

# Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

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## **CoC Bi-Monthly Meeting**

January 30, 2024; 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<sup>1</sup>**

Nicole Anderson

Breanna Benjamin

Damian Butler-Buccilli (P)

Kwabena Danso-Ayesu (P)

Chase Archer Evans (P)

Melissa Ferraro

Andy Halfhill (P)

Shawlane Heffernan (P)

Matthew Grayson

Brian Knight (P)

Dave Lettrich (P)

Amy Plant (P)

Raymond Prushnok (P)

Susie Puskar (P)

Gale Schwartz

Katie Stohlberg (P)

Pam Turner

LaVerne Wagner

Michael Yonas (P)

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

### **Minutes**

- **Welcome—Ray Prushnok**

Ray Prushnok welcomed all HAB members and CoC participants. Mr. Prushnok 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 is one HAB member who has been appointed since the last meeting. Danielle Schnauber Jones has accepted an appointment to the HAB. Danielle will be serving for the 2 years remaining on the term vacated by Dan Palka. Danielle is a Nurse Practitioner with Operation Safety Net, before which she was an emergency department nurse. The HAB Executive is pleased to have this opportunity for Danielle to contribute her experience and expertise to the HAB and CoC.

***The November 2023 CoC/HAB Bi-Monthly Meeting Minutes were approved by HAB vote. No revisions were required, and all present HAB members voted in favor (HAB member Dave Lettrich arrived after this vote).***

- **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.

- **Allegheny County CoC Governance Charter—Ray Prushnok**

The Allegheny County CoC Governance Charter is reviewed, revised and approved annually. The HAB Executive has extended the period in which people can submit suggested revisions. The new

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<sup>1</sup> (P) indicates HAB members who were present for the meeting.

## Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

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deadline is Wednesday, February 14th. The form for submitting a revision was shared with the meeting materials, and completed forms should be emailed to Hilary Scherer. The HAB Executive has done a review of the Charter, and updates are being drafted for review and comment. A vote on these, and any additional revision recommendations received will be voted on at the March meeting.

Chase Archer Evans raised his request to update the CoC/HAB meeting schedule to be monthly. Rather than delaying the decision for the next meeting he ***made a motion to move to a monthly, rather than bi-monthly, meeting schedule. No HAB member seconded the motion***, and Mr. Evans expressed his frustration with the board and questioned the boards interest in making meaningful change. Mr. Prushnok and Michael Yonas each spoke to the ongoing evaluation of the HAB's, and fuller CoC's, processes and their effectiveness, citing that they did not see a change to the meeting schedule as the most affective next step. Rather, they recommended implementing more Committee reporting and discussion at the meeting first.

Mr. Prushnok raised a motion that was distributed with the meeting materials and recommends that the designation of the HAB being 15-21 members be removed (Appendix B). The recommended revision would enable the size of the HAB to be responsive to the appropriate representative composition rather than an arbitrary number. This is exemplified with the nominations received for the 2024 membership slate, and the opportunity for the HAB to expand representation from people with lived expertise, while maintaining representation from other critical partners. While the specific size qualifier would be removed, language regarding the composition of the HAB being guided by being an effective decision-making body that is made up of individuals representing an array of diverse sectors, stakeholder groups and organizations, and experiences, would remain.

***The motion to remove the designation of the HAB being specifically 15-21 members was approved by HAB vote. One HAB member abstained from the vote (Chase Archer Evans), and all other present members voted in favor.***

A CoC member asked if the Governance Charter included any reference to the diversity of the HAB and cited his disappointment in the nominee he put forward not being included in the slate of members to be voted on later in the meeting. It was explained that the Charter does speak to the selection proves for HAB membership will involve a review for “HAB stakeholder representation needs, conflicts of interest, nominee’s willingness and ability to meaningfully contribute to CoC mission, nominee’s commitment to the CoC as evidenced by attendance at CoC meetings and/or experience in the field, and considerations of diversity.” In regard to the citation of this particular nominee, there was consideration of the balance of homeless service providers represented on the HAB.

- **HAB Membership—Ray Prushnok**

Mr. Prushnok first thanked the HAB members whose term with the HAB would be concluding with this meeting: Nicole Anderson, Breanna Benjamin, Melissa Ferraro and Katie Stohlberg. He went on to remind meeting participants that 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 slate of members being recommended by the HAB Executive Committee was shared with the meeting materials (Appendix C). An unprecedented 16 nominations were received this year. Mr. Prushnok thanked everyone who put forward interest in serving on the HAB. The nominees were very strong, and all would bring meaningful experience to the work of the CoC. He expressed that for those who do not join the HAB,

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the HAB truly hopes they still participate in the CoC, via these meetings and the Committees.

Mr. Evans raised opposition to the inclusion of Lisa Frank on the slate and sought the inclusion of a different representative from the City of Pittsburgh. Amy Plant, Andy Halfhill and Mr. Prushnok each raised respectful disagreement with the objection. They applauded the overall engagement of the Gainey Administration and expressed gratitude for the personal involvement of Chief Frank, speaking highly of her key participation and collaboration. Mr. Yonas also expressed agreement with the latter HAB members, while also highlighting the importance of making authentic space for disagreement within discussions. He thanked Mr. Evans for his comments and continued commitment.

***The motion for the 2024 HAB Membership Slate was approved by HAB vote. Two HAB members abstained from the vote (Damian Butler-Buccilli and Andy Halfhill) and one HAB member voted against (Chase Archer Evans).***

- **IO Update—Andy Halfhill**

Mr. Halfhill provided an update from DHS. First, he shared that HUD had announced their funding decision for the FY23 CoC Program Competition (i.e., the annual application submitted by the CoC in 2023, for funding of projects beginning July 1, 2024), and the Allegheny County CoC was fully awarded. The CoC was awarded \$26,279,627, which is inclusive of all existing RRH and PSH and YHDP housing projects renewed at a higher level, one new expansion project based on reallocation of funds from a low-performing project, and the annual Coordinated Entry, HMIS, Planning and UFA project grants.

Mr. Halfhill went on to provide an overview of plans for the annual Point in Time (PIT) Count. He explained that the PIT provides a snapshot of how many people are experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness on a single night in January. The PIT is done annually as part of a HUD requirement for all CoCs, in an effort to understand the extent of homelessness and help to increase awareness. Allegheny CoC's previous PIT reports and data can be access on the Allegheny Analytics page (<https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/2023/05/23/point-in-time-count-of-people-experiencing-homelessness-annual-reports/>). Mr. Prushnok asked about capacity of outreach workers and volunteers for conducting the count in regard to levels as compared to previous years. Mr. Halfhill described it as comparable and highlighted that time is required after the count is conducted to de-duplicate the date.

Finally, Mr. Halfhill provided an update on Code Blue since the start of winter. He provided data on the number of people served at the Code Blue Shelter at Ammon for each night it has been open to date. The highest count for a single night was 75, which occurred on January 21, 2024, when another shelter program that normally has 20 beds, was closed. Otherwise, on nights when all other shelters were operational, the highest number of people served at Ammon was 51. The following questions and comments were shared regarding Code Blue:

- A CoC member asked if there are contingency plans should the capacity at Ammon be reached. Lise Frank, Chief Operating and Administrative Officer, City of Pittsburgh, reported contingency plans are in place.
- Dave Lettrich highlighted a few things have been implemented differently during this year's Code Blue, as compared to previous years when Code Blue was used. This year has included: Distribution of sub-zero sleeping bags; space for different gender identities; space for people to decompress; and some form of medical on site.
- Brian Knight asked to explore ways of assessing the need and level for winter shelter bed capacity, in addition to the utilization numbers of the Code Blue Shelter at Ammon. In

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particular, he highlighted a desire to assess if there was an impact on access with the new location and it not being open every night.

- HAB members noted that when the Code Blue Shelter at Ammon is not opened, the other shelter beds for individual adults are at or near capacity.

- **Public Comments/Announcements**

- Chase Archer Evans announced that he was resigning from the HAB. He stated that he does not believe the board is trying to help and that he does not believe it to be effective or meaningful, so he could not continue to put his name on it.
- Adrienne Walnoha announced the monthly meeting of the Housing Opportunity Fund Advisory Board and invited attendance to those meetings. Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month, at 2pm in the first floor conference room of the Dollar Bank Headquarters (20 Stanwix Street in Downtown Pittsburgh). Folks can attend in person, or online by visiting the HOF page of the URA website (<https://www.ura.org/pages/HOF>). If anyone wants to provide comments, they can reach out to Adrienne ([adrienne.walnoha@omicelo.com](mailto:adrienne.walnoha@omicelo.com)).

**Next CoC Meeting**

March 26, 2024 from 10:00am to 12:00pm  
1 Smithfield St, Pittsburgh, 15222 (HSB, Lower Level) *and*  
Microsoft Teams

Appendix A  
Allegheny County CoC Overview Slides



# Allegheny County Continuum of Care Overview

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January 2024


## Overview Agenda

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### 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

- **Coordinated Entry** ensures streamlined access to the CoC's homeless response system, providing fair and equal access to homelessness services by centralizing the referral process and prioritizing the most intensive services to those most at risk.
- **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 ReHousing** 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 912 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.

# System Capacity for Shelter, Bridge Housing, Rapid Rehousing and Supportive Housing

Program Type	# Active Projects	Capacity HH w/children	Capacity HH w/o children
Emergency Shelter (year-round)	23 (3 DV)	143 Units	377 Beds
Emergency Shelter (SWES/overflow)	7	45 Beds	255 Beds‡
Bridge Housing	12	5 Units	159 Units
Rapid Rehousing*	16 (2 DV)	228 Units	317 Units
Supportive Housing	26	352 Units	818 Units

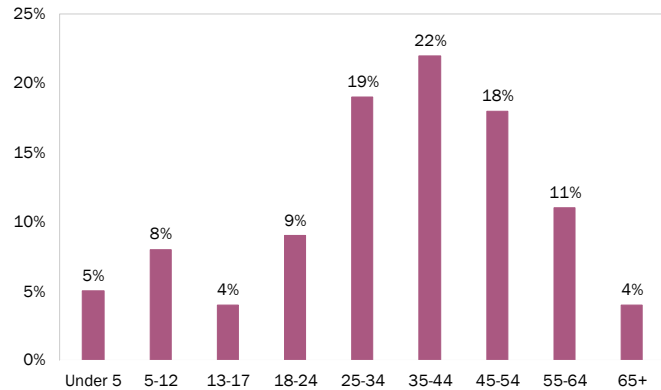
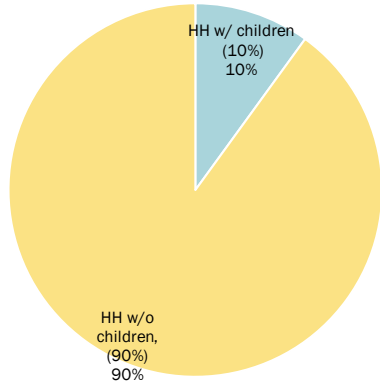
\*includes ESG funded beds, which are calculated by use

‡ Includes 75 code blue beds at Ammon, 8 code blue beds at CommUNITY Place, and capacity for up to 60 to rest at Unity Recovery Drop -In Center, which expanded to be 24/7

All information above includes DV Bed Capacity

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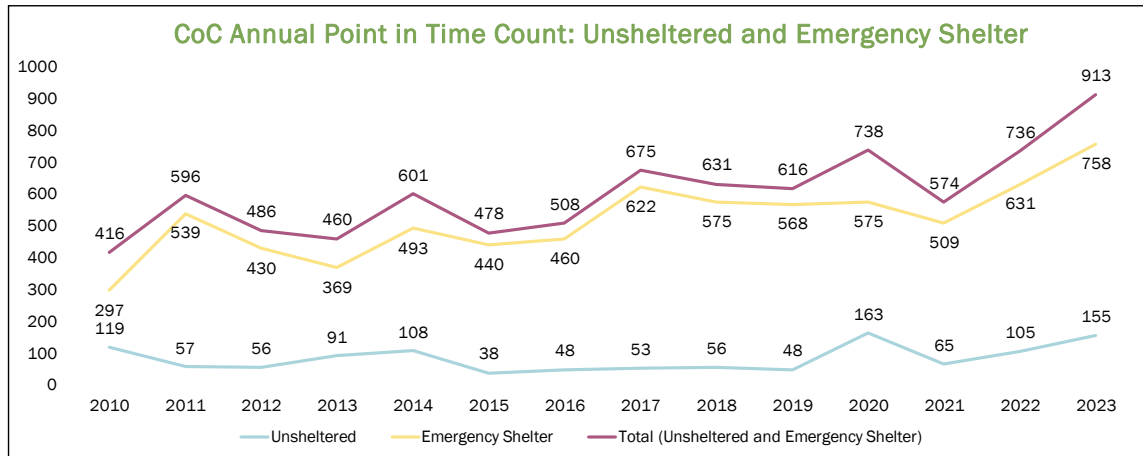
## 9,044\* individuals were served in 2023



\*Includes client totals across all homeless assistance project types except for ERAP

- Household and demographic information excludes DV projects

## Homeless System Performance: Making Homelessness Rare



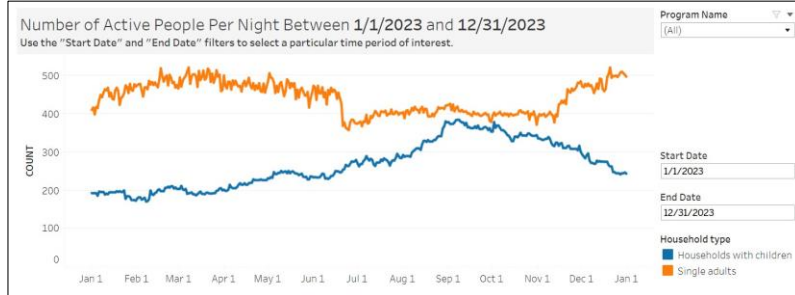
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PIT is the data HUD uses to reflect homeless numbers—HUD reports include Safe Haven and Transitional housing, but this graph is showing just ES and those experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The emergency shelter count shows a relatively flat line from 2017, a dip in 2021 and then increases in 2022 and 2023. 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, including a huge surge in availability of homeless prevention, particularly rental assistance, through pandemic funds



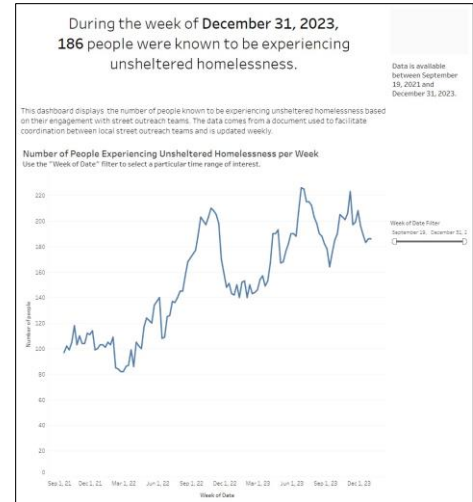
## Current approaches to counting the people experiencing homelessness

### Shelters



Public dashboard link:

<https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/2023/05/23/trends-in-people-experiencing-sheltered-and-unsheltered-homelessness-interactive-dashboard/>



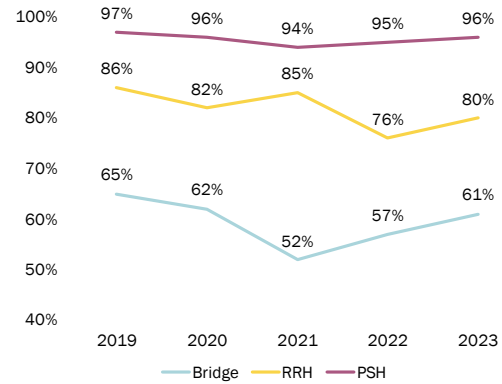
## Homeless System Performance Measure: Making Homelessness Brief

- Length of stay in shelter (in days) was longer in 2023 than it was in 2019
- Days from enrollment to move-in for both RRH and PSH have increased since 2019
- The number of exits from PSH has generally been decreasing since 2019



# Homeless System Performance: Making Homelessness Non-Recurring

## Percent of Exits to Permanent Destinations



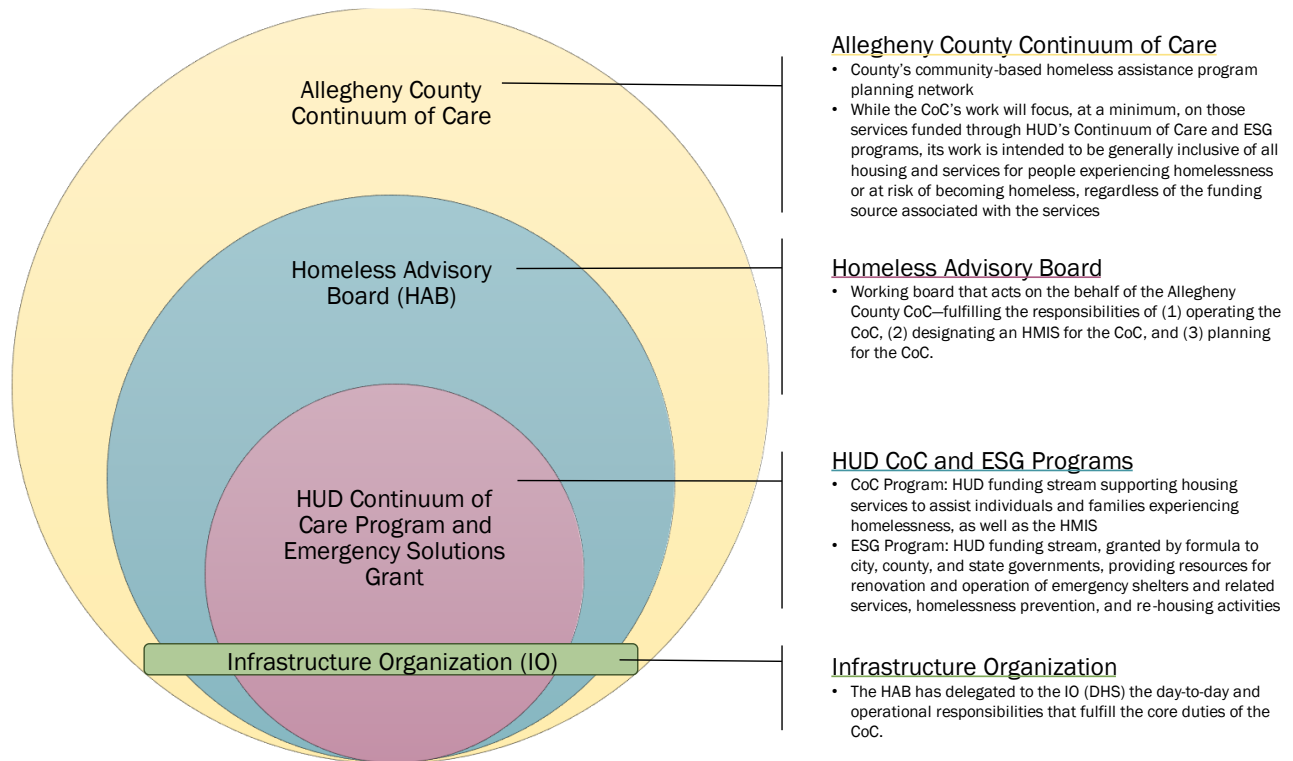
- Shelter data has shown declines in the percent of exits that were to permanent destinations since 2019
- Of clients who exited homeless programs between 2017-2021 to HUD-defined "permanent housing destinations" the percentage who began new enrollments in homelessness programs within 24 months of their exit ranged from a low of 16.8% in 2017 to a high of 19.9% in 2021.

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# Allegheny County CoC



# Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board



HUD CoC Program requirements guide the CoC's and HAB's responsibility to address homelessness through a coordinated community-based process of identifying needs and building a system of housing and services that addresses those needs. HUD CoC Program is the only program that stipulates CoC authority as it relates to the administration of the funds. HUD ESG and other funding sources (e.g., Home4Good funding from PHFA), build in expectations around coordination with CoCs, as the community planning networks. 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. The HAB, and the COC at large, utilize their expertise to provide input and guidance to other entities and systems—housing, physical and behavioral health supports, employment/career opportunities, education connection, strong crisis responses systems, reduced criminal justice involvement, supported basic needs

## Homeless Advisory Board

- Working board of the Allegheny County CoC, carrying out the CoC's duties to address homelessness through a coordinated community-based process of identifying needs and building a system of housing and services that addresses those needs
- Comprised of representatives of 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



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### HUD CoC Program Decisions

- Consolidated Application
- 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
- Plan and respond to Special Notices of Funding Opportunities under CoC Program.

## 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/evidencebased practices and establish priorities.

Comprised of HAB Chair, ViceChair, 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 public-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**

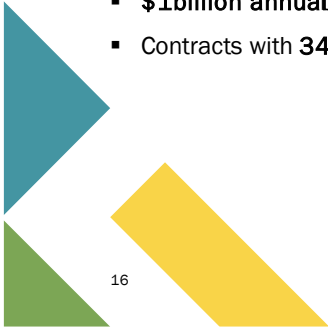
Program Offices	Area Agency on Aging
	Behavioral Health
	Children, Youth & Families
	Community Services
	Developmental Supports
Support Offices	Administration
	Analytics, Technology & Planning
	Equity & Engagement

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	Community Services
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Support Offices	Administration
	Analytics, Technology & Planning
	Equity & Engagement



# Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

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## Appendix B Motion for Revision to Charter- January 2024

### **Recommendation**

The Executive Committee of the Homeless Advisory Board (HAB) is putting forward to the HAB the recommendation to update the Allegheny County CoC Governance Charter to remove reference to the specific number of members that make up the HAB.

### **Background**

Currently, the Allegheny County CoC Governance Charter specifies that the HAB will have 15-21 individuals (page 2, Homeless Advisory Board Section, Membership). The recommendation would remove the specific reference to “15-21” individuals, while maintaining a focus on being an effective decision-making body that is made up of individuals representing an array of diverse sectors, stakeholder groups and organizations, and experiences.

### **Rationale**

The recommended revision would enable the size of the HAB board to be responsive to the appropriate representative composition rather than an arbitrary number. This is exemplified with the nominations received for the 2024 membership slate, and the opportunity for the HAB to expand representation from people with lived expertise, while maintaining representation from other critical partners.

# Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

## Appendix C 2024 Membership Slate

Pursuant to the CoC Governance Charter and HAB By-Laws a nomination period for HAB membership was open November 2023 through January 5, 2024. During this period 16 nominations were received. The 7 members on the slate below were selected by the Executive Committee based on considerations individual, organizational, and sector representation on the HAB, as well as experience and expertise of the nominees.

Name	Affiliation
Damian Buccilli*	Planner/Zoning Officer/EEO Officer, Municipality of Penn Hills
Nikki DiMaria	Community Partner
Lisa Frank	Chief Operating and Administrative Officer, City of Pittsburgh
Andy Halfhill*	Administrator, Homeless Services Programs, ACDHS
Derek Kendall-Morris	Manager of Consumer Lending, Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh
Richard Stephenson	Chief Operating and Financial Officer, Allegheny County Housing Authority
Malcolm Visnich	Overdose Prevention Specialist, Prevention Point Pittsburgh

*\*Indicates a HAB member who will be starting their second term.*

If approved by the HAB, the above slate will be joined by the third elected Provider Representative, and will be joining the following sitting HAB members.

Name	Affiliation
Kwabena Danso-Ayesu	Senior Director of Housing and Community Services, Goodwill
Chase Archer Evans	Community Partner
Matthew Grayson	IPV Homeless Provider Program Supervisor, Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh
Shawlane Heffern	Director of Programs, The Open Door, Inc
Brian Knight	Manager of Community Engagement, Homeless Children's Education Fund
Dave Lettrich	Executive Director, Bridge Outreach
Gale Schwartz	Associate Director, Policy & Strategic Initiatives, Housing Alliance of PA
Danielle Schnauber Jones	Operation Safety Net Nurse Practitioner, Pittsburgh Mercy
Amy Plant	Senior Manager of Operations, Bethlehem Haven
Raymond Prushnok	Executive Director, UPMC Center for Social Impact
Susie Puskar	Chief Program Officer, Partner4Work
Pam Turner	Veteran HUD Housing Team Lead, Veterans Leadership Program (VLP)
LaVerne Wagner	Assistant Director of Occupancy, Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP)
Michael Yonas	Vice President, Public Health, Research and Learning, The Pittsburgh Foundation

The following individuals will be completing their terms with the HAB with the January 30, 2024, meeting. The time and attention they have given to the HAB is greatly appreciated and has been invaluable to the progress of the CoC.

*Nicole Anderson  
Breanna Benjamin  
Melissa Ferraro  
Katie Stohlberg*



# Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

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## Appendix D IO Update Slides

### HUD CoC Award

- HUD announced CoC competition funding decisions on 1/29
- Our CoC received \$26,279,627
- All existing RRH and PSH and YHDP housing projects renewed at a higher level
- One new expansion project based on reallocation from last year
- Award include grants for Link, HMIS, Planning and UFA

### Point in Time (PIT) Count Overview

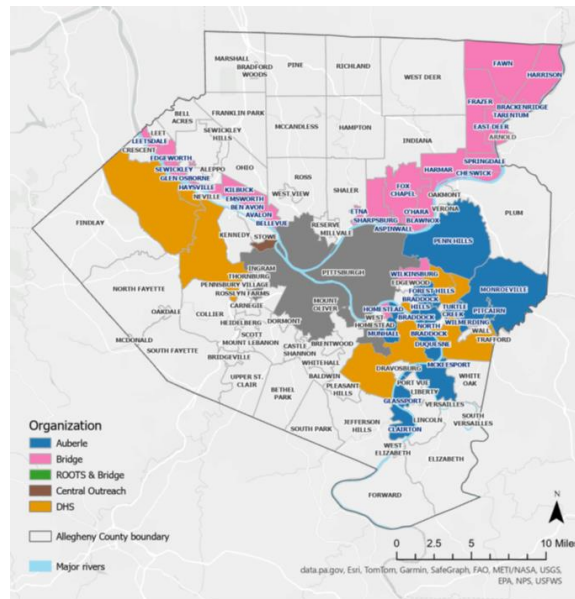
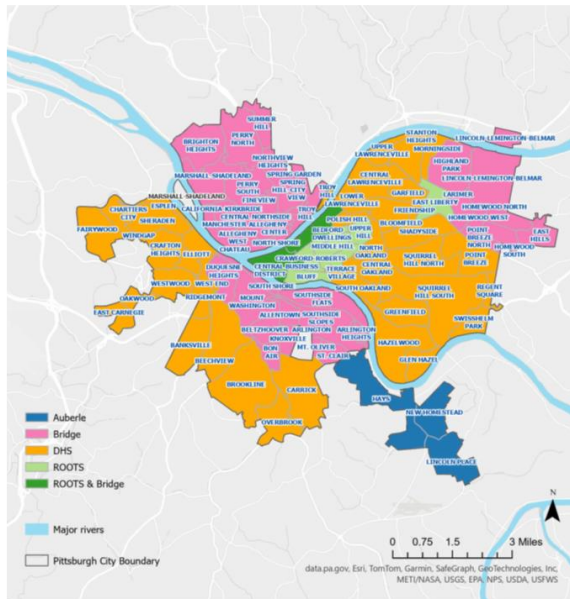
- A snapshot of how many people are experiencing **sheltered** and **unsheltered** homelessness on a single day
- We do a PIT Count every January because:
  - It is a HUD requirement of all Continuums of Care
  - Understanding the extend of homelessness helps us to better plan for services
  - Helps to increase awareness and understanding
- Reports on previous PIT counts:  
<https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/2023/05/23/point-in-time-count-of-people-experiencing-homelessness-annual-reports/>

# Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

## Point in Time Count

- PIT Count = sheltered count (HMIS + counts from DV shelters) + unsheltered (Qualtrics survey)
  - Sheltered count: timely and accurate HMIS data entry
  - Unsheltered count: data collected during canvassing via Qualtrics survey + known additions from weekly unsheltered case conferencing list
- Deduplication:
  - Unsheltered survey data deduplicated against sheltered/HMIS data
- Thank you to all of the street outreach partners, drop-in center partners and volunteers that are supporting the count!

### Locations and Outreach Commitments for Unsheltered Survey



## Code Blue Update

To date, Code Blue has been activated for:

- 12/13/23
- 12/18/23 – 12/19/23
- 1/4/24 – 1/6/24
- 1/13/24 – 1/21/24
- 1/29/24 – 1/30/24

