



Now more than ever,
housing is healthcare



Office of
Homeless Services

Dear Friends.

Housing provides more than just a roof over people's heads. It gives families the foundation to thrive.

As a direct result of our strategic investment in homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing, family homelessness in Philadelphia has decreased by 25% since 2017.

While Philadelphia has the lowest number of people who are unsheltered among the largest US cities, we continue to face the challenge of homelessness in our city. As a community, we must continue to work together to support our families, neighbors, and fellow Philadelphians.

Roadmap to Homes – released in 2018 – is the five-year strategic plan for the homeless service system. Guided by the priorities outlined in the plan and through collaboration with local partners, we have expanded housing opportunities.

Our progress has reduced street homelessness to a four-year low by investing in evidence-based supportive housing, adding daytime services, conducting extensive outreach, and lowering barriers to entry.

These combined efforts have allowed us to make significant changes in the way we serve our most vulnerable residents, working to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring in Philadelphia.

In March 2020, the COVID-19 crisis sidetracked our progress, exposing to the broader community the hidden vulnerability of homelessness, and laying bare the deep health, economic, and racial disparities in our nation.

It has never been clearer that housing is health care. It has never been clearer that housing provides the most fundamental health protections. It has never been clearer that housing enables people to thrive.

We remain committed to increasing long-term housing opportunities for those who need it. And with your help, we can end homelessness in Philadelphia.

Our 2020 Annual Report provides the latest data on homelessness in our community and how we as a City are tackling the crisis. We humbly submit that it is not enough.

We hope that in this year of the pandemic and protest, that you will learn more about efforts underway and get more involved. No one should be homeless. Together we remain convinced that homelessness can be rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Liz



Elizabeth G. Hersh
Director, Office of Homeless Services
City of Philadelphia



Liz Hersh poses with Mayor Jim Kenney and Julie Coker Graham, former president and CEO of the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau.

2020 Annual Report | July 2019 – June 2020

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Summary

July 2019 – June 2020



\$45 million

million awarded in competitive grants



5,131

permanent supportive
housing beds



19,988

unique persons served



2,650

people exited to permanent
housing destinations



2.4 million

total meals served in shelter

Mission Statement

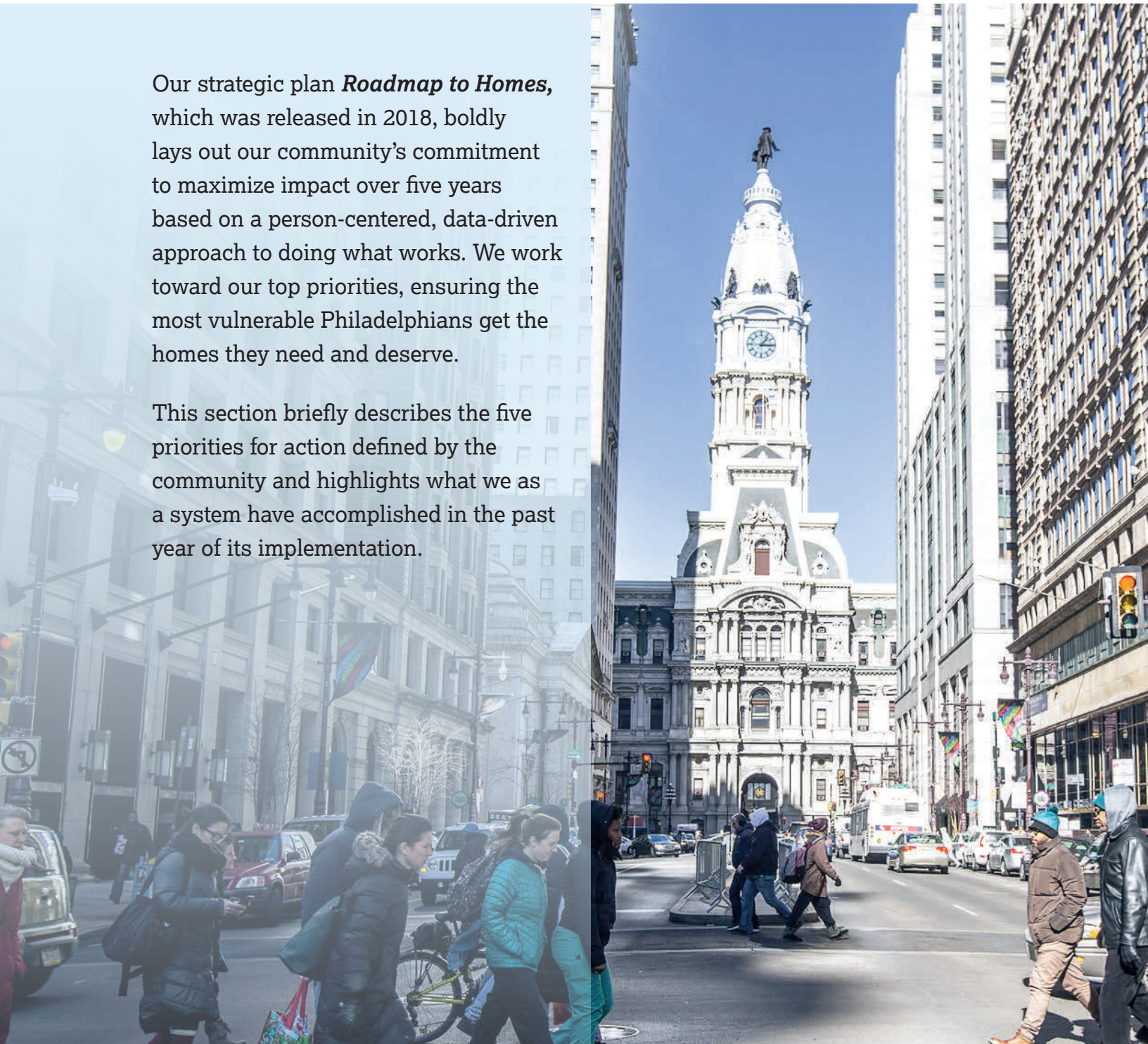
The mission of the Office of Homeless Services (OHS) is to provide the leadership, coordination, planning and mobilization of resources to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring in the City of Philadelphia.

Guided by the housing-first approach, our homeless provider network supports people in their journey to housing security. We strive to be person-centered and trauma-informed in removing barriers and connecting people to vital services.

Highlighting Progress on Our Five-Year Strategic Plan: *Roadmap to Homes*

Our strategic plan *Roadmap to Homes*, which was released in 2018, boldly lays out our community's commitment to maximize impact over five years based on a person-centered, data-driven approach to doing what works. We work toward our top priorities, ensuring the most vulnerable Philadelphians get the homes they need and deserve.

This section briefly describes the five priorities for action defined by the community and highlights what we as a system have accomplished in the past year of its implementation.



PLAN PRIORITY:

Expand Homeless Housing Resources



Wawa makes a matching donation to PHLCares.

PROGRESS: Business and hospitality partners launched PHLCares

PHLCares (pronounced Philly Cares) is a hospitality and business-led response to chronic street homelessness. Launched in January 2020 and spearheaded by the PA Convention Center, Wawa, and PREIT, which opened the Fashion District, this partnership is dedicated to investing in long-term housing solutions. Despite the pandemic, PHLCares made its first grant to house six people most at risk for COVID so they never face homelessness again.

PROGRESS: Successfully competed for HUD funds for permanent housing

Philadelphia's Continuum of Care (CoC) was awarded \$33,751,218 from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development. The funding sustains 2,601 existing units and creates 99 new units. As participants move in and achieve greater financial and housing stability, more units turn over. This enables new people to move in and benefit from the enriched services and rent subsidy. HUD funds do not increase annually; the City's CoC can only leverage new dollars by phasing out poorly performing programs.



Japanese delegation visit.

PROGRESS: Attracting international attention

Philadelphia's effective approaches to addressing homelessness attracted peers from both Tel Aviv and Japan to learn from our expertise.

PROGRESS: Leveraged competitive state funds to innovate, address emergent needs

The City's homeless service providers successfully competed for funds from Home4Good, PHARE, the State's Housing Trust Fund, and State CARES ESG – bringing in an additional \$6.6 million in new funds for FY20 and FY21. Among other uses, these awards expand the provider base, enabling community-led approaches to reach the Latinx/Hispanic, non-English speaking, immigrant and refugee communities, homeless youth, and the LGBTQ community.

PLAN PRIORITY:

Implement Transparent And Inclusive Quality Improvement Processes



YALC members pose together during their fall summit.

PROGRESS: Engaging youth experiencing homelessness in policy evolution

We continue to bring the Young Adult Leadership Committee (YALC), a committee of youth with lived experience of homelessness, to the table to help make the homeless system better. In November 2019, YALC hosted its inaugural summit *Authentic Youth Inclusion in Policy & Practice: Homelessness in Philadelphia*, which focused on overcoming barriers.



The Joy of Sox volunteers hand out new socks to those experiencing homelessness at St. John's Hospice. Tom Costello Jr/The Joy of Sox

PROGRESS: Established a Training Unit for homeless service providers and staff

Quality requires knowledge. Our Training Unit equips providers with the learning culture to effectively deliver services. In FY20, 977 individuals from the provider network participated in more than 137 trainings, ensuring system workers remain trauma informed and culturally competent.

PROGRESS: Being data informed

Strong data allows us to analyze and improve our response to homelessness. We continually work to strengthen the quality of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data, which "tells the story" of people experiencing homelessness. In FY20, we had 574 active HMIS users which included the addition of several new homeless service providers, resolved more than 1,200 HMIS tickets, performed over 800 phone and 3,350 email technical assistance consultations, and provided technical assistance for over 97 projects.

PLAN PRIORITY:

Communicate More, Communicate Better



Stakeholders gather for a Roadmap to Homes Community Meeting.

PROGRESS: Established a true, community-elected leadership *Roadmap to Homes* board

The *Roadmap to Homes* community – homeless service providers, people with lived experience homelessness, advocates, business, hospitality and civic leaders, to name a few - help us improve processes, policies, and practices within the homeless system.

The governance structure includes an Intergovernmental Council on Homelessness, a *Roadmap to Homes* Board, committees, ad hoc subcommittees, and workgroups. Under this structure, the community shares input, implements, and achieves the strategic plan.



Progress updates to success stories – we regularly share the phenomenal work.

PROGRESS: Landing in the inbox to spread good news

We implemented an email marketing strategy to keep stakeholders informed, share knowledge, and increase public understanding and engagement.

Our bi-weekly "Tools & Trainings" email includes resources and information that help City staff and service providers meet unique community needs.

Our "Drumbeat" newsletter highlights our network's collaborative efforts. With these emails, we continue to build community engagement.

PLAN PRIORITY:

Collaborate Across Systems



A family plays together at the Logan Circle water fountain.

PROGRESS: Family homelessness continues to drop

The number of families experiencing homelessness continue to decline in Philadelphia. Our strategic investments in homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing, have proven successful: family homelessness in Philadelphia has decreased by 25% since 2017.



During COVID-19, volunteers at a food warehouse assemble and pack food.

PROGRESS: Increased access to healthy foods and meals for people in need

In FY20, our warehouse provided food that prepared 2,470,470 nutritious meals directly to hungry Philadelphians in shelter. Collaborations with Muslims Serve and Philabundance helped us distribute 36,089 meals at the Hub of Hope, a daytime engagement center in Center City launched collaboratively with SEPTA in 2018.

PROGRESS: Addressing high-cost drivers

The "Hi-Five" program, a pilot between the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services, Philadelphia Department of Prisons, and OHS provides housing to 45 Philadelphians. This pilot adopts an evidence-based strategy to reduce recidivism to behavioral health, correctional, and homeless systems.

PLAN PRIORITY:

Focus On Employment, Increased Income



CLIP Same Day Work and Pay crew member helps to keep Philadelphia beautiful.



Artists painting during a Color Me Back mural reveal in Suburban Station. Steve Weinik/Mural Arts

PROGRESS: Same Day Work and Pay

The Mural Arts program launched the City's first Same Day Work and Pay program for people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. OHS provided seed funding and quickly supported the program's expansion to include CLIP, the City's Community Life Improvement Program.

Same Day Work and Pay offers people a chance to work and make cash the same day. Within a month of inception, as many as 100 people were showing up daily for the chance to work.

Interrupted by COVID, Same Day Work and Pay programs are being re-established in both Center City and Kensington with private funding, City, and new State investment.

The Sheller Family Foundation, an original funder of "Color Me Back: A Same Day Work and Pay Program", and the Homeless Assistance Fund, Inc. won two of seven national awards for their public-philanthropic work in addressing homelessness.



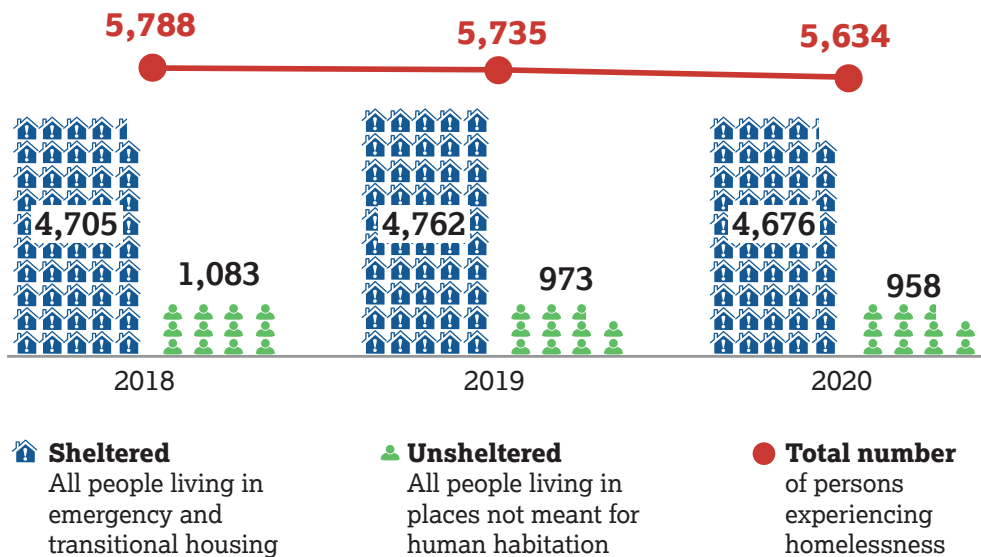
Reducing the Number of People Experiencing Homelessness

Jessica Griffin / The Philadelphia Inquirer*

Philadelphia shows a continuous reduction in the growth of street homelessness. As a result of our compassionate, effective solutions, Philadelphia has the lowest street homelessness population across the top ten major U.S. cities.

Point-in-Time (PIT) Count

Each January, Philadelphia – like communities across the country – counts the number of people experiencing homelessness. This “point-in-time count” is a one-day snapshot of people who are literally homeless as defined by HUD.



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The Cure: Long-Term Housing

Jessica Griffin / The Philadelphia Inquirer*

In an overburdened shelter system, housing for couples is extremely scarce. Thanks to collaborative efforts among City outreach workers and partner Project HOME, Philadelphia couple Richard and Luz secured housing together.

Housing Inventory Count



Measuring Our Impact

MAKING HOMELESSNESS RARE:

Decrease the number of people experiencing homelessness for the first time	FY 2019 72%	FY 2020 68%
Increase the number of households that receive rental assistance	FY 2019 1,362	FY 2020 1,412

MAKING HOMELESSNESS BRIEF:

Decrease the average length of time (days) participants are enrolled in an emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing	FY 2019 161	FY 2020 157
Increase the number of households moving into rapid re-housing programs	FY 2019 388	FY 2020 507

MAKING HOMELESSNESS NON-RECURRING:

Maintain successful exits from emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional or rapid re-housing to a permanent housing destination	FY 2019 26%	FY 2020 26%
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Who We Are

The Office of Homeless Services is organized into three units:

Housing Services

- **Prevention and diversion:** Working to prevent homelessness in the first place and diverting people away from shelters and into alternatives that are effective and safe for them.
- **Emergency and temporary shelter:** Providing critically needed shelter to those who otherwise have no options and would be on the street or other places unfit for human habitation.
- **Long-term housing:** Securing safe and affordable housing options for Philadelphia’s most vulnerable residents. This includes programs like rapid re-housing.

Policy, Planning, and Performance (P3)

P3 designs and develops the essential planning, policy, information management, performance standards, funding, and learning systems for OHS so it successfully fulfills its mission.

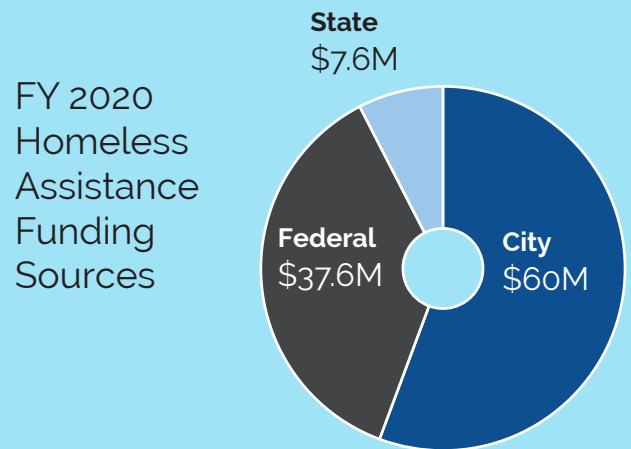
Administrative Services

Responsible for budget and finance, contract administration, human resources, facility and asset management, and information technology.



OHS leadership at the 2020 PIT Count.

How We Do It:



Different Together:

At OHS, we care deeply about equity, diversity, and creating an inclusive culture.

With 170 employees:

- **69% of leadership team members** are women, gender non-conforming, or non-binary
- **72% of leadership team members** are people of color
- **84% of the overall agency members** are people of color



Tim Tai/The Philadelphia Inquirer

COVID-19 and Call to Action

“We try to do our best to [comfort them].”

OHS administrator Yulanda Fitzgerald talks to a man in the waiting room of the Roosevelt Darby Center, a homeless intake center in North Philadelphia.

Never has it been clearer that housing is healthcare.

In March, when the City’s “stay at home” order was issued as the single most important way to protect oneself from contagion, it highlighted the difficult reality that hundreds of Philadelphians had no home to stay in. They lacked the most basic protection of their health – a place to live.

The homeless system, a network of service and housing providers, went to work to keep people safe. Actions included reducing bed density to ensure six feet of distance established for sleeping accommodations; immediately quarantining for shelter participants who were displaying COVID-19 symptoms; procuring personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer) for all shelter sites; and moved from congregate to grab and go meals in shelter.

Between March and August, our proactive actions sheltered over 6,500 participants; provided 21,000 bed-nights; and served 879,000 meals. And during that same time period, we reported only 120 positive participant cases.

As the world finds a new normal, it is our hope – and our call to action – that homelessness is not normal. It is not right that literally thousands of Philadelphians – and people across the country – are unhoused. Our new resolve will be NEVER AGAIN. Everyone needs a place to call home.

We urge you to be part of the movement to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring with your voice, your vote, your time.