



Together ● we  
**THRIVE**

Annual Report of  
Philadelphia's Health and  
Human Services Cabinet

# Overview

**Together We Thrive is the annual report of the Managing Director's Office of Health and Human Services Cabinet (MDO-HHS) for the City of Philadelphia. HHS is led by Eva Gladstein, Deputy Managing Director for Health and Human Services, and includes the Data Management Office (DMO), Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS), the Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity (CEO), the Office of Domestic Violence Strategies (ODVS), the Mayor's Commission on Aging (MCOA), the Office of Homeless Services (OHS), and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH).**

In Together We Thrive 2019, HHS committed to:

- addressing the risks that shape the health and safety of individuals and communities,
- transforming the way we assess need and match people to resources, and
- building infrastructure to ensure agencies are ready to act when new challenges appear.

These tenets prepared HHS for the sudden arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, which disrupted nearly every facet of life in Philadelphia and demanded a swift reimagining of how health and human services were delivered. Because of the pandemic, HHS did not publish a Together We Thrive report in 2020, but an extended account of how the HHS Cabinet has led the City's COVID-19 response for economically vulnerable individuals can be found [here](#).

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health stepped up to provide vital leadership and partnership to City officials and employees, HHS providers, and individuals citywide. The pandemic placed an especially great strain on the frontline workers who provided the health, treatment, housing, homeless outreach, and other in-person services that the community could not function without. Recovery from the pandemic will be years-long, and for the thousands of Philadelphians who have lost friends and family, life will never be the same.



## Glossary

<b>CBH</b>	Community Behavioral Health
<b>CEO</b>	Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity
<b>CWEU</b>	Community Wellness Engagement Unit
<b>DBHIDS</b>	Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services
<b>DHS</b>	Department of Human Services
<b>FEMA</b>	Federal Emergency Management Agency
<b>FY</b>	Fiscal Year
<b>HHS</b>	Health and Human Services
<b>HSWG</b>	Housing Security Working Group
<b>MCOA</b>	Mayor's Commission on Aging
<b>MDO</b>	Managing Director's Office
<b>ODVS</b>	Office of Domestic Violence Strategies
<b>OEM</b>	Office of Emergency Management
<b>OHS</b>	Office of Homeless Services
<b>ORU</b>	Opioid Response Unit
<b>PDE</b>	Pennsylvania Department of Education
<b>PDPH</b>	Philadelphia Department of Public Health
<b>PHDC</b>	Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation
<b>YRPTF</b>	Youth Residential Placement Task Force

# The HHS Cabinet is committed to:



## HEALTHY PEOPLE

Working for every Philadelphian to be able to live in a healthy environment with stable access to food, housing, high quality physical and behavioral health care, and for those whose health is at risk, offering early intervention and prevention services in the community.



## CONNECTED PEOPLE

Developing pathways for economic mobility and full integration into the life of the city, such that someone experiencing health or economic vulnerability can select and access the services and activities they need to heal and to thrive.



## SAFE PEOPLE

Keeping Philadelphians safe from injury in their homes and communities and providing trauma-informed services across the health and human services system.



## EQUITABLE CITY

Pursuing policies and programs that promote racial equity, which is imperative to address the historical and systemic barriers to the health, safety, and connectedness of Philadelphians.

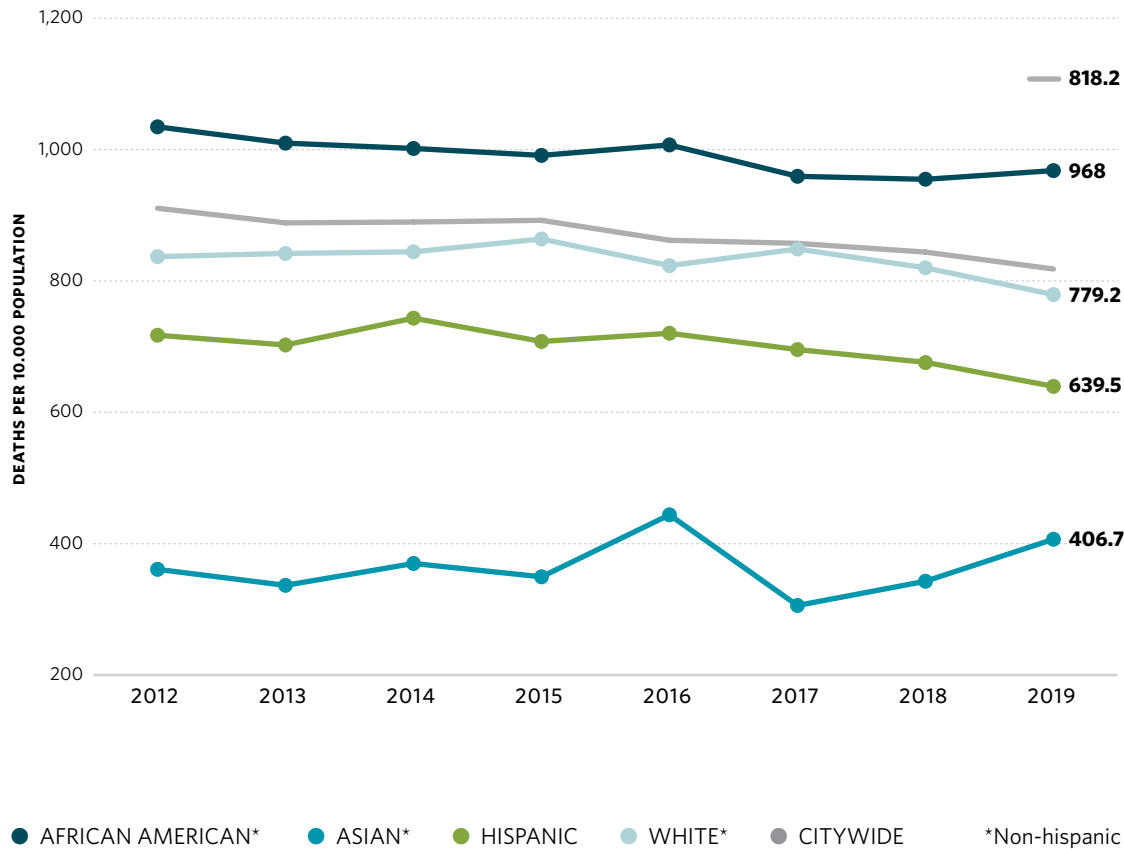
# Committing to a Renewed Focus on Racial Equity

**Black and Hispanic Philadelphians have the highest rates of infection, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19.** For Black residents, disproportionately high mortality was a feature of life in Philadelphia pre-pandemic, and the Black lives lost to COVID-19 amplified the reality that Black Philadelphians live in an environment that does not protect their health and safety as well as that of their neighbors.

The disparities in health and well-being experienced by Black and Hispanic Philadelphians mandates that work to HHS — that work to build a city where the structures, systems, and environments enhance the health of all residents must be driven by a focus on racial equity. HHS implements evidence-based interventions and data-informed best practices in its policies and service delivery, but that has not yet been enough to turn around the untenable rise in opioid overdose deaths and gun violence, or to mitigate the disparate impact of COVID-19 disease burden and vaccination access experienced by communities of color. As a government body, HHS can uniquely make structural changes towards remediating the barriers to health, safety, and connectedness many Philadelphians disproportionately experience from the confluence of public health crises, social determinants of health, and systemic racism.

Longstanding challenges to equity in health and well-being — including chronic homelessness and an unyieldingly high poverty rate — are not intractable. The influx of federal funding from the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan have provided resources to scale interventions that the City knows can work. For example, Philadelphia's homeless services system serves mostly Black residents due to a history of systemic racism, but permanent supportive housing is a proven solution to chronic homelessness that has already made homelessness more rare, brief, and non-recurring across the city. New federal funding, spurred by the stark needs laid bare by the pandemic, will help accelerate the City's ability to scale up permanent supportive housing and ring in a more equitable future — a better outcome for all City residents. Expanded federal resources also have the potential to cut the number of children in deep poverty in Philadelphia by one-half through the implementation of the 2021 Child Tax Credit, which makes at least \$3,000 per child available to almost all Philadelphia families this year with the potential to make a substantial, lasting impact if extended or made permanent by lawmakers. There are actionable, demonstrable policy solutions even for longstanding causes of economic, medical, and social injustice.

**FIG. 1 Age Adjusted Mortality by Race/Ethnicity**



PDPH published an overview of COVID-19 impact by race and ethnicity through August 2020 here: [PDPH CHART](#).

The data through June 2021 is available on Open Data Philly here: [COVID Hospitalizations](#) and [COVID Deaths](#).

2012 - 2019 mortality data comes from PDPH's vital statistics.

FIG. 2 Covid Hospitalizations by Race

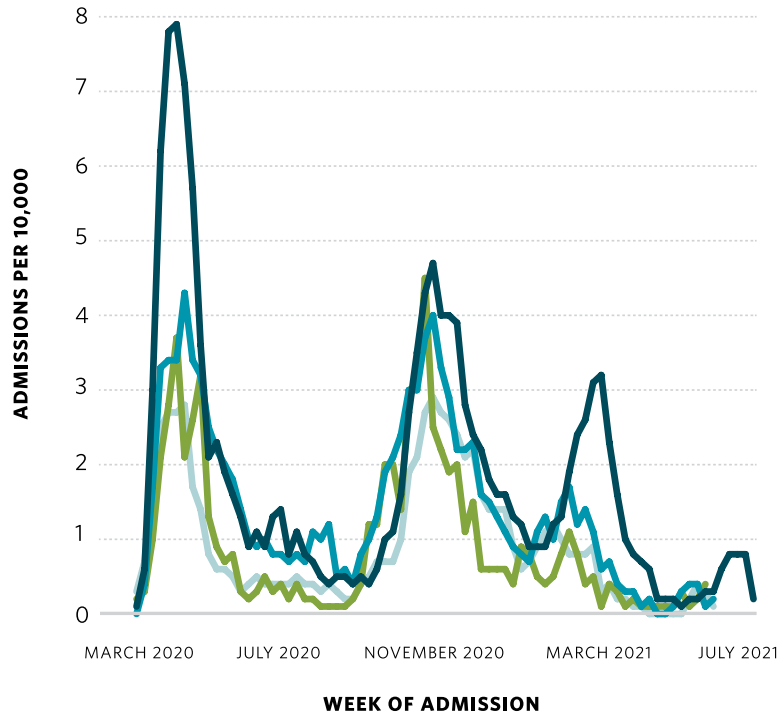
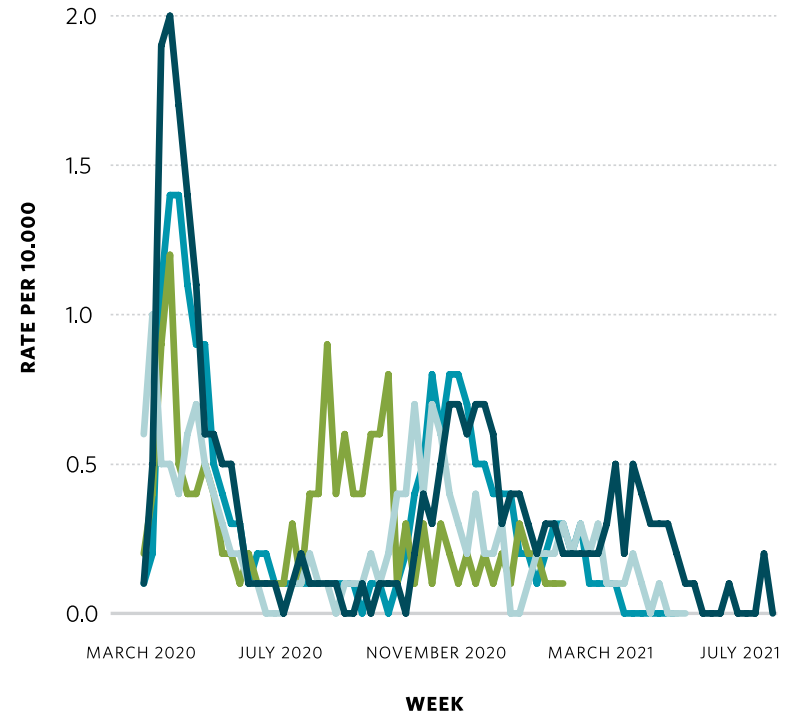


FIG. 3 Covid Deaths by Race



● AFRICAN AMERICAN ● ASIAN ● HISPANIC ● WHITE

# Coordinated Strategies of the HHS Cabinet

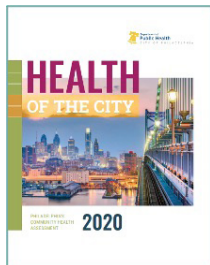
The purpose of the HHS Cabinet is to ensure progress is being made towards shared goals, and experience demonstrates that this is best achieved through aligning work and systems between HHS agencies, across City government, and with community partners. The close working relationships in the HHS cabinet allow for a better and more efficient government through deduplication of efforts, information sharing, coordinated advocacy, linkages between services for residents, and preparedness responding to new challenges. The following five strategies are hallmarks of HHS work:

- 1 Implement and lead cross-departmental working groups to advance major City initiatives.**
- 2 Create and maintain strong and effective internal and external partnerships.**
- 3 Improve services provided to individuals.**
- 4 Educate Philadelphians on critical issues by providing reliable information and by proactively engaging people in the community.**
- 5 Advocate for federal, state, and local policy change.**

The aim of these strategies is to make Philadelphia a city where every resident can be healthy, safe, and connected. That is, a city where someone experiencing health or economic vulnerability can rely on a health and human services infrastructure within which they can select and access the services and activities they need to heal and to thrive. The City can only achieve this for all Philadelphians by approaching its work through the lens of racial equity. Additionally, physical health, behavioral health, and public health must be addressed together with social determinants of health, including financial health, economic stability, housing stability, and food security. Each HHS agency leads and participates in strategic, cross-cutting work every day, making its work stronger and more effective in service to Philadelphians.

## For each of the five strategies, this report highlights a selection of representative work and recent achievements from across the HHS cabinet.

Since Together We Thrive 2019 there have been big changes at HHS. In 2020, the coordination of cross-agency response to the opioid epidemic transitioned to a permanent home in the newly created Opioid Response Unit in the Managing Director's Office. Also in 2020, the Philadelphia Department of Human Services (DHS) moved from the MDO-HHS to the new Mayor's Office of Children and Families. Updates on DHS work can be followed at: [phila.gov/dhs](http://phila.gov/dhs). For additional updates about HHS department-specific progress and priorities since 2019, see the following recent publications:



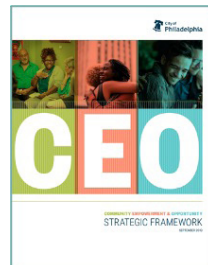
Health of the City  
2020



OHS Annual Report  
2020



DBHIDS Annual  
Report 2021



CEO Strategic  
Framework 2019

### The projects below were next steps in Together We Thrive 2019, which have since been brought to fruition:

- ✓ Beacon House opened in June 2021, providing essential housing and daytime engagement services in the Kensington neighborhood.
- ✓ The Youth Residential Placement Task Force (YRPTF) published its recommendations, and implementation is well underway. The most recent progress updates can be found in the [2020 annual report](#).
- ✓ Same Day Work and Pay Program Pilot was implemented in 2019, with 10 workers hired each day for a no-barrier opportunity with Mural Arts Philadelphia. The program has since expanded to include the Kensington neighborhood with the Community Life Improvement Program (CLIP), and up to 20 workers hired each day.
- ✓ Pursuant to the commitments in the [Brotherly Love: Health of Black Men and Boys](#) published in March 2019, PDPH launched a locally produced hypertension campaign called "What's Your Pressure" aimed at helping Black men to control their blood pressure. The campaign includes [videos](#) and has used barbershops to distribute materials and to host radio events.



1

HHS agencies **implement and lead cross-departmental working groups** to advance major initiatives – providing strategic planning, oversight, and guidance for implementation.

### Youth Residential Placement Task Force

The Youth Residential Placement Task Force convened in 2018 and 2019 to make recommendations on ways to reduce the reliance on—and improve the safety and quality of—youth residential placements across three systems: child welfare, juvenile justice and psychiatric treatment. In November 2019, Task Force members (including City leaders and system stakeholders) released a report with 19 recommendations to reach these goals and accelerate progress already underway, with implementation coordinated by MDO-HHS. In the first year of implementation, MDO-HHS drove the creation of the “Youth and Family Rights Guides” and the “Three-Year Plan and Projections” to reduce placement numbers and increase community alternatives. More information about the City’s progress is available in the [2020 Annual Report](#). To learn more about the work of the Task Force and to view previous publications, [explore these past reports and guides](#).

### Intergovernmental Council on Homelessness

Intergovernmental Council on Homelessness (ICH) was founded in 2018 and represents the interdisciplinary partnership between OHS and various departmental stakeholders from across more than 10 agencies - including DBHIDS, DHS, PDPH, and HHS - that is intended to improve communication and integration to streamline and improve the system’s operations and service delivery. ICH members are departmental directors and commissioners who lend their expertise and leadership to the successful implementation of the [Roadmap to Homes Strategic Plan](#), which details the goals, values, and priorities they committed to collectively. Updates and collaboration are facilitated through quarterly and bimonthly meetings on cross-system projects.

### Opioid Response Unit Strategy Groups

The Opioid Response Unit (ORU) was created in February 2020 to coordinate the City's long-term, strategic response to the ongoing opioid epidemic in Philadelphia. The ORU has four strategy groups, three of which are led by subject matter experts from HHS: MDO-HHS leads the Community Support group; PDPH leads the Prevention group; and DBHIDS leads the Treatment group. Additionally, MDO-HHS, DBHIDS, OHS, MCOA, and PDPH all support one or more strategy groups led by other agencies. Detailed updates to the ongoing work of the ORU strategy groups can be found in the [Philadelphia Opioid Response 2021 Action Plan](#).

### Firearm Homicide and Nonfatal Injury Review Team

PDPH built on its experience with OD Stat, the City's opioid overdose fatality review started in 2019, to establish the Firearm Homicide and Nonfatal Injury Review team. This new review team identifies opportunities to prevent firearm violence and death through in-depth case review of victims of violence and their touchpoints with City and prevention agencies. Meetings include stakeholders from over 18 organizations, within and outside of city government. The purpose of the meetings is to identify patterns and create actionable recommendations. The first meeting was in January 2020 and the review continues quarterly.



2

HHS agencies create and maintain strong internal and external partnerships that facilitate responsiveness to stakeholders and help address the multiplicative factors that impact each aspect of health and well-being.

PARTNERSHIPS	KEY ACHIEVEMENTS
<p><b>MCOA with AARP Pennsylvania</b> + over 57 community-based organizations &amp; City departments</p>	<p><b>Released an <a href="#">Age Friendly Report and Action Plan</a></b> in July 2020, detailing its collaboration with a network of partners to assess Philadelphia’s “age-friendliness” and develop an action plan for creating an livable city for all. The report identifies housing, transportation, and access to outdoor spaces and buildings as priority areas for the future.</p>
<p><b>MDO-HHS with DBHIDS/CBH</b> + Philadelphia School District + behavioral health providers</p>	<p><b>Expanded access to Medicaid-reimbursable behavioral health services for youth</b> through the school district.</p>
<p><b>ODVS with DBHIDS + OHS + Women Against Abuse + Nationalities Services Center</b> + over 50 stakeholder organizations</p>	<p><b>Improved communication from Shared Safety – a coordinated community response to address intimate partner violence, sexual violence and human trafficking – to over 200 stakeholders</b> by increasing the number of times the Shared Safety e-blast is opened, from 211 reads to 601, and increased the number of times links were clicked in the e-blasts from 60 to 214.</p>
<p><b>OHS with DHS</b></p>	<p><b>Obtained 75 Family Unification housing vouchers to enable children to be reunited with their parents</b> after court determination of safety when the only remaining barrier is lack of housing.</p>
<p><b>CEO with MDO + OHS + City Council</b> + over 35 organizations &amp; City agencies</p>	<p><b>Advanced 12 of the 14 recommendations remaining to be implemented from the 2018 Recommendations from the Mayor’s Task force on Eviction Prevention and Response</b>, as reported in detail in the <a href="#">Housing Security Working Group Eviction Prevention and Response Progress Report March 2021</a>.</p>

PARTNERSHIPS	KEY ACHIEVEMENTS
<p><b>MDO-HHS with</b> Philadelphia Municipal Court + PHDC + legal aid and community partners</p>	<p><b>Implemented a <u>nationally recognized</u> eviction prevention program during the pandemic</b>, supported by a Court Order, requiring landlords to pursue mediation and rental assistance before filing for eviction due to non-payment of rent.</p>
<p><b>OHS with</b> OCF + PDE + UPenn + CareerLink + community partners</p>	<p><b>Developed a pathway for families and individuals to gain employment, exit shelter sooner and get a sustainable income</b> through the Employment and Childcare Initiative called “Help for the Hurdles.” Help for the Hurdles initiative had its first orientation for single shelters at the end of April 2021. The first cohort started working in May 2021. To date, the program successfully employed 16 single shelter residents and paid \$26,751.67 in earned wages with an average hourly rate of \$14.65. Family shelter marketing started in June. Family orientations started in July.</p>
<p><b>PDPH with</b> Commerce + OEM + Fire + Philly Counts + FEMA + DBHIDS + OHS + Community Partners</p>	<p><b>Helped hundreds of thousands of Philadelphians get COVID-19 vaccines by working together in a true, whole-city effort.</b> PDPH worked with: OHS to vaccinate people staying in shelters, staff, and unsheltered individuals; Commerce to offer vaccines to local businesses; Philly Counts to share information with thousands of Philadelphians through phone banking, canvassing, and ambassadors; and DBHIDS to help surmount concerns about vaccine safety. OEM has served as a central coordinating organization for the emergency response, and the vaccination of more than 900,000 Philadelphians as of June 2021 has been achieved through hundreds of community partnerships, building on existing relationships and creating new ones in the process.</p>
<p><b>CEO with</b> 8 community-based organizations</p>	<p><b>Provided one-on-one screening, application assistance, and enrollment for thousands of residents into more than 19 local, state, and federal benefits programs through the BenePhilly initiative.</b> In CY20, 2,086 residents received one-on-one help with 4,556 screenings and 6,166 applications, resulting in 1,689 enrollments that generated \$3,995,652 in benefits.</p>

PARTNERSHIPS	KEY ACHIEVEMENTS
<p><b>DMO with</b> HHS Cabinet, City agencies, and Academic Partners</p>	<p><b>Facilitated data requests and prepared data between January 2020 and June 21 for over 60 projects</b>, about half of which were within the HHS cabinet and half of which were with other City agencies as well as several intensive data projects for program evaluations in partnership with external academic researchers.</p>
<p><b>OHS with</b> DBHIDS + Office of Reentry Partnerships + Office of Criminal Justice + Philadelphia Department of Prisons + RHD</p>	<p><b>Established an emergency housing program to provide 25 people with behavioral health challenges immediate housing upon release from incarceration, with supportive services and housing for at least 12 months.</b> Launched in 2020, there are currently 19 people housed through this program with 1 more individual set to be released and housed. All 19 individuals are currently receiving supports in the form of case management, care coordination, peer engagement, and a tenant service coordinator. Of those 19 individuals, 5 individuals receive income from SSI, SSDI, or employment.</p>
<p><b>PDPH with</b> Philadelphia health systems and hospitals</p>	<p><b>Established a goal to connect every person seen at a Philadelphia trauma center because of a gunshot injury with a hospital-based violence interruption program</b>, and worked towards realizing this goal as a way to reduce the burden of gun violence on the Philadelphia community.</p>
<p><b>DBHIDS with</b> Philadelphians and their communities</p>	<p><b>Bolstered the capacity of Network of Neighbors Responding to Violence, a network of community members trained to support—and lead—responses to stress, trauma, loss, and violence within their own communities</b>, including trauma from gun violence and COVID-19. In 2020, 79 community members were newly trained as Network of Neighbor Responders, and from January - June 2021, Network of Neighbors served 93 communities. The number of communities served by Network of Neighbors doesn't make sense to me. First we say we served 93 communities, then we say the number went from 29 to 48 in a specific period of time. Clarify or leave out the last sentence.</p>

*See appendix for a glossary of acronyms.*

## 3

## HHS agencies improve services provided to individuals by implementing new best practices and bringing successful practices to scale.

### People with behavioral health needs and people with intellectual disAbility challenges

DBHIDS established the Community Wellness Engagement Unit (CWEU) in July 2019, which is a mobile team of Certified Peer Specialists, Certified Recovery Specialists, and Behavioral Health Specialists. The unit also includes a Family Navigator and an Autism Peer Specialist. CWEU operates in neighborhoods with the goal of supporting community organizations and engaging with individuals to offer connection to treatment, shelter, and City services. This skilled, diverse, and multilingual team truly meets people where they are to provide behavioral health assessments and links to both behavioral health care and wellness related services to address other social determinants of health that may affect individuals' health and well-being. The first CWEU team was a success, and has now grown to 6 teams, who have conducted 738 encounters and made 150 referrals for treatment through December 2020.

### Survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and trafficking.

The Office of Domestic Violence Strategies is training HHS staff, OCF staff, and HHS and OCF providers in the dynamics of intimate partner violence, sexual violence and trafficking; and how to provide trauma-informed services to survivors. In FY21, ODVS – in collaboration with HHS departments – held 43 trainings for 1,284 people, a significant increase from the 28 trainings that reached 842 people in FY 20. In FY21, ODVS and DHS provided 540 domestic violence consults on DHS cases, up from 360 in FY20.

### People with substance use disorder

DBHIDS is evaluating and transforming its residential programs by working with staff and residents to create a viable and vibrant supportive housing network, based on the current needs of the programs, staff and participants. The challenges of limited permanent supportive housing options, COVID-19, and staff shortages required a creative and flexible response to the needs of the agencies, programs, and participants to find efficiencies across the system. DBHIDS worked with four contracted agencies to complete a process that included a full assessment of each participant in the program as well as an assessment of the physical space. DBHIDS is in the process of modifying program models, moving individuals to a higher and lower level of care as appropriate to best meet their needs, and seeking additional funding for domiciliary care and other potential opportunities. The goal of this housing transformation process is to have a healthy housing system which meets the needs of Philadelphia residents, ensures financial viability and maintenance of quality programs, and accommodates the de-densification necessitated by COVID-19.

DBHIDS also made substantial progress towards bringing the number of warm hand-offs back to pre-pandemic levels. Warm hand-offs are when an individual with substance use disorder who is engaged or treated by a healthcare unit is linked to substance use treatment through an arrangement of at least one behavioral health service that is confirmed and accepted by both the individual and the provider. Between July 2019 and March 2020, over 1800 warm hand-offs were facilitated – more than 600 per quarter. During 2020, the number of warm hand-offs decreased but remained above 250 per quarter, and in the first quarter of 2021 the number of warm hand-offs once again surpassed 500.

### Older adults

Programs for older adults were adapted to continue serving seniors during the pandemic, including a critical transition from congregate meals in Senior Centers across the city to grab-and-go meals. From March 18, 2020 through February 26, 2021, seniors accessed 527,079 meals at more than 25 sites in the community. The Senior Community Service Employment Program, operated by MCOA, also continued to support participants by moving programs online and expanding access to virtual training opportunities and daily wellness checks.



### People in congregate care

OHS and DBHIDS combined their experience in operating congregate spaces with PDPH's expertise in managing infectious disease to keep shelters and treatment programs safe for participants throughout the pandemic. Reducing bed density, developing quarantine procedures, procuring personal protective equipment, and using grab-and-go meals helped keep case rates low in shelters. COVID Prevention Spaces provided non-congregate shelter for people over 60 and with health conditions that made them high risk for serious cases of COVID-19. As of June 2021, over 800 people in the shelter system have gotten COVID vaccines. Successful exits from shelter to permanent housing rose from 26% in 2020 to 28% in 2021. Providers leveraged resources such as pandemic-related HUD waivers to lower barriers for entry to permanent housing and secured permanent housing placements for 2,650 individuals in 2020 and 2,269 individuals in 2021. The number of exits from shelter to permanent housing decreased from 2020 to 2021, reflecting a downward trend of people experiencing homelessness systemwide. Although the pandemic brought many things to a halt, not one single program ceased operating due to the pandemic, and programs innovated remote operations to continue to provide service.

4

HHS agencies educate Philadelphians on critical issues by providing reliable information and by proactively engaging people in the community to connect them with resources that promote health and well-being.

### Public Awareness Campaigns on Health and Wellness

PDPH and DBHIDS produced culturally competent communications materials to share accurate, evidence-based health and safety information about the COVID-19 pandemic across diverse communities citywide. The current DBHIDS campaign is focused on healing and resilience for individuals and communities.



### Finances and Safe Banking

CEO's Financial Inclusion Unit provides programs and support to foster greater financial inclusion in Philadelphia. Financial Inclusion accomplishes this by administering one-on-one financial counseling at its Financial Empowerment Centers, promoting safe and affordable bank accounts through its Bank-On Coalition, and connecting youth to banking through its Summer Jobs Connect Program. In 2020, FECs served 1,111 individuals across 1,335 sessions and helped clients reduce debt by a collective \$740,000, helped increase savings by a collective \$340,000, helped 108 clients increase their credit scores by at least 35 points, and helped 18 clients open safe and affordable bank accounts.



### Youth Workforce Development and Career Pathways

CEO's Youth Strategies Unit provides programs and support for Philadelphia youth to increase access to age-appropriate workforce development and post-secondary planning. The Career Pathways program forms partnerships that shorten and strengthen career pipelines and training programs for youth citywide by providing quality work experiences and professional mentorship for teens ages 12-18. The Promise Corps program provides teams of AmeriCorps College and Career Coaches to high schools in West Philadelphia, who provide one-on-one coaching to guide the high school students towards all post-secondary options available, and then establish short and long-term goals to drive them towards their desired plan. Data and detailed updates can be found in the [2020 - 2021 West Philadelphia Promise Corps Progress Report](#). In FY 20, over 1,000 youth participated in CEO's Youth Strategies programs and received training, resources, and quality work experience.



### Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) can impact anyone regardless of their background, race, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. ODVS provides several educational opportunities each year for Philadelphians about the dynamics of IPV as well as available resources. In FY 20, ODVS held 4 public awareness events and reached at least 200 people through events and social media. In FY 21, ODVS held 3 public awareness events, including one tailored to City staff, and in response to elevated concern around IPV survivors and the safer-at-home recommendations. ODVS also disseminated information and resources through publicly live-streamed COVID-19 press conferences, by including flyers in food boxes, and by creating space pads with the Domestic Violence hotline number.

 Mural Arts  
Philadelphia

Artista: Nile Livingston



Línea de Ayuda para Violencia Doméstica de Filadelfia

**1-866-723-3014**

## 5 HHS agencies advocate for federal, state, and local policy change to shape a more equitable future.

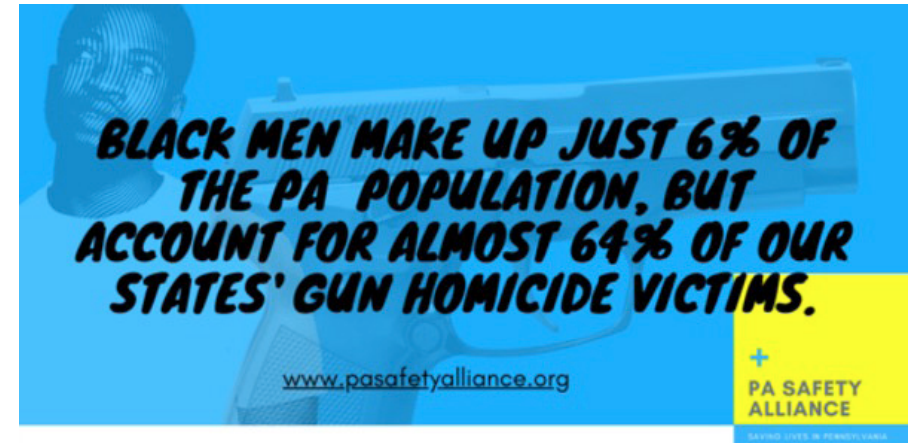
### Federal Administrative Advocacy

Since 2019, every HHS agency has submitted public comments to the federal government in response to proposed regulatory changes that would significantly impact their work or the lives of the people they serve. The public comment process is a critical way for City agencies to evaluate the justification presented by the federal government for proposed rule changes and assess whether the proposal's purported benefits outweigh its costs. Several proposed rulemakings in 2019 and 2020 threatened access to basic entitlement benefits, and HHS leadership submitted over 30 comments communicating their strong opposition to those proposals, including:

- opposing cuts to SNAP benefits during three separate proposed rulemakings;
- protecting Social Security beneficiaries from a more burdensome process to maintain benefits;
- opposing expanded limitations on access to public benefits for immigrants and their sponsors; and,
- protecting access to shelter nationwide for transgender individuals.

### State-level Advocacy on Firearms Policy

In July 2020, PDPH helped launch the PA Safety Alliance as a founding member. The PA Safety Alliance includes diverse, statewide membership and seeks to advocate for sensible policies with unified support from stakeholders. In March 2021, the Alliance released polling data that demonstrated the popularity of implementing a permit requirement to purchase a firearm. Updates, resources, and a full list of members can be found at [pasafetyalliance.org](https://pasafetyalliance.org).



### Local-level Advocacy on Municipal Court Fines and Fees

CEO is continuing to lead the effort started in 2019 to promote discussion, advocacy, and action aimed to reduce the prevalence of charging excessive municipal and court fines and fees, as reported in CEO's 2021 [Impact of Criminal Court Fines and Fees on Philadelphia Report](#). Through this work, CEO - with its partners in the Mayor's Office, MDO, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the Budget Office, and the Department of Prisons - aims to reduce the financial burden placed on returning citizens and develop recommendations to reform the current system. This group reform identified three priorities for reforming harmful fines and fees in the City of Philadelphia. This work led to the Philadelphia Department of Prisons eliminating or reducing several fees charged to inmates in city jails and boosting the available amount of free communication - read more about the changes [here](#). These actions will help strengthen family ties and lead to more successful reentry.



# Moving Forward

The pandemic introduced an enormous new threat to the health and well-being of Philadelphians, while also exacerbating nearly every preexisting economic vulnerability - but there is cause for optimism that the next year can bring real, positive change. Expansive new federal funding is being made available to Philadelphia at this critical time, including funds for the City to help mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic and to boost the recovery, and to over 90% of Philadelphia families with kids through the 2021 Child Tax Credit. The next steps below highlight a few ways that HHS agencies plan to build on the tried-and-trusted strategies described in this report. For a more comprehensive review of work occurring across the HHS agencies, visit the reports and webpages linked in the appendix.

In conclusion, the HHS Cabinet is committed to working in furtherance of a more equitable City, achieved through changes in policy and government systems, that supports the health, safety, and connectedness of every Philadelphian.



# APPENDIX

## Recent Reports

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[PDPH Health of the City 2020](#)

[DBHIDS Annual Report 2021](#)

[ORU Strategic Report 2021](#)

[YRPTF Annual Report 2020](#)

[COVID Response to Support Economically Vulnerable Populations](#)

[CEO Impact of Criminal Court Fines and Fees on Philadelphia Report 2021](#)

[HSWG Staying at Home: Eviction Prevention & Response Progress Report 2021](#)

[OHS Annual Report 2021](#)

[CEO Strategic Plan 2019](#)

[Roadmap to Safer Communities 2021 Update](#)

[HSWG Eviction Prevention Report 2020](#)

[Philadelphia Livable Communities Action Plan and Assessment Report](#)

[2020 - 2021 West Philadelphia Promise Corps Progress Report](#)

[Roadmap to Homes OHS Strategic Plan 2018](#)

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Project Manager

#### Joshua Roper

Policy Director

#### Mary Scalia

Executive Assistant

#### Beverly Woods

Assistant Deputy Managing Director

Together  we  
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2020-2021

Annual Report of Philadelphia's Health and Human Services Cabinet

