



Supportive Housing Platform for Pennsylvania: Recommendations for Interagency Collaboration.

Overview

In 2023 The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) and Regional Housing Legal Services (RHLS) released a Supportive Housing Policy Platform to identify and address policy changes needed to enhance the creation and sustainability of supportive housing across Pennsylvania. More than 300 individuals representing more than 120 organizations and more than 50 PA Counties have participated in this process. One of the four primary policy priorities of this platform is enhancing collaboration among state agencies. More specifically, the members of the supportive housing coalition that have helped to create this platform wish to see the following recommendations implemented.

Interagency Collaboration as Supportive Housing Priority:

Throughout the creation of the policy platform, participants expressed frustration about the lack of state leadership related to preventing and ending homelessness. Participants frequently requested the need for state and local collaboration as a platform recommendation, like in the form of an interagency council, to coordinate and keep in motion these proposed efforts. As a recommendation, the Shapiro Administration must:

- Establish an interagency council to prevent and end homelessness to provide leadership by coordinating resources, providing guidance, and enabling localities to advance solutions;
- This council, which would be comprised of secretary level representation (not designees), must create and effectuate a statewide plan to prevent and end homelessness in PA;
- Identify resources for direct TA and capacity building for Continuums of Care (CoC's) that will help identify and strategically address gaps.

Statewide Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness:

The newly formed interagency council, with support from the Shapiro Administration, should create and prioritize a statewide plan to prevent and end homelessness including increasing the stock of supportive housing. A strong plan to prevent and end homelessness in PA should include:

- Assessment of overall needs including the need for Permanent Supportive Housing and long term affordable housing for individuals with incomes under 30% AMI;
- Strategy to align with the Federal USICH plan to prevent and end homelessness
- Plan to better coordinate data across counties to a statewide data warehouse;
- Alignment with local priorities and guidance to counties/local communities in the development of their plan to address homelessness;
- Plan to coordinate resources across departments;
- Homeless Prevention
- Measurable targets, including race equity, increasing the stock of Permanent Supportive Housing, and goals for reductions in homelessness over time.



ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERAGENCY COUNCIL

The interagency council should be made up of secretary level representation from state agencies. The council should also meaningfully include persons with lived experience of homelessness. The Council should report to a Governor staff designee. Recommended representation should include:

- Department of Human Services
 - Office of Medical Assistance Programs
 - Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
 - Office of Developmental Programs
 - Bureau of Children and Family Services
- Department of Community and Economic Development
- Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency
- Department of Aging
- Department of Health
- Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs
- Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Labor
- Department of Education
- Department of Agriculture
- Licenses and Inspections
- PA Rural Development Council
- Center for Rural PA
- PA Emergency Management Agency
- Persons with lived expertise

In service of the implementation of a statewide plan, this council may seek to:

- Promote collaborative models of braiding state, local, and federal funds for housing and homelessness resources;
- Coordinate statewide data related to homelessness and housing;
- Create coordinated and collaborative resources, guidance, and processes to expedite peoples' connections to housing and services;
- Hold webinars, meeting spaces, and fulfill a convener role for statewide dialogue on homelessness challenges and solutions;
- Fund direct TA and capacity building for Continuum of Cares (CoCs)
- Offer guidance and recommendations for alignment with the U.S. Interagency Council to End and Prevent Homelessness;

The Council may seek to form working groups and committees in furtherance of this work. CSH recommends that these working group include a focus on the following:

- Accessibility for persons with disabilities
- Centering Race Equity
- Rural Homelessness
- Health and Housing (incorporating work with partners like MCOs, Health Systems, etc.)
- Incorporating Lived Expertise
- Housing And Community Development
- Underserved populations such as survivors of domestic violence
- Services to immigrants and individuals with limited English proficiency
- Capacity building among PA's 16 Continuums of Care
- Alternative Housing models (i.e. shared housing, co-op housing, shared equity housing)
- Youth and Young Adults
- Workforce Development