

SUPPORTING PENNSYLVANIANS THROUGH HOUSING

2017-18 UPDATE



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The Department of Human Services' (DHS) five-year housing strategy is a comprehensive plan to connect Pennsylvanians to affordable, integrated, accessible, and supportive housing. This update to the strategy clarifies goals and reorganizes information. To achieve the goals of the strategy, DHS will leverage internal and external resources and collaborate with all levels of government and private agencies to make housing resources and services more accessible and available to a wide range of individuals served by DHS.

The housing strategy concentrates on:

- **Individuals who live in institutions but could live in the community with housing services and supports**
- **Individuals and families who experience homelessness or are at-risk of homelessness**
- **Individuals who have extremely low incomes and are rent-burdened**

The DHS housing strategy update describes the challenges faced by these populations and identifies the action steps to address them.



THE PLAN

STRATEGY NO. 1: CONNECT PEOPLE TO HOUSING



GOAL NO. 1

Build better local and state housing partnerships.

2017-18

- Strengthen the Local Referral Network (LRN) including local coalitions of consumers, former consumers, county human services agencies, service providers, housing providers, and Regional Housing Coordinators (RHCs); identify and implement local best-practices in housing across the commonwealth. Work with county, municipal, and non-profit partners to streamline systems and minimize redundancies.
- Strengthen and support the LRN to increase access to housing for all target populations, especially families and individuals with extremely low incomes (up to 20 percent of the Area Median Income).

- Partner with state and federal agencies - including the PA Housing Finance Agency (PHFA), Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), Department of Aging (PDA), Department of Corrections (DOC), Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) along with the Housing Stakeholder Workgroup and the RHCs.
- Connect local human services agencies, housing providers, service providers, and other nonprofit organizations that focus on housing to ensure timely referrals to housing by expanding the RHC program. Align RHC technical assistance to support all DHS program office housing initiatives.
- Deploy RHC technical assistance to the LRN, including regular Housing Stakeholder Workgroup meetings, webinars, regular conference calls, and face-to-face meetings with agencies.
- Create consumer- and provider-focused education and outreach materials in partnership with the RHCs to ensure access to housing resources.
- Support the DHS Offices of Developmental Programs and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and local stakeholders in identifying appropriate housing options for residents impacted by the closing of the Hamburg Center for individuals with intellectual disabilities and the Norristown State Hospital Civil Unit for individuals with mental illness.

2018-19

- Convene an RHC Summit to provide training and share best practices related to the LRN and to further strengthen interagency, state, and county relationships. Develop targeted training to better educate human services providers on state and local housing resources.
- Grow and sustain the RHC Program to better support the LRN across all disability populations.

GOAL NO. 2

Provide IT tools to the Local Referral Network to better connect individuals and families to housing.

2017-18

- Implement an online, interactive housing resource guide for consumers and providers. Work with local and state partners to identify new resources and sustain the inventory.
- Develop an online tool to support the LRN when connecting people to housing opportunities. Partner with LRN stakeholders to create a comprehensive tool that minimizes redundancies and connects to existing systems.

- Train the LRN on the use of the interactive housing resource guide.

2018-20

- Implement the comprehensive online tool to support the LRN to connect people to housing opportunities. Provide training and ongoing support to key stakeholders to facilitate use and maximize positive outcomes.

GOAL NO. 3

Expand the Section 811 Project Rental Assistance Program in partnership with PHFA.

2017-18

- Ensure a steady flow of timely referrals by supporting the LRN in areas where 811 apartments become available.
- Expand the 811 program service area to respond to consumer needs for housing by increasing the number of 811 apartments from 100 to 250.
- Deploy 300 units of public housing or Housing Choice Vouchers that Public Housing Authority partners committed in support of the 811 program.



2018-19

- Expand the 811 program service area to match consumer needs by securing the remaining apartments for a total of 400 across the commonwealth.

STRATEGY NO. 2: STRENGTHEN SERVICES AND SUPPORTS THAT ADDRESS HOUSING NEEDS**GOAL NO. 1**

Maximize Medicaid funding for housing-related services and supports.

2017-18

- Implement housing services and supports for persons with intellectual disabilities served by the Office of Developmental Programs' Medicaid waivers.
- Implement housing services and supports for persons who are aging and/or who have physical disabilities served by the Office of Long-Term Living's home- and community-based Medicaid waivers and the new Community HealthChoices managed care waiver.

2018-19

- Implement housing services and supports for persons with mental illness and/or substance use disorder served by the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services' HealthChoices Behavioral Health Program.

GOAL NO. 2

Increase housing opportunities and services for individuals with mental illness and substance use disorder who are involved with the criminal justice system.

2018-20

- Develop housing services and supports to better place individuals leaving jails, prisons, and forensic treatment centers into housing.
- Improve the existing referral system for individuals leaving jail, prison, and forensic treatment centers for appropriate community-based housing. This is in partnership with the DOC and local behavioral health and criminal justice partners.
- Identify housing resources, including HealthChoices reinvestment funds for consumers of behavioral health services, to expand housing opportunities in partnership with counties, behavioral health providers, and criminal justice agencies.

STRATEGY NO. 3: EXPAND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOUSING

GOAL NO. 1

Develop public and private partnerships.

2017-18

- Create a private investment strategy for housing in partnership with PHFA, managed care organizations (MCO), and health systems.
- Target housing resources in areas of high need to leverage current and future innovative health care and social services investments and maximize the overall impact of resources.
- Leverage low-income housing tax credits to create new, affordable housing opportunities in partnership with PHFA and DCED.



2018-19

- Leverage philanthropic resources to expand MCO and health system investment. Demonstrate new funding mechanisms for housing.
- Develop a no- or low-interest loan program for providers to buy, modify, or renovate homes to serve people with disabilities and older adults in their community. Partners will include PHFA, DCED, and others.

2019-20

- Sustain and increase funding by MCOs, health systems, government entities, and philanthropic organizations.
- Create new or strengthen existing funding mechanisms under the State Affordable Housing Trust Fund model, in partnership with PHFA and other state agencies.
- Partner with market-rate housing developers and philanthropic organizations to create an affirmative approach to affordable housing development.

GOAL NO. 2

Target existing DHS resources for housing programs.

2017-20

- Develop new rapid re-housing, eviction prevention, tenant-based rental assistance, and other promising housing practices in collaboration with PHFA, DCED, and local providers.
- Continue strengthening the successful 10-year OMHSAS HealthChoices Reinvestment Program for permanent, supportive housing.

GOAL NO. 3

Redirect existing homeless and housing services resources toward housing. Partner with DCED, PHFA, and the Homeless Continuum of Care.

2017-20

- Generate new housing resources through savings leveraged by creating a common intake, assessment, and referral system.
- Expand affordable housing opportunities in collaboration with PHFA, PHAs, and other housing providers within the LRN.

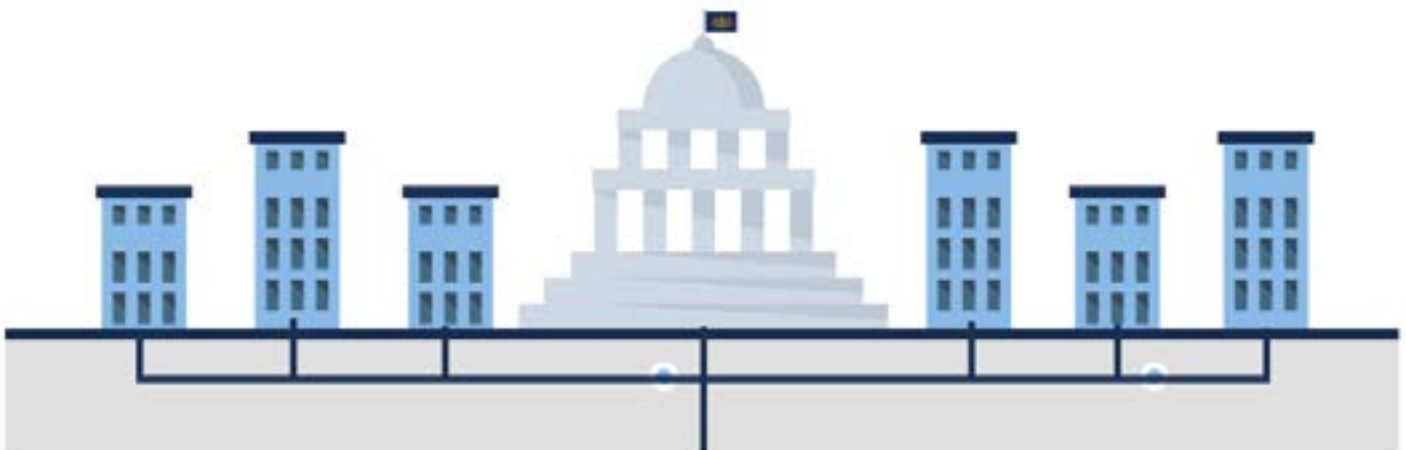
STRATEGY NO. 4: MEASURE AND COMMUNICATE PROGRESS

GOAL NO. 1

Track metrics and measure outcomes.

2017-20

- Identify baselines and set goals to evaluate progress in securing housing for the populations DHS serves.
- Conduct a permanent supportive housing (PSH) gap analysis to estimate the need for PSH compared to the availability of PSH.
- Determine the benefit of PSH by comparing Medicaid costs before and after housing is secured; partner with the University of Pittsburgh, DCED, and the Homeless Continuum of Care.
- Measure the impact of new housing services for persons with intellectual disabilities; persons who are aging and/or have physical disabilities; and for persons with mental illness and substance use disorder.
- Increase the delivery of new consumer and provider focused education and outreach efforts to partner agencies serving populations served by DHS.



GOAL NO. 2**Continually improve DHS programs.****2017-20**

- Assess existing internal programs to identify opportunities to improve efforts and expand housing options.
- Utilize the information gathered from the PSH gap analysis to target specific populations and geographic areas that demonstrate a high need.
- Target resources based on the benefit of PSH for recipients of Medicaid in partnership with DCED, PHFA, and the Homeless Continuum of Care.

GOAL NO. 3**Communicate the progress of the DHS housing strategy to stakeholders and advocates.****2017-18**

- Interface with local, state, and federal housing initiatives such as the Regional Housing Advisory Committees and the Pennsylvania Housing Advisory Committee hosted by DCED.
- Publish an annual year in review.
- Conduct four to six “Housing Stakeholder Workgroup” meetings a year.
- Present housing strategy findings, updates, and data at conferences and meetings of key stakeholders.
- Share housing success stories and best practices.
- Publish outcomes on DHS housing web page.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Community HealthChoices (CHC) is a new initiative that will use managed care organizations to coordinate physical health care and long-term services and supports (LTSS) for older persons, persons with disabilities, and Pennsylvanians who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid (dual eligible). For more information, please visit: <http://www.healthchoices.pa.gov/info/about/community/index.htm>

Medicaid Data Match is an analysis comparing the before and after Medicaid costs of persons who experienced homelessness, but were placed in permanent supportive housing. The analysis is conducted with the PA Department of Community and Economic Development, University of Pittsburgh Medicaid Research Center, and Allegheny County Department of Human Services.

HealthChoices (HC) is Pennsylvania's mandatory managed care program for Medical Assistance recipients. Through **Physical Health Managed Care Organizations**, recipients receive quality medical care and timely access to medically necessary physical health services, whether the services are delivered on an inpatient or outpatient basis. The DHS Office of Medical Assistance Programs (OMAP) oversees the Physical Health component of the HealthChoices Program.

Through **Behavioral Health Managed Care Organizations**, recipients receive quality medical care and timely access to medically necessary mental health and/or drug and alcohol services. This component is overseen by the DHS Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS). For more information, please visit: www.healthchoicespa.com.

Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV) helps families with very low incomes rent or buy safe housing. Local Public Housing Agencies issue HCVs, which are funded by HUD. The Housing Choice Voucher Program is formerly known as and still commonly referred to as Section 8 vouchers. For more information, please visit: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/about

Housing Stakeholder Workgroup (HSW) was formed by DHS in April of 2017 to collect feedback and support from stakeholders and partners on issues of housing policy development and program administration within the context of implementing the Housing Strategy. For more information, please visit: www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/housing/housingstakeholderworkgroup/.

Local Referral Network (LRN) are local coalitions comprised of county human services agencies, service providers, housing providers, other relevant nonprofit organizations, and Regional Housing Coordinators (RHCs). The Local Lead Agency (LLA) is the primary point of contact for the county human services agencies and is responsible for inviting those agencies' appropriate representatives. The RHCs assist the LLAs in building and coordinating the LRN, while also serving as a waitlist administrator for referrals to the 811 program.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) combines permanent and affordable rental housing with flexible, voluntary supportive services. Housing is either tenant- or project-based and is designed to provide a level of care to individuals and families so that they remain stably housed and build the necessary skills to live as independently as possible. The lease is held in the individual's name with full rights of tenancy.

Regional Housing Coordinators (RHCs) are a statewide team of 14 locally based staff who provide technical assistance and informational resources to public or private housing and human services providers to help bridge the gap between those systems and better serve Pennsylvanians with housing needs. The RHC program is administered by the Self Determination Housing Project (SDHP). For more information, please visit: www.sdhp.org/

Section 811 Project Rental Assistance Program (811 PRA) provides project-based rent assistance to people with disabilities and extremely low income. The rental assistance pays the difference between the amount the tenant can afford and the approved fair market rent for that apartment. The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) and the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) administer the 811 program in partnership to increase access to affordable, integrated, and accessible housing. Funding is provided by HUD. For more information, please visit: www.phfa.org/mhp/section811pra/

PARTNERS

Thank you to the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency and the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development for partnering with DHS to support Pennsylvanians through housing.





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