

# *PA Supportive Housing Coalition: Recommendations for the Pennsylvania Housing Action Plan*

*March 2025*

These recommendations encompass a statewide action plan to end homelessness and address Pennsylvania's need for supportive housing. These recommendations incorporate feedback from the Pennsylvania Supportive Housing Coalition members along with core elements of other effective state plans on homelessness.

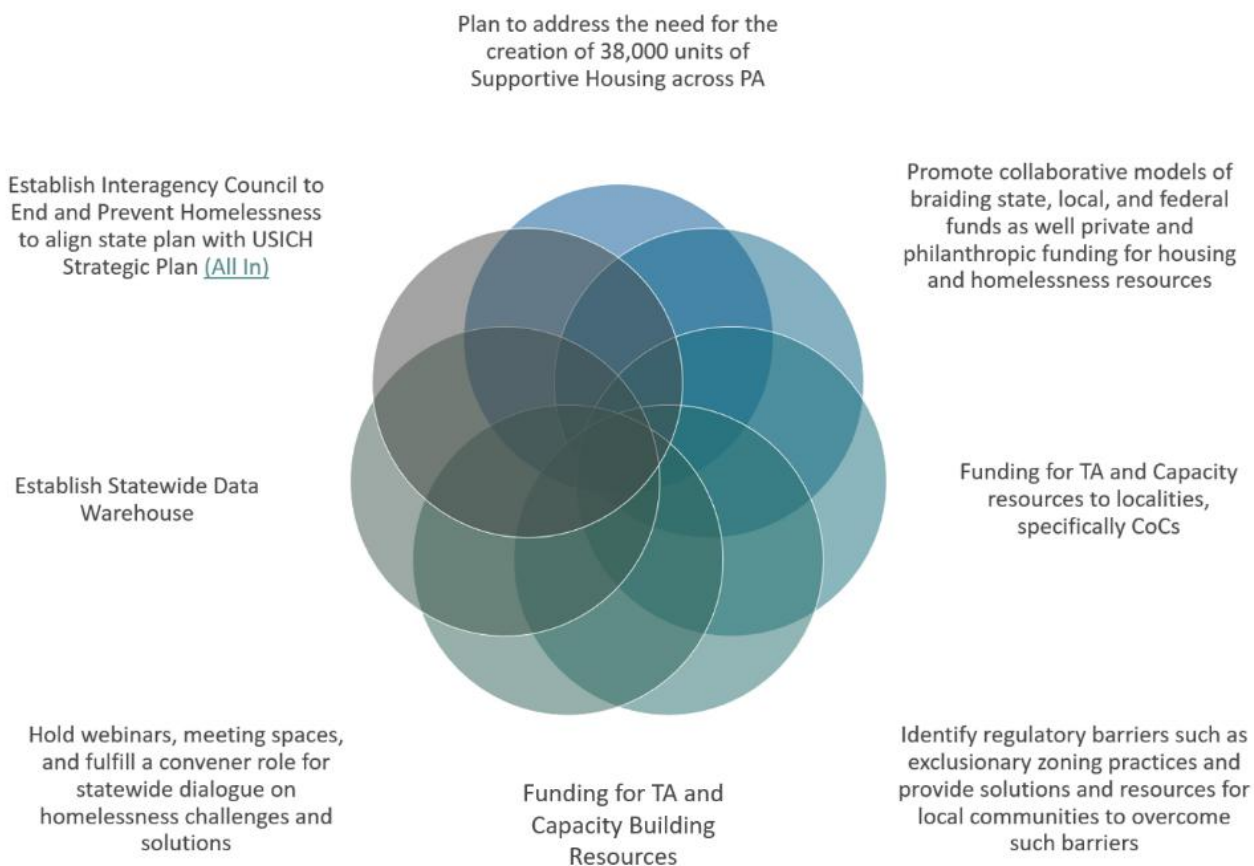
## *About CSH*

CSH (Corporation for Supportive Housing) advances affordable and accessible housing aligned with services by advocating for effective policies and funding, investing in communities, and strengthening the supportive housing field. Since our founding in 1991, CSH has been the only national nonprofit intermediary focused solely on increasing the availability of supportive housing. As an intermediary, we do not directly develop or operate housing but center our approach on collaboration with a wide range of people, partners, and sectors.

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## Introduction

Establishing better inter-agency collaboration to prevent and end homelessness has been a priority of the Supportive Housing Coalition of Pennsylvania since its establishment in May 2023. The Coalition, which is comprised of more than 300 members representing more than 150 organizations from 52 counties in PA, has conducted a quarterly interagency working group to develop this policy priority. In addition to convening this working group, CSH has reviewed other statewide action plans and spoken with state government peers with state plans that play an important role in driving action towards alleviating housing needs. CSH has leveraged those conversations to develop the following recommendations. The following recommendations incorporate feedback from the Coalition members along with core elements from other effective state plans. The recommendations specifically focus on what the statewide action plan can do to prevent and end homelessness and address PA's need for supportive housing.



## Participation/Representation

The PA Supportive Housing Coalition was established to incorporate the ideas and recommendations of individuals and organizations across Pennsylvania. The Coalition holds the incorporation of persons with lived expertise of housing insecurity as a core value central to the work we do. If this action plan wishes to be successful in decreasing or eliminating housing insecurity, the participation of those with lived expertise must be incorporated in a meaningful way to the development and execution of the plan. This entails plans for addressing issues related to access and ensuring that state agencies have the capacity to compensate persons with lived expertise for their participation.

In addition to those with lived expertise, the Coalition members have asserted that the following state agencies and departments should be active participants in the housing action plan and ongoing interagency coordination to end and prevent homelessness.

STATE AGENCIES NECESSARY FOR THE HOUSING ACTION PLAN		
Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)	Department of Human Services (DHS)	Center for Rural PA
Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs	Office of Medical Assistance Programs	PA Emergency Management
Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency	Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS)	Department of Labor and Industry
Department of Corrections	Office of Developmental Programs	PA Rural Development Council
Department of Education	Bureau of Children and Family Services	License and Inspections Agency
Department of Aging Department of Health	Department of Agriculture	Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs

The Coalition members have identified that the following groups should be offered opportunities for meaningful participation in the creation of the plan as well as the implementation of and accountability to the established goals.

RECOMMENDED GROUPS TO PARTICIPATE IN CREATION OF THE PLAN	
Persons with Lived Experience (PWLE)	Philanthropic Partners
Housing Developers	Public Housing Authorities
Supportive Services and Housing Providers	PA State Association of Township Supervisors
Continuums of Care	Managed Care Organizations and Health System Representatives
Advocates (Housing, Disability, Aging, Healthcare, Domestic Violence, Legal Aid)	Housing lenders and financial organizations (specifically the Federal Home Loan Bank)
Housing and Redevelopment Authorities	

## Measurable Goals

CSH echoes the sentiments of Governor Josh Shapiro’s administration, the Department of Community and Economic Development, and the Department of Human Services in the importance of this plan containing measurable goals and plans for action to address PA’s housing crisis. The PA Supportive Housing Coalition asserts that the housing action plan must include goals specific to addressing the need for supportive housing in Pennsylvania. The following provides an overview of the goals that should be included.

- A Plan to address the need for the creation of 38,000 units of supportive housing across PA. The PA Supportive Housing Coalition has identified the need to create 2,000 new units of supportive housing in communities across Pennsylvania every year over the next 20 years to meet this need. The Coalition is currently working on recommendations that should be finalized in the first quarter of 2025 for methods that can be employed to meet this need.

- In addition to a target for supportive housing, the plan should identify targets for the creation of resources for supportive services, new affordable housing units, the preservation of affordable housing units, the creation of new market rate units, stabilized households, addressing equity gaps, and home repair/energy updates.
- Promote collaborative models of braiding state, local, and federal funds for housing and homelessness resources. The action plan and/or the interagency body it establishes must provide this guidance to local and municipal partners to empower them to pursue solutions that fit their community's needs. This should include a plan to collaborate with Public Housing Authorities to increase incentives for homelessness and Moving On programs. These should also be developed with consideration for how private partners like philanthropic organizations can make long-term plans and investments based on the established action plan. This plan should seek to incorporate proven public/private<sup>1</sup> housing partnerships like social impact bonds, flexible housing subsidy pools, and asset/loan pools to provide a structure for investment into proven solutions for addressing the housing need in PA.
- The housing action plan must address how data shows certain communities are unfairly impacted by housing insecurity, homelessness, evictions, and other housing barriers, while also being more likely to receive unfair loan terms when attempting home ownership. The plan must include measurable ways that Pennsylvania will seek to address these discriminatory practices and promote fair access to housing opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their background.
- Examples include expanding access to affordable housing, addressing discriminatory lending laws, and reforming zoning laws. This should be seen as an opportunity to address unfair practices that can impact the way that affordable housing is created in PA. Addressing this problem will require the development, construction, and repair of housing needed by those most affected by discrimination. This plan must establish priorities to ensure full participation in the process that will meet the plan's goals and offer economic opportunities to those in and related to the housing industry.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.funderstogether.org/public\\_private\\_partnerships](https://www.funderstogether.org/public_private_partnerships)

- Funding for TA and Capacity resources to localities, specifically to Continuums of Care. While the state has made this funding available through mechanisms like PHARE applications, there is a tremendous benefit to shifting to a model that allows CoCs or local communities to rely on a consistent minimum allocation that they can make both short and long-term plans around. A permanent homeless services allocation should be established to build the capacity for local communities to find local solutions and leverage state and federal resources for the maximum impact on their community's homelessness needs.
- Not all solutions to address the housing needs in Pennsylvania are going to require new funding or resources. The State Action Plan should seek to identify the regulatory barriers such as exclusionary zoning practices that make it very difficult to create new housing opportunities for those who need them most. The plan should seek to provide solutions and resources for local communities to ensure everyone has fair access to housing.
- The state government has a tremendous role as a convener. When official representatives of statewide departments speak and create spaces for feedback, there is exciting potential to gather stakeholders from across PA that can help identify solutions for the state and for their communities. Indeed, many of the state agencies currently play this role and do excellent work to engage the public. The PA Housing Action Plan should identify a plan to hold webinars, meeting spaces, and fulfill a convener role for statewide dialogue on homelessness challenges and solutions across systems with multiple state agencies represented.
- The PA Housing Action Plan should formally establish an Interagency Council to End and Prevent Homelessness (ICH). Statewide Interagency Councils can play a crucial role in continuing the cross systems collaboration that the Housing Action Plan seeks to establish. A State ICH can also help to align the state plan with USICH Strategic Plan ([All In](#)), help local communities with learning opportunities, peer learning and technical assistance, and can position Pennsylvania to more effectively bring federal

resources to communities across the Commonwealth to end homelessness and to seek upstream solutions to prevent homelessness.

## **Accountability**

The Coalition believes that the housing action plan will only be successful with robust accountability for the goals and objectives it establishes. The Statewide Action Plan must include the following accountability measures.

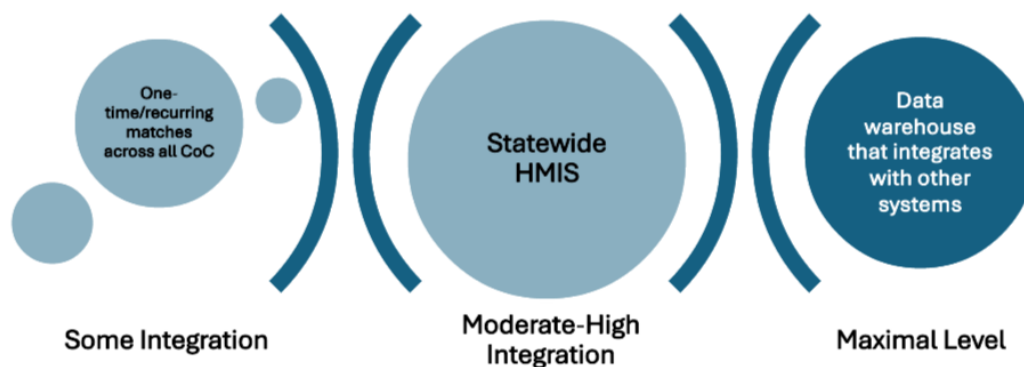
- Identify the body responsible for tracking progress on the goals and the accountability each state agency will have to adhere to this reporting standard. The Coalition recommends that this function be performed by the Governor's Office.
- Establish an annual reporting mechanism that can be adhered to during the 5-year implementation period and inform accountability beyond this time. These reports can be uncomplicated when tied to measurable goals established in the plan. PA should look to peer states like [Michigan](#), [Oregon](#), & [Illinois](#) for examples on reporting mechanisms.
- Public access to the plan and any subsequently developed documents or addendum should be fully accessible. CSH applauds the efforts of DCED to establish a landing page that can be easily accessed. The Coalition recommends that such resources be expanded to provide more detail to allow public viewing of progress on the plan and access to related activities during and after it is drafted.
- Additionally, the plan should establish a mechanism to solicit public feedback on the progress of its execution during the 5-year implementation period.

## Data

Housing data is collected in various ways across several social systems. While many of these systems and state agencies have done amazing work with data to drive social change, there is much work to be done to better integrate data across social systems. Across the country, states are working to integrate housing and homelessness data with the systems that those with housing needs frequently encounter. Without better coordination, it will be difficult for systems like healthcare, child welfare, behavioral health, homelessness, disabilities, and behavioral health to identify shared priorities and efficient utilization of resources to address PA's housing need.

CSH sees advances in the utilization of Homelessness Management Information Systems (HMIS) as a starting point for this data coordination. The Department of Housing and Urban Development<sup>2</sup> has encouraged Continuums of Care to utilize HMIS data to foster cross-sector data coordination. While homelessness data does not capture the entire picture of housing need across Pennsylvania, there is tremendous promise in the potential for the statewide housing plan to create a mechanism for statewide HMIS data coordination and integration with other systems.

- Establish a statewide HMIS data warehouse that can serve to both understand the impact of homelessness across the commonwealth and create a springboard for cross systems data sharing.



<sup>2</sup> <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Homelessness-and-Health-Data-Sharing-Toolkit.pdf>



- Dedicate staff, time, and capacity to the statewide data warehouse to integrate HMIS data with healthcare, child welfare, behavioral health, and other systems' data to facilitate cross-sector collaboration. The state should also consider partnership with universities in Pennsylvania that have experience in this area that could add capacity to address this need.
- Pennsylvania should look to peers like the state of Texas where the [Texas Homeless Network](#) has been endeavoring to establish the country's largest homeless data integration effort, The Texas Homeless Data Sharing networks, as a model for ways to coordinate HMIS data as a means for beginning this process.

## Conclusion

The Members of the Pennsylvania Supportive Housing Coalition are grateful that the Shapiro Administration and the staff at DCED and DHS are working to develop this much needed plan for the commonwealth. The challenges that it seeks to address are decades in the making that will require collaborative and innovative solutions. We appreciate the ability to provide these recommendations for inclusion in the statewide plan. Many of these recommendations represent the input and contribution of the hundreds of Pennsylvanians that have participated in coalition-led discussions and meetings. More detail, national examples, or peer connections related to these recommendations can be provided upon request. Thank you for undertaking this effort, and for the opportunity to provide this feedback.

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