

Preventing and Ending Homelessness by 2020

It's a new initiative with a lofty goal; the development of a community wide strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness by 2020.

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness defines an end to homelessness as every community having a plan in place that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible, or if it cannot be prevented, seeing that it is a brief and a non-recurring experience.

"Bringing the entire community together to assess how well the homeless system is functioning as a continuum is an exciting opportunity," said Abigail Horn, Senior Advisor at the Department of Human Services (DHS).

With help from local foundations, DHS and the Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board (HAB) completed a competitive RFP process, selecting Housing Innovations from Peekskill, NY to guide the process.

The planning is designed to not only strengthen partnerships among homeless services and affordable housing agencies but to engage others who have not traditionally been a part of the process, including those who have experienced homelessness.

"We can identify shared goals around homeless services and affordable housing, align funding to reach those goals and explore new and creative ways that the population's complex needs can be met," Horn explained.

Over the next seven months, Housing Innovations will analyze our current homeless system while engaging stakeholders and the community to identify needs and gaps as well as best practices and public policy improvements.

A community kickoff meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 3, at 9:30 AM in the Homestead Grays Room in the Human Services Building at 1 Smithfield Street.

The general public, elected and community leaders, providers and anyone concerned or impacted by homelessness are invited to take part in the meeting and can [RSVP by clicking here](#).

