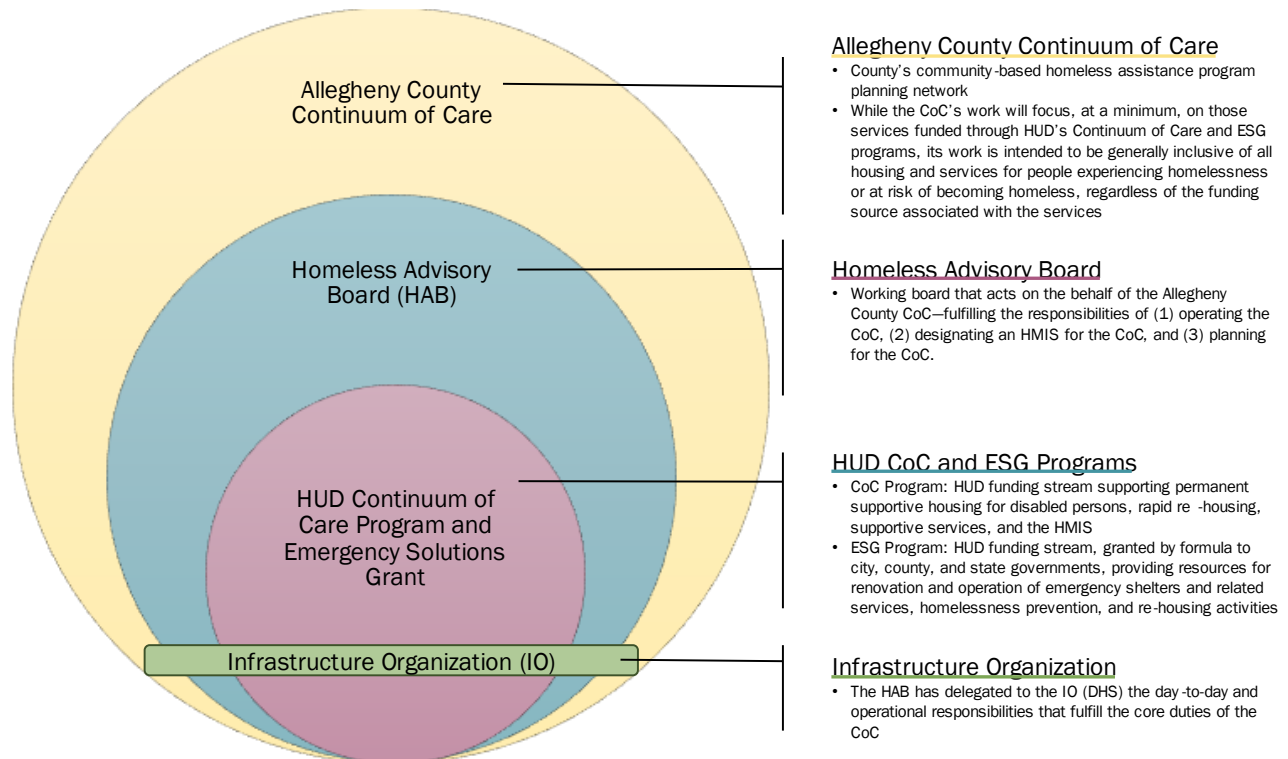HUD: persons with HIV/AIDS, rental assistance

VA – $6 million

Veterans: prevention, transitional, RRH, service grants

Foundations, Private Fundraising

Homelessness Services

Economic Stability and Prevention Services

COVID Response Funds

Affordable Housing

Other Human/Social/ Health Services

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

Allegheny County Continuum of Care
- County's community-based homeless assistance program planning network
- While the CoC's work will focus, at a minimum, on those services funded through HUD's Continuum of Care and ESG programs, its work is intended to be generally inclusive of all housing and services for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless, regardless of the funding source associated with the services

Homeless Advisory Board
- Working board that acts on the behalf of the Allegheny County CoC—fulfilling the responsibilities of (1) operating the CoC, (2) designating an HMIS for the CoC, and (3) planning for the CoC.

HUD CoC and ESG Programs
- CoC Program: HUD funding stream supporting permanent supportive housing for disabled persons, rapid re-housing, supportive services, and the HMIS
- ESG Program: HUD funding stream, granted by formula to city, county, and state governments, providing resources for renovation and operation of emergency shelters and related services, homelessness prevention, and re-housing activities

Infrastructure Organization
- The HAB has delegated to the IO (DHS) the day-to-day and operational responsibilities that fulfill the core duties of the CoC

HUD CoC and ESG Program requirements guide the CoC's and HAB's responsibility to ensure the essential homeless services (i.e., those cited on slide 4) are coordinated and operated effectively. Examples of these responsibility in practice include: ensuring the operation of a coordinated intake and assessment system, establishing and evaluating performance targets and outcomes for CoC and ESG Program service providers, review and approve any new CoC projects that become possible through strategic re-allocation of HUD funding or when new monies become available from HUD or other federal partners. Where this direct authority ends, strong partnerships continue and work to support coordinated engagement around planning and operating systems to meet the needs of Allegheny County residents. This is done in the context of recognizing that ending homelessness requires a community-wide, cross-sector response.

Homeless Advisory Board

- Responsible for planning, coordinating and operating a system in Allegheny County to meet the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness

- 21 members across stakeholder groups

- Committees are designated by the HAB to advise on the progression of CoC priorities

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HAB Directions

Past System Visioning

- Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness
- Housing First
- Prioritizing services to the most vulnerable
- Data-informed decision making
- Coordinated Entry

HUD CoC Program NOFO Decisions

- CoC Program Project Rankings
  - Performance Outcome Tool and Ranking Approach
  - Appeals Response
  - Final Ranking
- Reallocating funds from the lowest performing program to expand higher performing programs
- Special Notice of Funding Opportunity Plan: Serving Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness with Severe Service Needs

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Committees

CoC Analysis and Planning Committee
Provide ongoing analysis to support the planning of the CoC, at both the provider and system level

Homeless Outreach Coordinating Committee
Address the complex issues and challenges faced by people who are unsheltered

Communication and Education Committee
Develop and distribute messaging regarding the needs and experiences of people experiencing homelessness and the homelessness system, and facilitate avenues for community engagement

Provider Committee
Capture the experiences and perspectives of providers in order to inform CoC planning and processes

Executive Committee
Drive the strategic direction of the HAB and the Allegheny County CoC, based upon data, best practices/evidence-based practices and establishe priorities.

Comprised of HAB Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Committee HAB Chairs, and IO Representative.

Establish additional Ad Hoc Committees when necessary to carry out special initiatives.

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Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS)

- DHS is responsible for **providing and administering publicly funded human services** to County residents.
- Serves 200,000+ people each year. That's **1 of every 5 County residents**
- **$1 billion annual** budget
- Contracts with **340 human services providers**

Program Offices	Area Agency on Aging
	Behavioral Health
	Children, Youth & Families
	Community Services
	Developmental Supports
Support Offices	Administration
	Analytics, Technology & Planning
	Equity & Engagement

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Resources Links

- Allegheny County Analytics Webpage
  - Allegheny County Point-in-Time Count of People Experiencing Homelessness: Annual Reports and Dashboard
  - Clients Using Allegheny County Homelessness Programs: Interactive Dashboard
  - Allegheny County Analytics: Homelessness Reports
  - Allegheny Housing Assessment (AHA) Information

- Allegheny County CoC Webpage
  - Documents *(Governance Charter, Strategic Plan, HUD CoC Program NOFO Responses)*
  - Performance Management Plan and Quarterly Performance Reports