



PHILADELPHIA

UPWARD MOBILITY ACTION PLAN

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

www.phila.gov

CONTENTS

SUMMARY..... 3

VISION STATEMENT 6

HOW WE GOT HERE..... 6

The COVID-19 Pandemic and Its Impacts on our Work 7

Technical Assistance from the Urban Institute 8

Creating Philadelphia’s Mobility Action Plan 10

HOUSING AND UPWARD MOBILITY FOR FORMERLY INCARCERATED PHILADELPHIANS 12

SUMMARY OF UPWARD MOBILITY INSIGHTS..... 15

Financial Well-Being 15

Secure and Stable Housing 17

Neighborhoods 19

Work 22

UPWARD MOBILITY GOALS..... 25

STRATEGIC ACTIONS 26

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY..... 42

APPENDIX 01: PHILADELPHIA’S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE..... 43

APPENDIX 02: PHILADELPHIA PROGRAM & POLICY INVENTORY..... 46

SUMMARY

The Philadelphia Upward Mobility Project is an interagency initiative of the City of Philadelphia intended to recommend strategies to increase upward mobility from poverty for Philadelphia residents. Through this project, Philadelphia will focus on strengthening four key systems behind our upward mobility work: data management, performance evaluation, community engagement, and coordinated benefits access strategies.

Philadelphia strives to be a city where every resident is healthy, safe, and has economic prosperity and a good quality of life. We aim to be an equitable city that eliminates the barriers to health, safety, and connectedness that exist based on race and ethnicity, disability status, age, and gender identity.

COLLABORATORS

The Philadelphia Upward Mobility Project, led by the Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity (CEO) and the Division of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), engaged key stakeholders from across city government and from nonprofit and community-based organization partners to analyze data on barriers to mobility, conduct community engagement activities, and develop strategic actions that could boost mobility from poverty and eliminate racial disparities in the city.

MOBILITY INSIGHTS

To understand the current structural barriers in Philadelphia that block people with low-incomes and people of color from achieving prosperity, the Upward Mobility Project conducted several rounds of information-gathering and data analysis. We began by analyzing the Urban Institute's [Mobility Metrics](#) for Philadelphia, and then gathered additional local administrative data and assembled an inventory of plans and programs in operation or recently proposed in Philadelphia to learn more about the current state of initiatives and gaps in services. Next, we convened key stakeholders within and outside of government, and conducted community engagement with a key population that faces upward mobility challenges—individuals in re-entry—to learn more about the specific challenges they face in accessing housing as that was

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Strengthen four key systems behind Philadelphia's upward mobility work.

Strategic Action 1

Expand the City's data management operations and sharing.

Strategic Action 2

Strengthen departmental capacity for person-centered performance evaluation of Upward Mobility program performance.

Strategic Action 3

Improve the quality of equitable community engagement.

Strategic Action 4

Expand benefits access and departmental collaboration around service delivery.

identified as a key mobility metric. Finally, we participated in a training on equity-centered performance management practices. Based on these efforts, the Upward Mobility project gathered the following key insights about barriers to mobility in each of the project's four priority policy domains:

- **Housing:** The current supply of affordable housing in Philadelphia is gravely insufficient, particularly for extremely low-income households. Additionally, well over half of low- and two-thirds of extremely low-income renter households are housing cost burdened, meaning they spend over 50 percent of their income on rent. Current Philadelphia residents are struggling to find safe and affordable housing in Philadelphia. The community engagement Philadelphia is currently conducting with individuals in re-entry about their housing needs is revealing significant barriers they face in accessing safe, affordable housing. More details on those findings will be released later in 2022.
- **Financial Well-Being:** Over half of Philadelphia residents living in zip codes that are majority people of color have debt in collections, versus less than a quarter of people living in zip codes where residents are majority White, non-Hispanic. Black and Hispanic households that may be slightly above income limits for benefits programs but who have significant household debt are at a disadvantage, and Philadelphia should acknowledge this benefits cliff when structuring programs.
- **Neighborhoods:** Philadelphia has high rates of income segregation relative to comparison cities. 34.6 percent of residents experiencing poverty live in high poverty neighborhoods. This statistic is worse for Black and Hispanic residents. Philadelphia must consider this when determining where investments are made so that we can boost the availability and quality of amenities, goods, and services.
- **Work:** Philadelphia continues to struggle with a lower employment rate than the nation and peer cities. In 2018, only 74.2 percent of Philadelphians between the ages of 25 and 54 were employed, as compared to Baltimore city (78.6%), Cook County (80.8%) and Fulton County (82.9%). Black and Hispanic Philadelphians are faring worse: only 67.1 percent of Black Philadelphians and 63.9 percent of Hispanic Philadelphians between the ages of 25 and 54 were employed in 2018.

The Kenney Administration and leaders in City Council have long recognized these challenges, and together have produced several plans since 2018 that recommend policies and programs to advance inclusive neighborhood growth, expand housing programs, create job and workforce development programs, and spur an equitable economic recovery. Appendix 02 includes an inventory of those plans and key recommendations from them. For this Upward Mobility project, Philadelphia chose to recommend four key strategic actions that we believe would strengthen our

ability to implement the recommendations in those plans and achieve more equitable outcomes for Philadelphians:

KEY STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Expand and improve the City's data management and sharing

Strong and effective data collection and management, and use of person-level data can allow us to solve the challenges that our residents face in accessing program and services.

Expanding and improving the City's data management operations and sharing will help us to design better and more targeted programming and to monitor implementation more closely.

01

- Ensure that data collected either directly by the City or through its contracted service delivery partners is appropriately disaggregated.
- Make certain that contracts with service delivery partners include adequate data collection, sharing, and use agreements.
- Inventory the data departments are currently collecting.
- Create a data equity framework.
- Build the internal systems for managing data.
- Contribute to a citywide data dictionary.
- Create and contribute to a multi-departmental public data dashboard.

Strengthen departmental capacity for outcomes-based evaluation of upward mobility programming

Philadelphia currently operates many policies and programs aimed at boosting upward mobility and addressing the causes and conditions of poverty. To know whether they are having the intended impact on upward mobility, Philadelphia must strengthen its ability to evaluate our current programs, with a focus on measuring their impact on residents' outcomes.

02

- Conduct annual trainings for key staff on root cause analysis, racial equity, and the difference between outputs and outcomes.
- Create planning and performance evaluation tools and procedures that are accessible to relevant staff and go beyond the immediate service term/contract term.
- Identify metrics that can be measured to evaluate upward mobility.
- Incentivize providing the service that people need.
- Demonstrate to the public how seriously we take our accountability by sharing the results of our evaluations publicly.

Improve the quality of equitable community engagement

Intentional and meaningful community engagement will allow residents to experience upward mobility from poverty by generating solutions from the people closest to the problems, demonstrating how problems affect people in different ways, and help build trust and civic infrastructure within communities.

03

- Create standards for equitable public comment processes.
- Improve language access including for smaller language communities.
- Build on our existing community engagement network but find opportunities to strengthen coordination and capacity.
- Compensate residents for their expertise and time.
- Report back to the public how their input was used.

Expand benefits access, cash assistance, and departmental collaboration around service delivery

Philadelphia can continue leading locally by growing its benefits access work, shifting toward automatic and cross enrollment, advancing more flexible cash assistance programs, removing barriers to access, and advocating for similar efforts at the state and federal level.

04

- Invest more in the community-based outreach and enrollment model of BenePhilly.
- Expand BenePhilly to include portable and self-guided options.
- Upgrade benefits access platform and systems to streamline applications to local, state, and federal benefits, easily add new benefits.
- Improve telephonic benefits access.
- Continue experimenting with flexible cash assistance programs.
- Create local best practices around "benefits cliff" avoidance and to encourage upward mobility.
- Explore more opportunities for auto-enrollment and cross-enrollment for local, state, and federal programs.
- Reduce barriers to annual re-certification or renewal in benefits programs.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Following the completion of the Philadelphia Mobility Action Plan, we anticipate the following next steps:

- The release of a detailed report describing what we learned from our community engagement with Philadelphians in re-entry about their housing needs and challenges, and recommendations on how the four strategic actions in this plan can be applied to those learnings to strengthen housing stability for this population that faces significant barriers to upward mobility.
- Exploration of how to coordinate and align Philadelphia's ongoing work creating department-level racial equity strategies with these strategic actions.

- Discussions with key city leadership on the resources, technical assistance, and capacity that would be needed to implement the four key strategic actions, including which departments are well-positioned to lead pilot projects that can later be brought to scale.

The Upward Mobility Cohort

Everyone deserves the chance to improve their lives: to strengthen their economic well-being, to be valued and feel they belong, and to have power and autonomy.

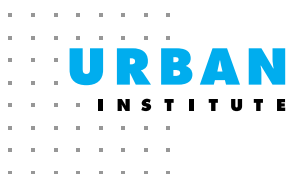
Thriving communities that support opportunity boost upward mobility and aim to narrow racial and ethnic inequities for children, youth, and adults. Local leaders increasingly have access to strategies and policy levers that can help achieve those goals.

This Mobility Action Plan describes goals, strategies, and target outcomes for boosting mobility from poverty for the City of Philadelphia. These findings are the product of 18 months of research and engagement by the city of Philadelphia with support from the nonprofit Urban Institute. Building on the insights of the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty, namely that upward mobility is about more than just economic success but also belonging and autonomy, Urban and a working group of researchers developed a framework and set of mobility metrics representing a range of policy areas that influence mobility. Communities can use these metrics to understand local conditions and disparities, set priorities, and take policy action to boost upward mobility and reduce inequities.

To better understand how these mobility metrics can support communities, Urban selected eight counties from across the country to participate in the Upward Mobility Cohort. Philadelphia was a member of this initial cohort. Beginning in early 2021, each county sought to better understand the local conditions that enable or prevent mobility and equity in their communities and to develop priorities and strategies for action. As part of this process, counties have:

- analyzed the mobility metrics and other local data to understand the areas of strength and concern for upward mobility and the people and communities who are most affected;
- partnered with local organizations and community members to examine the local histories and underlying factors that may perpetuate structural barriers affecting mobility and equity outcomes and ensure that the Mobility Action Plan reflects community priorities;
- identified the current and potential landscape of solutions by inventorying existing plans and programs within and beyond government to assess where there are gaps or opportunities for improvement; and
- engaged with peer counties to share best practices, address roadblocks, and facilitate continuous learning and improvement.

As each county works to implement and sustain its Mobility Action Plan, the Urban Institute will draw insights and lessons from the Upward Mobility Cohort to guide further improvements to the framework and mobility metrics.



For more information on this work, visit <https://upward-mobility.urban.org>

VISION STATEMENT

Philadelphia strives to be a city where every resident is healthy, safe, and has economic prosperity and a good quality of life. We aim to be an equitable city that eliminates the barriers to health, safety, and connectedness that exist based on race and ethnicity, disability status, age, and gender identity.

HOW WE GOT HERE

Philadelphia has grappled with deep poverty for decades and has invested significant resources in programs and policies aimed at alleviating the conditions and consequences of poverty and providing opportunities for upward mobility.

Percent Below Poverty in Philadelphia County by Race/Ethnicity

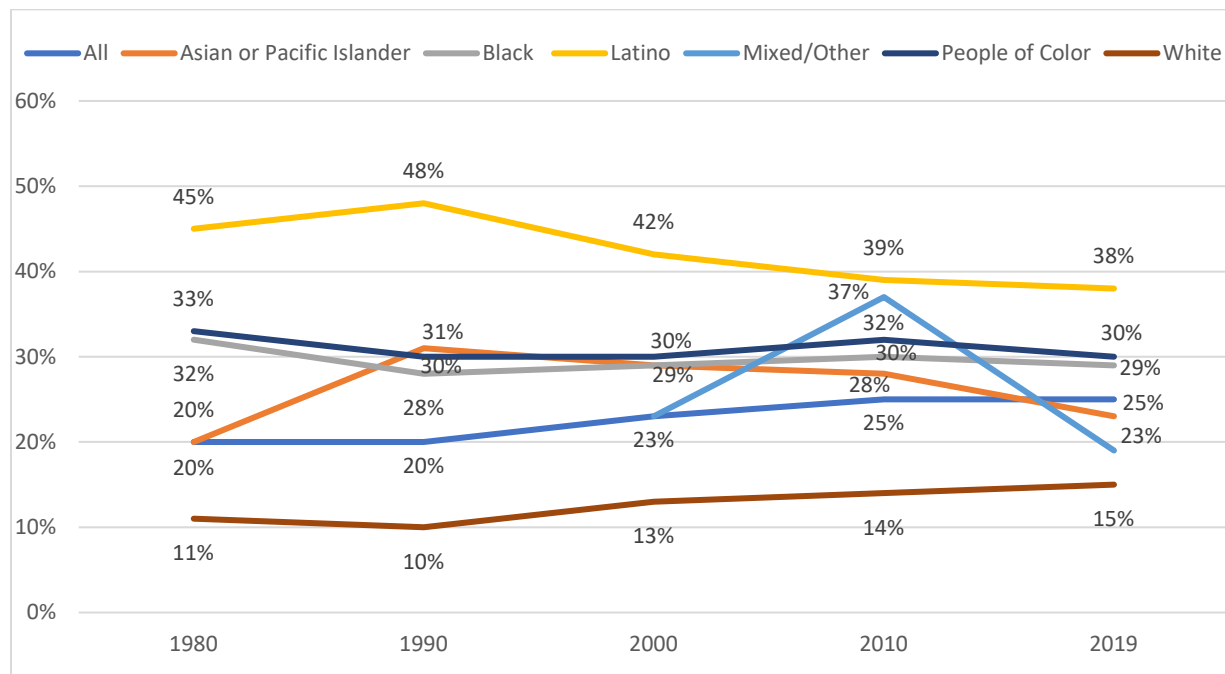


Figure 1: Policy Link Equity Atlas/PUMS USA

In the last four years alone, leaders across Philadelphia have produced many plans to propose additional investments and strategies to reduce poverty and provide more opportunity for upward mobility. Taken together, they directly address the key mobility metrics mentioned above that Philadelphia struggles with, including housing, financial well-being, neighborhoods, and work. They include:

- [*Fueling Philadelphia's Talent Engine: A Citywide Workforce Strategy*](#) (February 2018) which establishes three top line goals, and makes 9 specific recommendations, to better prepare Philadelphians for the workforce, address barriers they face, and strengthen the workforce system.
- [*Housing for Equity: An Action Plan for Philadelphia*](#) (October 2018) that sets a goal of creating or preserving 100,000 housing opportunities over ten years and outlines 34 recommendations to accomplish that goal.
- [*Growing with Equity: Philadelphia's Vision for Inclusive Growth*](#) (May 2019) which recommends 18 strategies to boost jobs, prepare the workforce, and encourage equitable growth for neighborhoods.
- [*The Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan*](#) (March 2020) that sets a goal of lifting 100,000 Philadelphians out of poverty by focused investment in the Social Safety Net, Housing, Jobs and Education through 33 action steps.
- [*Respond, Restart, Recharge, Reimagine: An Equitable and Inclusive Economic Recovery for Philadelphia*](#) (September 2020) which recommends 42 action steps to emerge from COVID-19 with a more inclusive, equitable, and robust economy.

These and other departmental strategic plans chart a path towards equitable growth, upward mobility, healthy equity, and poverty reduction. See Appendix 02 for an inventory of key recommendations from these plans and how they relate to the mobility metrics.

As a means of ensuring continued attention on the proposals in those plans, the City applied for, and was selected for participation in the Urban Institute's Boosting Upward Mobility from Poverty cohort. This cohort builds on years of research and evidence by the Urban Institute and its partners to support localities in boosting mobility from poverty and removing the structural barriers that prevent places from advancing equity. The strategic goals recommended in this plan aim to build on the City's existing plans and priorities as well as the insights gained from participation in the Urban Institute cohort.

The COVID-19 Pandemic and Its Impacts on our Work

The tragedy of COVID-19 led to an unprecedented investment from the federal government in relief and recovery strategies, including the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan. These legislative actions resulted in billions of dollars flowing into Philadelphia, including Child Tax Credit payments directly to families, homelessness funds and rental assistance that were quickly distributed by our housing agencies to help Philadelphians become or stay stably housed, flexible funds for local government to replace lost revenue allowed us to maintain critical city services for our residents, and other critical investments.

These funds have mostly been depleted or are on track to be spent down soon. But longstanding problems remain, including a too high poverty rate and lack of local financial resources to adequately address needs in the way the federal government can. New problems have emerged, including the possibility of a structural local budget gap driven in part by lower local wage tax collections due to a decrease in suburban residents commuting to work in city offices.

As articulated in *Respond, Restart, Recharge, Reimagine*, Philadelphia remains committed to a vision of a city that emerges into a post COVID-19 world with a more inclusive, equitable, and robust economy that will help ensure long-term prosperity for all. To achieve that goal, we must use our resources to improve our systems so that they can better serve Philadelphians in need.

Technical Assistance from the Urban Institute

In 2017, the Urban Institute hosted the [US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty](#), an initiative that sought to better understand what it would take to dramatically increase mobility from poverty in this country. After a year of gathering insights from research, practice, and people who have experienced poverty, the Partnership developed [an expansive definition of mobility from poverty](#) that goes beyond economic success. It argued that mobility from poverty also requires power and autonomy, or the ability of people to exercise control over their circumstances and influence the policies and practices that affect their lives, and it requires that people feel valued by and have a sense of belonging in their community (Figure 2).

In 2019, Urban formed a [working group](#) of distinguished academics to help explore the most current evidence on predictive factors that influence mobility from poverty for adults, families, and children. The working group rigorously vetted the best available metrics for their connection to long-term mobility and produced a set of evidence-based predictors and specific measures for them that local change agents can use to guide and assess their efforts to advance upward mobility in the short to medium term.

In creating these metrics, the working group also identified three key drivers that propel individuals and families up and out of poverty over the course of their lives. All three contribute to a person's economic success, their power and autonomy, and their sense of belonging and value to community:



Figure 2

Strong and healthy families: A secure and stable home environment provides the essential foundation for children’s healthy development and for the educational and economic success of children, adolescents, and adults, along with an accompanying sense of accomplishment and empowerment.

Supportive communities: Safe and inclusive communities play a central role in shaping families’ well-being, their social networks and supports, and their children’s chances to thrive and succeed.

Opportunities to learn and earn: Education, from pre-K through post-secondary as well as adult education and workforce development, provides a crucial avenue to economic and social mobility, and for most people in the U.S. today, work constitutes the most important means of economic security and advancement.

For each of the three mobility drivers, the Working Group identified key predictors that collectively are strongly associated with long-term economic success, power, and autonomy, and belonging and that can be influenced by state and local policies. The predictors are:

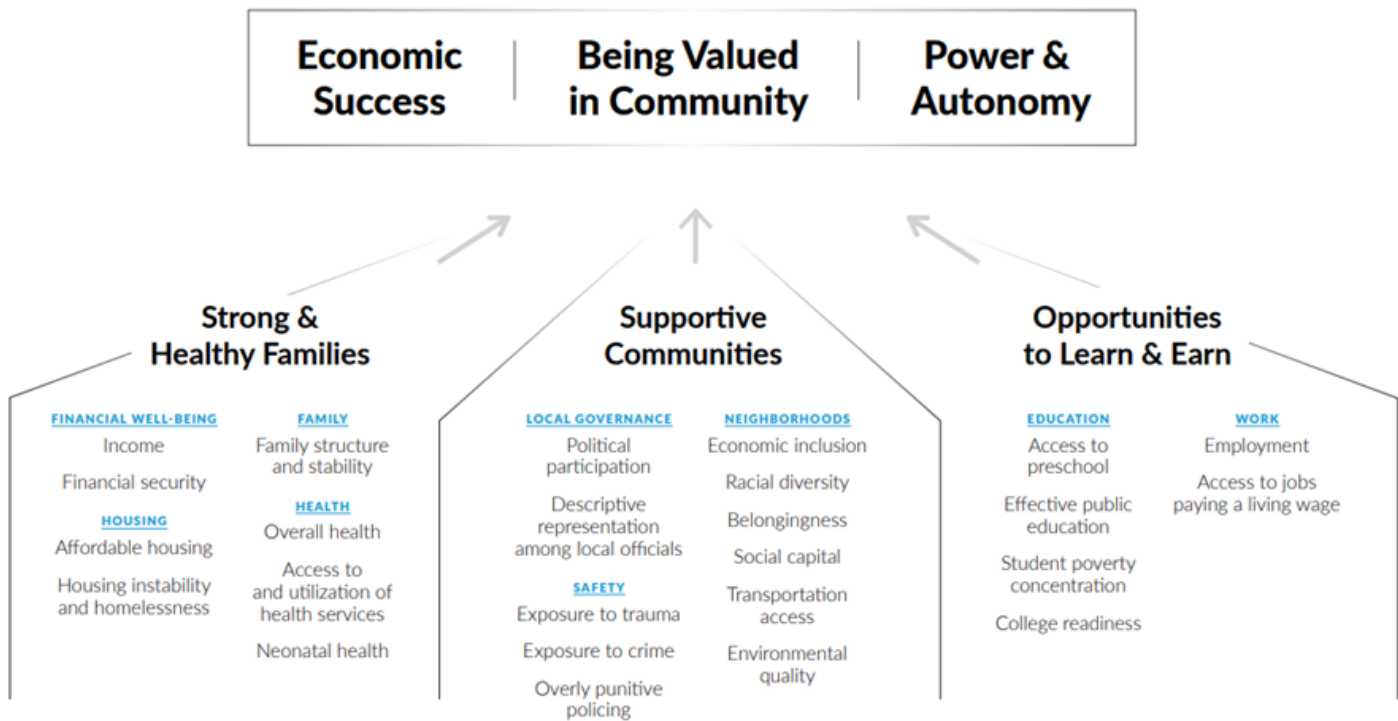


Figure 3

Urban’s Boosting Upward Mobility project built on the Partnership’s original work by applying and testing these metrics in [eight counties](#), including Philadelphia, which were selected through a competitive process in 2020.

In Philadelphia, the Upward Mobility work began with the City of Philadelphia's Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity (CEO) and the Division of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

[CEO](#) is Philadelphia's Community Action Agency, and their mission is to provide leadership on issues of economic justice by advancing racial equity and inclusive growth to ensure that all Philadelphians might share in the city's prosperous future.

As part of the [Department of Planning and Development](#), the Division of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) funds programs that help Philadelphia offer homes for people at all income levels, commercial corridors with thriving businesses, and healthy neighborhoods. DHCD is working toward a city that has a place for everyone.

Given both entities' involvement in related mobility predictors, they were well positioned to lead the creation of the Mobility Action Plan.

Philadelphia received 18 months of technical assistance from the Urban Institute to develop a Mobility Action Plan which described barriers to upward mobility that exist in the county and proposed a set of strategies for how the city can remove these barriers and create better outcomes for Philadelphians.

Creating Philadelphia's Mobility Action Plan

The development of this Mobility Action Plan was a multi-stage process: The internal working team first conducted an intensive data analysis, starting with the [Urban Institute Mobility Metrics](#) and expanding to include local and more specific data about Philadelphia programs and services. Concurrently, the team gathered an inventory of plans and programs to help understand the current state of initiatives, effectiveness of efforts, and gaps in services.

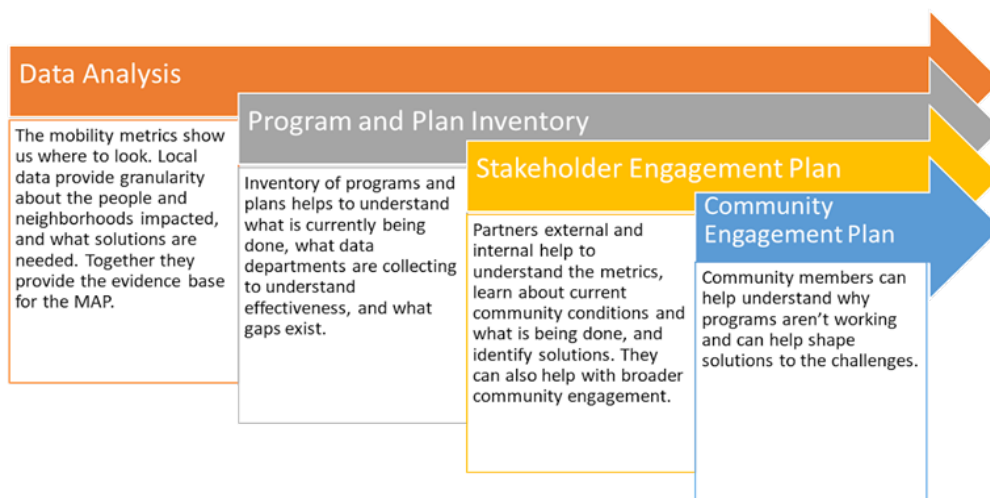


Figure 4

Throughout the various stages of plan development, key stakeholders were informed and targeted for feedback, including the Department of Commerce, OHS, DBHIDS, City Planning, Mayor's Office of Education, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and others. As goals and strategies were developed, the lead team held numerous one-on-one and group calls with involved agencies to gather feedback on the direction and any relevant initiatives and plans and to inform the strategic actions that would go into the MAP. The team also participated in a training on upward mobility performance evaluation through a racial equity lens with the firm Equity and Results. And finally, we partnered with nonprofit service-provider JEVS to conduct focus groups and survey individuals who were previously incarcerated that have significant housing needs. In addition to these steps, our MAP development process also led us to:

- Hear from key partners outside of the administration about what they need us to understand or learn about their work or provide to them to be more effective,
- recognize important work being done across the city that is in early stages of implementation, but shows promise for boosting upward mobility and advancing racial equity, and
- see the need for more cross-agency and cross-sector collaboration to address poverty-related issues more holistically.

In summary, our Upward Mobility strategy is to continue to implement the major policies and programs articulated in the prior plans that improve the key metrics of housing, financial well-being, neighborhoods, and work, while infusing more robust infrastructure and systems change to achieve better efficacy and impact for Philadelphia's residents.

HOUSING AND UPWARD MOBILITY FOR FORMERLY INCARCERATED PHILADELPHIANS

About 25,000 people return to Philadelphia from incarceration each year according to the Philadelphia Reentry Coalition. For each of the four mobility metric domains that are a top priority for Philadelphia—housing, neighborhoods, financial well-being, and employment—individuals returning from incarceration face unique challenges. For this project, we chose to examine their housing needs more deeply due to the interconnectedness of housing to these other domains.

Housing is critical for successful re-entry

An estimated 15 percent of individuals in prisons and jails experienced homelessness in the year prior to incarceration.¹ After incarceration, individuals are 10 times more likely to be homeless or housing insecure than the general population.² Housing and financial wellbeing go hand in hand: Longitudinal studies of returning citizens have determined that those who secured housing and those who have long periods of employment are less likely to return to prison.³ The inverse is also true: after release, individuals who were formerly incarcerated struggle to find a job because of gaps in employment and struggle to find a home due to the lack of steady income and high debt.⁴

Half of incarcerated individuals return to their old neighborhood or a similarly disadvantaged neighborhood where they lack the support for successful re-integration.⁵ Individuals released to emergency shelters or transitional housing are significantly more likely to be rearrested or return to prison due to revocation of supervision than those released to a residential address or work release center.⁶ Safe and secure housing gives returning citizens a “critical link” to services such as substance use and mental health treatment and employment.⁷

Philadelphia must invest more in housing opportunities for those returned from incarceration

Philadelphians who have spent time incarcerated can attempt to access housing supports through programs open to all qualifying residents, but like all housing programs in the city, the resources are too limited to meet the overwhelming need.

¹ Lucius Couloute, “Nowhere to Go: Homelessness among Formerly Incarcerated People,” Prison Policy Initiative (Prison Policy Initiative, August 2018)

² Ibid.

³ Jennifer Yahner and Christy Visser, “Illinois Prisoners’ Reentry Success Three Years after Release,” Research Brief (Urban Institute, August 2008).

⁴ Abigail Stevens, “The Returning Citizen: A Public Justice Perspective Reintegrating the Formerly Incarcerated,” *Public Justice Review* 9, no. 4 (2019).

⁵ LeBel, Thomas P. “Housing as the Tip of the Iceberg in Successfully Navigating Prisoner Reentry: Emergency Shelter Housing Interventions.” *Criminology & Public Policy* 16, no. 3 (August 2017): 891–908. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9133.12313>.

⁶ Valerie Clark, “The Effect of Community Context and Post-Release Housing Placements on Recidivism: Evidence from Minnesota” (Minnesota Department of Corrections, April 2015).


⁷ LeBel

A few small programs in Philadelphia are geared towards addressing the housing needs of those released from incarceration. The “Hi-Five” program is a pilot between the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDs), Philadelphia Department of Prisons (DPD), and the Office of Homeless Services (OHS) which provides housing to 45 Philadelphians. CEO, in partnership with PHA, the U.S. Attorney’s Office, and Clarifi, recently provided a combination of housing vouchers, cash assistance, and financial counseling to another 40 – 50 individuals who have returned from federal facilities and are under court supervision. A network of mission driven non-profits that assist individuals returning from incarceration—including Ardella’s House and Why Not Prosper—offer housing units to a few dozen more Philadelphians in re-entry. While these and similar programs provide critical housing and wrap-around support services geared toward helping those in re-entry achieve stability and upward mobility, they only serve a fraction of those in need.

There is also no single point of entry to access housing assistance for those in re-entry, which means individuals and/or their families must navigate a maze of programs with different rules, application requirements, and processes, all of which are oversubscribed. The Philadelphia Reentry Coalition, which is housed at the City of Philadelphia Office of Reentry Partnerships, functions as a valuable platform for strategic planning, communication, partnership among these housing providers, non-profits, and individuals with lived experience, but they don’t currently have the resources to build such a point of entry.

As part of this Upward Mobility project, we considered how the four strategies we recommend could have a positive impact on individuals in re-entry that need housing:

- 01 Expand and improve the City’s data management operations and sharing:** Philadelphia has very limited local data on the housing challenges and needs of individuals who have been incarcerated. This prevents us from understanding the scale of the need. CEO partnered with JEVS as part of this project to collect data about the housing situation and needs of this population through surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews.
- 02 Strengthen departmental capacity for outcomes-based evaluation of upward mobility programming:** Improved evaluation capacity will allow departments to evaluate the impact of efforts to provide opportunities for upward mobility through housing for the formerly incarcerated. Evaluation of housing and re-entry programs will help us be accountable to the public, individuals in re-entry, and their families to invest in what works to create stable, healthy, and safe families and neighborhoods.
- 03 Improve the quality of equitable community engagement:** As part of our data collection effort, CEO and JEVS also asked individuals who were formerly incarcerated about their experiences trying to access housing support, and what their needs are in securing stable housing. Their lived experience will allow us to recommend housing support programs that are more accessible and better meet the needs of individuals that face unique challenges in an already difficult housing market.
- 04 Expand benefits access, cash assistance, and departmental collaboration around service delivery:** Philadelphia could begin to build a more coordinated, better resourced, and efficiently run a “front door” for individuals returning from incarceration and who need



housing and other wrap-around supports and benefits. By offering one front door to access services, with strong coordination of various government departments and non-profit providers, we can take a whole-family and whole-person approach toward providing a path to upward mobility for those in re-entry, and better resource the system.

In the next phase of this Upward Mobility project, we plan to publish a report that provides some new data about the population of Philadelphians in re-entry and their housing needs. The insights we gain from the community engagement will help inform recommendations about how Philadelphia can strengthen and better resource our re-entry housing system and improve its alignment with other forms of benefits access. We also plan to recommend metrics that could be used to evaluate the upward mobility outcomes on individuals in re-entry that we serve with housing supports.

Providing opportunities for upward mobility for individuals in re-entry is a matter of racial justice and social equity to begin compensating for centuries of racism that exist in policing, in our criminal legal system, and in access to education, health care, and basic needs, all of which led to a disproportionate number of people of color imprisoned. Positive upward mobility for individuals who return from incarceration can also create safer communities for all Philadelphians.

SUMMARY OF UPWARD MOBILITY INSIGHTS

The Urban Institute provided Philadelphia and the seven other counties who are part of the Upward Mobility project 26 “Mobility Metrics” that provide a snapshot on the current state of our communities. The metrics were compared with similarly situated communities, including Baltimore city, Cook County, IL (home to Chicago and its suburbs) and Fulton County, GA (home to Atlanta and its suburbs). In considering comparisons, it’s important to keep in mind that Philadelphia city/county does not include its wealthier surrounding suburbs, unlike Fulton and Cook counties.



Scan this QR code to read Philadelphia's Poverty Action Plan

In addition to the Mobility Metrics, Philadelphia is in the process of conducting community engagement with citizens returning from incarceration to gain more information about how this especially vulnerable community is impacted in the following areas, with a focus on housing. See page 12 for a further discussion of this work.

Based on Philadelphia’s prior work, we selected five domains out of the nine available on which to conduct further data and information gathering to learn more about the status of mobility from poverty in Philadelphia: financial well-being, secure and stable housing, neighborhoods, work, and education. We added additional local data on health and social capital.

Financial Well-Being

Research shows that financial well-being is critical to achieving upward mobility as it is a clear marker of economic success. The ability to support oneself and one’s family financially allows people to exert control over their lives. Financial stability of parents allows their children to grow up in a more stable environment that sets them up for success later in life.

Hispanic households in Philadelphia have the lowest household incomes of all racial groups, with incomes at \$31,608 for those in the 50th percentile, and \$10,386 for those in the 20th percentile.

Philadelphia had a median household income of \$45,619 according to 2018 Census data. This was \$5,000 lower than the median income in the city of Baltimore and almost \$8,000 lower than Cook County.

Households that earn below 80 percent of HUD’s Area Median Income (AMI)—which is \$67,450 for a 2-person household—are often the focus of city housing assistance programs. About 59 percent of

households in Philadelphia were earning under 80 percent of AMI, with many areas in North and West Philadelphia having a higher proportion of households living below this threshold.

The Urban Institute's Mobility Metric *household income at the 50th percentile* estimates the incomes of households at the 20th percentile (the lowest 20% of income earners), the 50th percentile (median income earners), and the 80th percentile (the wealthiest earners).

Hispanic households have the lowest household incomes of all racial groups, with incomes at \$31,608 for households in the 50th percentile, and at \$10,386 for those in the 20th percentile.

Black, Non-Hispanic families are also faring poorly on this metric. Those at the 50th percentile have a \$33,330 income level, and \$11,086 for those in the 20th percentile.

In August 2021, 37 percent of communities of color had a subprime credit score while only 14 percent of majority White communities had a subprime credit score—a gap of 23 points.

Measurements of financial well-being must consider debts and well as incomes. Urban's metric "share with debt in collections" estimated that 43.3 percent of Philadelphians had debt in collections in 2018, lower than Baltimore city at 51.3% but higher than Cook (31%) and Fulton (34.2%) counties. Debts in collections are significantly higher in Philadelphia's zip codes that are majority people of color, where 55.6 percent of people have debt in collections compared to 23.7% in majority white zip codes.

We gathered additional data from the Urban Institute's Financial Health of Residents City-Level Dashboard to further measure financial well-being of Philadelphians. From this source, we learned that median delinquent debt in 2017 was \$1,476. The median credit score in Philadelphia in 2017

FINANCIAL INCLUSION POLICIES & PROGRAMS

- Financial Empowerment Centers in Philadelphia, run by Clarifi and funded by CEO, offer free one-on-one counseling to help residents improve credit scores, reduce debt, build savings, and access affordable banking options.
- Wage Tax Refunds put money back in the pockets of the lowest income Philadelphians. Working Philadelphians can receive a refund between \$360 and \$1,706 each year from the Department of Revenue.
- Water bill debt forgiveness through the Tiered Assistance Program (TAP) allows 20,000 customers to erase their water bill debt through 24 months of on-time payments.

was 628, lower than the national average of 675. Credit scores affect interest rates on loans that borrowers will pay and can even affect if an application for an apartment is approved or denied. Credit scores in areas of Philadelphia that are predominantly people of color are an average of 571. During the first 18 months of the COVID-19 pandemic from February 2020 to August 2021, the overall proportion of households with subprime credit scores dropped by 8 percentage points. However, there is a 23-point gap between communities of color and majority White Communities: in August 2021, 37 percent of communities of color had a subprime credit score while only 14 percent of majority White communities had a subprime credit score.

Philadelphia must focus on ways to raise income levels and lower debt in collections among low-income residents, but especially communities of color. While the City and its partners are already operating some relevant programming to address this challenge, we believe that expanding benefits access, and conducting person-centered performance evaluation will allow the City to put forward new initiatives and improve current initiatives that aim to lift up those in poverty.

Secure and Stable Housing

Secure and Stable Housing is a critical component of upward mobility. Affordable and stable housing allows individuals and families to focus on improving their employment prospects, educational attainment, health outcomes, and other aspects of their lives. Unstable housing can lead to job loss, physical and emotional stress, and other problems that reverberate throughout the lives of adults and particularly children. The Urban Institute's metrics for measuring this indicator include the ratio of affordable housing units to low-income households, and percent of households experiencing severe rent burden.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICIES & PROGRAMS

- Philadelphia runs foreclosure and eviction diversion programs that have helped keep thousands of Philadelphians in their homes. 78% of the participants in eviction diversion in 2021-2022 identified as Black or Hispanic.
- The Philadelphia Housing Trust Fund has invested \$221 million and assisted 62,000 households in housing production, preservation, down-payment assistance, and family stabilization. 70% of these investments supported households earning under 30% AMI.
- Philadelphia quickly distributed more than \$263 million in COVID-related rental assistance to more than 41,500 households from May 2020 through early 2022.

The ratio of affordable housing units per 100 households earning 80% AMI or below is 135, meaning there are more housing units than households at this income level. However, there is a deficit of affordable housing units for households most in need at 30% Area Median Income (AMI) with only 85 units per 100 households. It is also likely that some of these 85 units are inhabited by people at higher income levels, further exacerbating the housing strain on lower income Philadelphians.

Comparison of 2022 Philadelphia Area Median Income (AMI) and Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for 2-Person Household

	30%	50%	80%	100%	150%	200%
Annual Median Income - Philadelphia	\$25,300	\$42,200	\$67,450	\$84,350	\$126,550	\$168,700
Federal Poverty Level	\$5,493	\$9,155	\$14,648	\$18,310	\$27,465	\$36,620

Figure 5: HUD Section 8 Income Limits; HHS Poverty Guidelines for 2022

As compared to our peer communities, households in Philadelphia are paying more of their incomes on rent almost across the board. Fifty-seven percent of Philadelphia renters who are very low income, earning less than 50% AMI, are spending more than half of their income on rent. Seventy percent of extremely low-income renters who earn 30% AMI or below spent half of their incomes on rent—a severe cost burden for households that likely struggle to afford other necessities including

70 percent of extremely low-income Philadelphia renters are spending more than half of their income on rent.

food, clothing, and transportation. This cost burden for extremely low-income renters in Philadelphia is higher than those in Cook (65.7%) and Fulton counties (67.2%).

According to the 2016-2020 American Community Survey, the average low-income household that is cost burdened (paying more than 30 percent of their income on rent) is paying \$480 more each month than they can safely afford.

The average rent gap for cost-burdened households with low-incomes is \$480 per month.

To learn more about secure and stable housing, we also looked at metrics measuring homeownership, eviction, and foreclosure rates. ACS data shows the homeownership rate in Philadelphia has been hovering a bit over 50 percent since 2010. This is a larger share of the population than in those peer counties that the Urban Institute identified, and much higher than in bigger cities like New York. During the pandemic, due to local moratoria and CDC orders, the eviction rate dropped substantially. As these preventative measures expire, we once again are seeing a rise in eviction rates, though they remain below pre-pandemic averages in part due to city programs like rental assistance and eviction diversion. During 2018 and 2019, there were almost 34,000 eviction filings, however, in April 2022, eviction filings were 38 percent below pre-pandemic averages. Foreclosure rates follow a similar trend—on the upswing but still much lower than they were before the pandemic.



Scan this QR code to read more about Philadelphia's Eviction Diversion Program

Philadelphia must continue to focus on ways to provide support to the overwhelming number of households that are struggling with rising unaffordable housing costs, especially among renters and communities of color. While the City and its partners are already operating some relevant programming to address this challenge, we believe that expanding benefits access work and strengthening our data management and collection across departments will allow us to ensure programs meet a variety of different housing needs and strengthen programs intended to make housing more affordable.

Neighborhoods

The neighborhood in which one lives, learns, and earns not only shapes one's daily life, but it also has profound implications for well-being and the ability to access opportunities, especially those linked to upward mobility. We know from experience and from research that: economic exclusion and racial/ethnic segregation limits neighborhood choice and opportunity; accessible and affordable transportation allows people to accomplish daily activities and save money for other necessities; that poor neighborhood conditions can strip wealth from households by negatively affecting home

34.6 percent of Philadelphia residents who are experiencing poverty live in high-poverty neighborhoods.

equity; and environmental issues, like poor air quality, can trigger health complications that can undermine performance at school and work.

The Urban Institute's economic inclusion and racial diversity metrics reveal that 34.6% of Philadelphia residents who are experiencing poverty live in high-poverty neighborhoods.

This share is higher than all three comparison counties and notably double that of Baltimore, which means that there are greater concentrations of poverty in Philadelphia than in other places. Higher shares of Black and Brown Philadelphia residents who are in poverty live in high-poverty neighborhoods: 48.8% of Hispanic and 36.9% of Black residents experiencing poverty live in high poverty areas, as well 36.7% of residents of another race or ethnicity. Comparatively, only 18.5% of White (non-Hispanic) residents experiencing poverty live in high poverty neighborhoods.

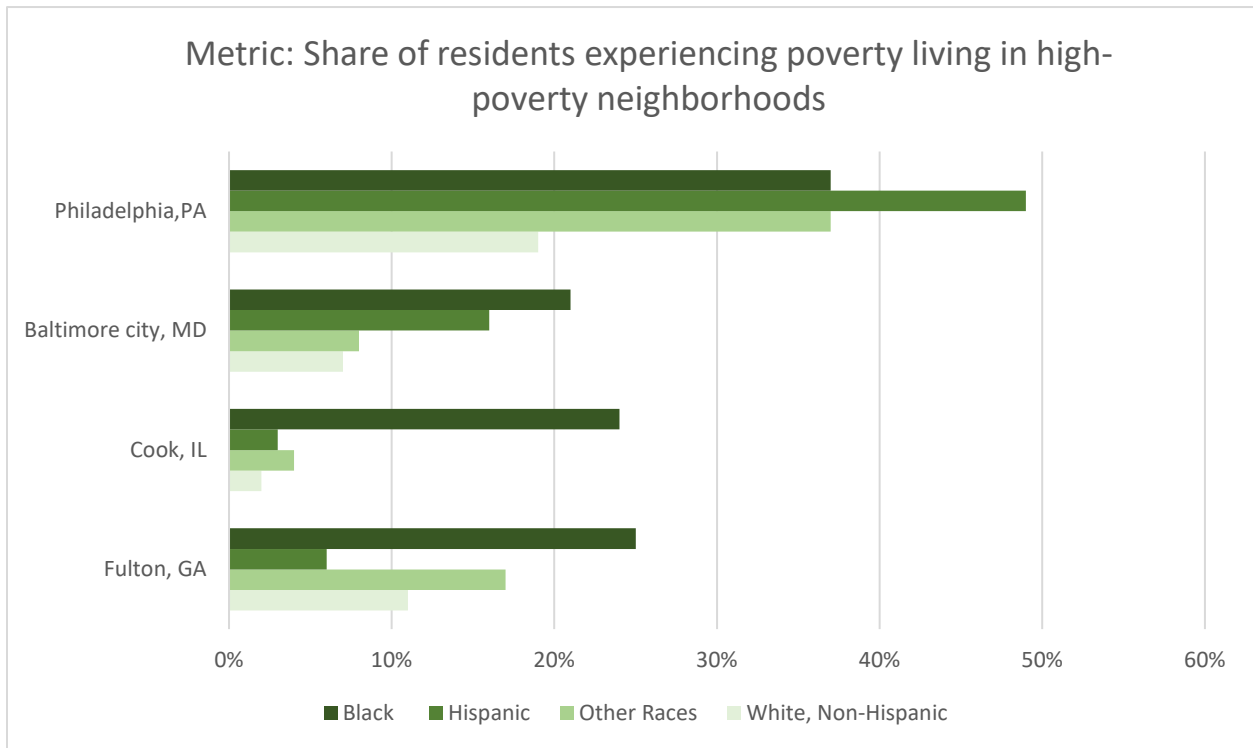


Figure 6: American Community Survey, 2019 (5-year)

Philadelphia is also segregated racially and ethnically. Only about a third of Black and White residents – Philadelphia’s largest racial groups – live near people of other races/ethnicities (30.8% and 38.6%, respectively). Black and Hispanic residents account for approximately 50% and 30% respectively of those living in racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty, as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. When mapped, racial and ethnic segregation patterns are clearly visible throughout the city.

In terms of transportation, the Urban Institute’s transit trips and low transportation cost indices show that Philadelphia residents utilize public transit at higher rates relative to other jurisdictions, specifically residents living in majority people of color and diverse Census tracts. The cost of

transportation (both public transit options and cars) is also comparatively lower in Census tracts that are majority people of color. Relative to Baltimore, Philadelphia's transportation costs are slightly higher, but they are much more affordable compared to other city-suburb counties.



Scan this QR code to read Philadelphia's Connect: Strategic Transportation Plan

Regarding environmental factors, the Urban Institute's air quality metric (an index that summarizes potential exposure to harmful toxins at a neighborhood level) shows that residents in majority people of color and high poverty Census tracts experience worse air quality and are therefore disproportionately impacted by related negative health effects. To learn more about environmental issues that could undermine mobility from poverty, the City looked at data on the toxic release of chemicals (potential risk score) and found that low-income people of color are very likely to live near facilities that contribute most to the toxic release of chemicals, especially in Southwest, North, and Lower Northeast Philadelphia.

STRENGTHENING PHILADELPHIA NEIGHBORHOODS

- The Philly First Home down payment assistance program makes homeownership and neighborhood choice more accessible to lower income households by providing up to \$10,000 or 6% of the purchase price in a grant to first time homebuyers.
- The Philadelphia City Planning Commission is now preparing to update the city's comprehensive plan, which will focus on how the built environment can support equitable access to housing, transportation, employment, community facilities, and more. PCPC is designing a thorough community engagement process to ensure the voices of Philadelphia residents are included in this plan.
- Transit First strategies outlined in Connect: Philadelphia's Strategic Transportation Plan link to a myriad of programmatic, policy, and operational changes that are intended to work together to support improved, equitable transit outcomes.

The insights gleaned from the Neighborhoods policy domain suggest that we must focus on ways to remove barriers to economic inclusion and neighborhood choice, while also addressing environmental issues that threaten the health and prosperity of residents, particularly those who are most vulnerable and of marginalized groups, i.e., low-income, Black, Brown, Asian, and other communities. While the City and its partners are using a variety of tools to address these challenges,

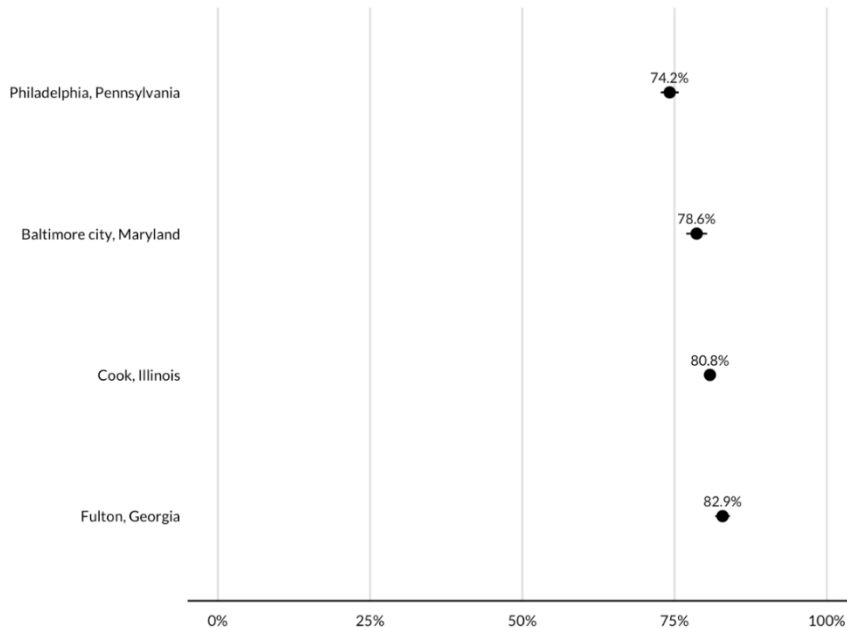
we believe operational improvements, like equitable community engagement and outcomes-based performance evaluation, will increase the impact of these strategies and have a more significant impact over the long-term.

Work

Work is not just a source of income and economic security, it also can fulfill one's need for autonomy, connection, and enrichment. But workers can remain in poverty if their jobs do not pay a living wage.

The Urban Institute's employment metric (employment to population ratio) indicates that Philadelphia has a relatively low labor force participation rate (74.2%) among its adult residents (aged 25-54) compared to other jurisdictions. This is a trend that holds true across racial and ethnic

Metric: Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54



Source: American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), 2018

Notes: Ratio of the number of employed adults between the ages of 25 and 54 in a given jurisdiction to the total number of adults in that age range living there.

groups; however, Hispanic and Black (non-Hispanic) populations have lowest employment rates at 63.9% and 67.1%, respectively. Urban's *ratio of pay on the average job to cost of living* metric indicates that the typical Philadelphia job now pays about the cost of living (ratio of 1.01 as of 2018). This metric suggests that the average job pays just enough for a family to get by but not enough to save.

We also looked at the sectors of the city's economy with the fastest

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

- Same Day Work and Pay gives Philadelphians who are struggling with homelessness and/or substance abuse the chance to work and get paid at the end of their shift through a low-barrier day program. Supportive services are offered to help address barriers they face to stability and permanent employment.
- YouthBuild gives young adults without a high school diploma an opportunity to earn that credential while developing vital job and academic skills, and job training in real-world settings such as construction sites.
- First Step Staffing offers individuals who have struggled with accessing the workforce such as those experiencing homelessness, military veterans, and those returning from incarceration entry level, temporary positions that can serve as transitions to more permanent, skilled employment.

growing (Information & Leisure and Hospitality) and largest (Professional and Business Services & Education and Health Services) number of jobs. The average jobs in the Information and Professional and Business Services sectors pay well above the cost of living (1.5 and 2.25 times the cost of living, respectively). The average job in the Education and Health Services sector pays just under the cost of living (about 0.9 times the cost of living). Finally, the average job in the Leisure and Hospitality sector pays just over half the cost of living. This industry, which is in the process of making a steep recovery as pandemic restrictions fade, largely employs residents who earn less than a living wage.

According to PEW's report "[Philadelphia's Small and Midsize Business Landscape](#)," Philadelphia has fewer small and midsize businesses per capita than comparison cities of Baltimore, Boston, and New York at 18.2 small and midsize businesses per 1,000 residents over 16 years old compared to the average of 26.2.

Outcomes-based performance evaluation would allow Philadelphia to assess the long-term impact of our workforce programs on participants, including their employability after transitional employment, their access to and use of credit, accumulation of assets such as savings and business or home ownership, and health outcomes that affect their ability to achieve upward mobility. Improving data management and program evaluation would give the City and its partners insight into how programs can be strengthened, modified, or scaled up if they show impact.

Health and Social Capital

DHCD, with help from the Urban Institute, collected metrics on health and social capital through its 2022 Housing and Neighborhood Survey. Residents were asked how they would rate their health as well as whether and in what capacity they are involved in their community.

According to the Urban Institute, “Research shows that self-rated health provides an accurate measure of a person's overall health, and it is a strong predictor of later-life outcomes. Good health helps people surmount life’s challenges and excel in school and on the job. When a person’s health is compromised, their overall well-being and their personal autonomy are compromised.”

Almost two thirds of respondents said that they would rate their health as excellent or good, with only 6 percent rating their health as poor or very poor. The remaining respondents (28 percent) rated their health as fair. As seen across many of these metrics, Black and Hispanic residents rated their health worse than White residents. Among Black residents, fewer rated their health as excellent or good and one third rated their health as fair. Among Hispanic respondents, one third also rated their health as fair. However, 17 percent of Hispanic respondents rated their health as poor or very poor. This is 11 percent higher than the citywide average.

37% percent of survey respondents said they were not involved with any community groups in Philadelphia.

According to the Urban Institute, “Research demonstrates a positive relationship between social capital and education, child well-being, lower crime rates, health, tolerance, happiness, and economic and civic equality.” When asked what community groups that they were involved in within the past year, 37 percent of respondents said that they were not involved in any. A little over half of respondents were involved in 1-3 community groups. When broken down by race, White respondents had the highest involvement in community groups (58 percent) closely followed by Black respondents (53 percent). Hispanic respondents had a much lower involvement in these groups with only 38 percent saying that they were involved with at least one community group.

These are two additional metrics serve as indicators of how well-positioned Philadelphia residents are to rise out of poverty. They should be considered by decision-makers along with the with the other domains of financial well-being, safe and secure housing, neighborhoods, and work.

UPWARD MOBILITY GOALS

This plan focuses on four operational recommendations that, if adopted, will strengthen the success of a range of Philadelphia’s policies and programs aimed at providing opportunities for upward mobility in the areas of housing, financial well-being, neighborhoods, and work. Below are examples of measures for each goal that could indicate whether operational improvements are leading to upward mobility for Philadelphians.

GOALS	MEASURES
<p>EXPAND DATA MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS & SHARING</p> <p>Expanding and improving the City’s data management operations and sharing will help us to design better and more targeted programming and to monitor implementation more closely.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More Philadelphians become enrolled in benefits as a result of data sharing agreements between local, state, and federal governments that strengthened outreach and auto-enrollment.
<p>STRENGTHEN OUTCOMES-BASED PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Improve outcomes for Philadelphians by conducting person-centered performance evaluation of our programs through a racial equity lens. Evaluation on the outcomes of people, not programs, will allow us to hold ourselves accountable to investing in what works for Philadelphians.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved health outcomes for individuals who received home repairs as measured by surveys of residents 6 months or 1-2 years after improvements are made. Growth in household wealth for homes purchased with down-payment assistance by measuring home equity of recipients.
<p>IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EQUITABLE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Generate policy and program solutions from people who are closest to the problems, build trust and civic infrastructure, and better understand community challenges through engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More individuals in re-entry gain access to suitable, affordable, low-barrier housing assistance due to program design that is informed by their needs and experiences. Increase in the number of Philadelphians moving from transitional to permanent

	work due to elimination of barriers that transitional workers articulate.
<p>EXPAND BENEFITS ACCESS</p> <p>Grow our benefits access work, modernize the use of technology, streamline applications, enrollments, and renewals, address the benefits cliff, and push for similar changes at the state and federal level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased food security and decreased utility shutoffs through more effective benefits access enrollment.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

To build on the policy and program recommendations in Philadelphia’s recently released plans focused on upward mobility and equitable recovery (see Appendix 02), we are proposing the following strategic actions. These actions focus on operational changes to the way some city departments implement policy and programs that, if implemented, could strengthen outcomes for Philadelphians.

STRATEGY 1: EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE CITY’S DATA MANAGEMENT AND SHARING

As the mobility metrics demonstrate, the barriers that Philadelphians face in achieving upward mobility are significant and interconnected. Lack of affordable housing, poor health outcomes, low incomes, and other metrics are also inextricably linked to substance abuse, gun violence, and other problems that are devastating families and neighborhoods. Structural racism and discrimination show clear inequalities in outcomes for Black, Latino/a/x, and certain Asian communities when data is appropriately disaggregated. Strong and effective collection, management, sharing, and use of person-level data can allow us to work more holistically on problems, solutions, and outcomes.

Stronger and expanded data use can help Philadelphia **evaluate and improve the work of departments**, the impact of policies, and the outcomes of our programs, on real people and real problems at the individual level, and how they change city-level metrics over time. Better data processes will also help us **design more equitable and effective policies and programs** by gaining better insight into the people we aim to serve, as well as by establishing achievable goals and measuring progress against those goals. **Implementation of policy and programs could be more**

targeted and equitable, such as through identifying outreach or enrollment strategies that help us reach the most at-risk and hardest to reach people. **Better data also means better communication** to the public what we're doing, how it's working, and how we're being responsive to community needs.

How we collect, use, and interpret data also has significant equity implications of which our teams need to be aware. Biases of those who decide what data to collect, how to collect it, and how it's interpreted can easily infuse data projects in ways that affect how the project is structured, funded, interpreted, communicated, and acted upon.

Mayor Jim Kenney took an important step in strengthening Philadelphia's cross-departmental data management system by issuing [Executive Order No. 2-22](#) on March 30th 2022, which creates the [Office of Integrated Data for Evidence and Action \(IDEA\)](#). While several City departments already have vigorous data collection, management, and use systems and have used those systems impactfully, this order expands on that work by evolving the Data Management Office (DMO) into IDEA, building on its past success operating within the city's Health and Human Services (HHS) cluster to include more departments, and to increase data sharing across departments.

City departments with less advanced data systems will need additional support and resources to fully participate in IDEA and leverage its value to achieve upward mobility outcomes for Philadelphians. Ensuring adequate staff capacity at IDEA to be proactive in performing technical assistance, and resources at the department level to support data work, can help departments do the following:

COLLECT GOOD DATA

- **Ensure that data collected either directly by the City or through its contracted service delivery partners is appropriately disaggregated** to identify variables between race and ethnicity, age, gender identity, neighborhood, and other factors. This disaggregation should consider that small population groups can often be hidden, and their unique needs obscured, when not identified in the data.
- **Make certain that contracts with service delivery partners and providers include adequate data collection, sharing, and use agreements.**
- **Inventory the data departments are currently collecting** through city-provided service and program delivery and share that inventory through IDEA with other city departments to facilitate cross-departmental collaboration on analysis.

BUILD DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND DATA EQUITY FRAMEWORK

- **Create a data equity framework** that could be modeled on that of [We All Count](#), which guides decision making about data projects that can help prioritize the lived experiences and worldview of the Philadelphians we aim to provide opportunities for upward mobility.
- **Build the internal systems for managing data**, as each department may have different needs ranging from a few spreadsheets to custom build data management systems. Determine the technical needs, develop data governance policies, identify potential providers that can build the systems, perform regular maintenance, and make technical improvements.
- **Contribute to a citywide data dictionary** so the terminology, data field names, and descriptors are clear internally and to other departments with whom we can share data and compare data sets.

SHARE DATA WITH THE PUBLIC

- **Create and contribute to a multi-departmental data dashboard**, where departments can share with the public aggregate data, and results of data analysis and evaluation, to track important citywide metrics and outcomes on upward mobility efforts. This can help identify gaps in our service delivery, disparities in outcomes, and elevate the need for new interventions.

STRATEGY 2: STRENGTHEN DEPARTMENTAL CAPACITY FOR OUTCOMES-BASED PLANNING & EVALUATION OF UPWARD MOBILITY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

As detailed in Appendix 02, Philadelphia currently operates many policies and programs aimed at providing opportunities for upward mobility and addressing the causes and conditions of poverty. To know whether they are having the intended impact on upward mobility, Philadelphia must strengthen its ability to identify anticipated results and evaluate our current programs for the impact they have for the people being served.

Performance evaluation is not a new idea to Philadelphia city government, and indeed there are examples of quality evaluation already completed or underway. But most departments do not have the sophistication or tools to forecast the anticipated results of a program or investment and compare it to other resource or financial investments to ensure the best use of limited resources. Many departments lack the sophistication and tools to track progress against those results. It is commonplace that we evaluate how we ran a program—number of people served and cost effectiveness—and less commonplace that we evaluate the outcomes for people for having benefited from the service or program.

How Much We Do	How We Do It	How Well We Do It
How much service did we deliver?	How does privilege affect program design/delivery?	How well did we do it?
# Customers Served	# of those w/ lived experience engaged	% Services/Activities performed well
# Services/Activities		
Is Anyone Better Off?		
What quantity/quality of change for the better did we produce?		
# / % with improvement in:		
Skills		
Attitudes		
Behaviors		
Circumstances		

Figure 7: Chart adapted from Mark Friedman

Compounding those operational challenges, evaluation of outcomes also requires that we face some difficult truths: the problems that Philadelphians and others face in achieving upward mobility are bigger than any one program we may run. Centuries of structural and systemic racism, an economic system that has kept wages low for generations, and failures of the state and federal government to adequately invest in big ticket needs like housing, great education systems, childcare, mental and physical health, and a robust social safety net are difficult to conquer with even the most well designed and run local policies and programs. Effective planning and evaluation require that we identify and understand these and other root causes of poverty and inequality (aka, “root cause analysis”), plan our programs and investments for maximum impact and leveraging of other resources, and assess our results within those contexts.

As part of this project, CEO and DHCD partnered with the Urban Institute to enlist the help of consulting firm Equity and Results to guide us through how we could more effectively evaluate the outcomes of our programs. Equity and Results is also currently partnering with the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) to work with dozens of City departments to create racial equity strategies. Linking Philadelphia's racial equity strategies on the planning side to more routine and robust performance evaluation will be a process improvement for the City of Philadelphia leading to better and more foreseeable outcomes.

Effective planning and performance evaluation requires rigorous data collection and management as recommended in Strategy 1 above, as well as equitable community engagement practices as recommended in Strategy 3, discussed on the following pages. In addition, we recommend the following action steps that Philadelphia city government can take to create a culture of routine planning and performance evaluation using a racial equity lens:

BUILD STAFF CAPACITY THROUGH TRAINING AND TOOLS

- **Conduct annual trainings for key staff on root cause analysis, racial equity, and the difference between outputs and outcomes.**

Philadelphia already offers employees a training on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Building on that offering with skills-focused trainings can help a wide range of city staff conduct “root cause analyses,” and understand the difference between an output (number of people served) and an outcome (are they any better off), and how to build outcomes-based measurements into their work. These trainings shouldn’t be limited to just to staff with a role in evaluation; a range of staff that play a role in outcomes could benefit from a clearer understanding of how they fit into our upward mobility and anti-poverty efforts.

- **Create planning and performance evaluation tools and procedures that are accessible to relevant staff and go beyond the immediate service term/contract term.** There is tremendous value in evaluation from experts that apply vigorous, sophisticated methodology to performance evaluation. But we don’t have the resources to scale those very thoughtful analysis to *all* programs that would benefit from evaluation. Developing and scaling up practical tools for staff responsible for program management can go a long way in adding to our planning and evaluative capacity. This could include worksheets that build on occasional trainings and use a standard Results-Based Accountability measures popularized by author Mark Friedman (as demonstrated in Figure 7).

It should also include tools and resources to help staff design and implement surveys, focus groups, community engagement, or other forms of data collection and analysis that can be gathered after the period of service or contract year. The challenges that we are aiming to address are deep and long-standing; outcomes may take months or years after the service was provided to be adequately measured.

UPDATE MEASUREMENT TOOLS


- **Identify metrics that can be measured to evaluate upward mobility.** As the Urban Institute definition and metrics acknowledge, upward mobility is not simply whether an individual or family is earning more; it also must include acknowledgement of the need for power and autonomy, and a sense of belonging in community. How well a county is doing providing opportunities for upward mobility is not just about wages and employment—it’s also about housing security, food

security, the ability to manage expenses as they become due, health, and civic participation. Planning and performance evaluation of a job training program may consider establishing outcome-based goals that include more holistic measures. Several of Urban’s metrics could be modified from the county level to the person level for consideration.

Sample: Urban Mobility Metrics Converted to Person-Level Measurements

	Urban Mobility Metrics - County Level	Sample Mobility Metric - Individual/Family Level
Financial Well-Being	Share of debt in collections	Client's debt-to-income ratio: <i>Have you had to skip a necessary expense in the last 3 months?</i>
Housing	Share of households experiencing severe rent burden	Household's percentage of income spent on rent and utilities: <i>Have you had to move because you were unable to afford rent in the last 12 months?</i>
Neighborhoods	Share of residents experiencing poverty living in high-poverty neighborhoods	Quality of amenities in a household's neighborhood such as parks, retail, banking, public accommodations, grocery stores, health care facilities: <i>how far do you have to travel to access financial services?</i>
Work	Ratio of pay to the cost of living	If employee has benefits such as paid leave, health care, retirement, opportunities for advancement, etc.: <i>how many days of work did you lose without pay in the last year?</i>

- Incentivize providing the service that people need.** If we are primarily focused on evaluating how well programs are run based only on the number of people served and how much it cost, we could incentivize quantity over quality. For example, contracted service providers that are reimbursed based on the number of individuals they provide housing counseling or benefits access to are disincentivized to spend adequate time with people who have extremely challenging needs. That same contracted service provider may be required to spend excessive amounts of time collecting information and making a holistic recommendation to them about benefits and services, when the client simply needed help enrolling in just one assistance



program. Efficiency matters. Holistic service also matters, but goals, metrics, outcomes, and the way we design contracts and pay for service should consider the needs of the individuals served as more significant than a particular program design.



SHARE RESULTS WITH THE PUBLIC

- **Demonstrate to the public how seriously we take our accountability by sharing the results of our evaluations publicly.** A centralized “outcomes” dashboard for the city, where summaries of key programs, major goals, metrics, and outcomes at the county, zip code, or census tract level, would help boost public confidence in our anti-poverty and upward mobility work.

STRATEGY 3: IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EQUITABLE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Disability rights advocates popularized the phrase “there is nothing about us without us,” in the 1990s to assert that policies that directly affect their lives need to center their experiences, expertise, and input. This sentiment holds great importance in many other movements for racial and social justice today. Local governments like Philadelphia must embrace meaningful, authentic community input when designing, running, funding, and evaluating upward mobility programs and policies.

Intentional and meaningful community engagement will allow city government to have a greater impact on upward mobility from poverty in that it **provides us with quantitative and qualitative data** we need to understand problems we aim to solve. It also helps us understand how problems, policies, and programs impact people in different ways, and **identify inequities that exist** and may not show up in city-wide data of larger populations. Quality, equitable community engagement can also **build trust and two-way dialogue with communities** that can increase civic participation and a sense of belonging in the community. **Good ideas and smart solutions are provided** through engagement from the people most affected by the problems. Engagement also helps **build the civic muscle and infrastructure needed to implement policies and programs** to get resources out to the community.

The complexity of community engagement

Engaging the public in decisions can be complex, particularly when related to development and zoning. Community members have used their influence to block projects that would advance equity and upward mobility, such as affordable housing. Public input processes can be used in ways that stigmatize marginalized communities such as low-income residents, immigrants,

refugees, and people of color. Community members can also be opposed to each other. Marginalized community members can be overshadowed by the loudest voices. Government also has a long history of ignoring community input such as by holding public comment sessions after decisions have already been made.

These complexities are not a reason to avoid community input, but rather to understand the history and hold eyes open about the tensions. They also require adequate training and resources for the staff responsible for community engagement, transparency and thoughtfulness about future community engagement processes and timelines.

Philadelphia’s community engagement infrastructure

Philadelphia has significant community engagement infrastructure that is critical for ongoing upward mobility work. As part of this project, we have catalogued some examples of that work and categorized the core purpose of these engagement activities. *See Appendix 01 for a description:*



	INFORMS <i>people are informed about services or are educated about issues or policies</i>	SERVES <i>Direct support is offered to help people enroll/access benefits or help</i>	VOICES COMMUNITY INPUT <i>Staff, board, volunteers serve as a conduit to decision makers to represent community needs</i>	CONSULTS <i>Residents are asked about their opinions when decisions are being made, which decision maker(s) may consider</i>	INVOLVES <i>community is given some amount of power in decision making, even if a small aspect</i>	EMPOWERS <i>Decision making is held entirely by the residents</i>
Financial Empowerment Centers (FECs)	✔	✔	✔			
BenePhilly Centers	✔	✔	✔			
Neighborhood Advisory Committees (NACs)	✔		✔	✔	✔	
Housing Counseling Agencies	✔	✔	✔			
Neighborhood Energy Centers (NECs)	✔	✔	✔			
Registered Community Organizations (RCOs)	✔		✔	✔		✔ *
PhillyCounts	✔		✔			
Community Resource Corps	✔	✔	✔			
Steering/Advisory Committees, Commissions	✔		✔	✔	✔	
Public Comment Processes				✔		

*RCOs have decision making over their own position, but do not have decision making power over the zoning or design decisions that are ultimately approved or denied by paid professionals.

ESTABLISH BEST PRACTICES IN EQUITABLE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **Create standards for equitable public comment processes.**

Philadelphia should create a standard for best practices for equitable engagement to be followed by departments that solicit public comment on rules, regulations, or plans. This could include requirements that the public is given a minimum number of days to provide comment; reasonable efforts are made to publicize the comment process; plain language summaries of complex policy changes are provided; digestible summaries of hefty plans are produced; how persons with language or accessibility needs will be included; and requiring direct outreach to key constituencies (i.e. youth, community institutions/partners) to ensure their awareness. A base-line standard for equitable public comment processes will strengthen transparency and public confidence in the process.

- **Improve language access including participation of smaller language communities.**

Philadelphia has improved language access particularly for Spanish speakers, but still has a long way to go to ensure that residents have a way to engage with the city in their language of choice and consistent with their accessibility needs.

Translation of community engagement materials and documents in multiple languages and using accessibility features should become a more standard practice. Interpretation at community meetings should also be more widely available, and when possible, meetings should be conducted in additional languages. Philadelphia has a wealth of community partners with cultural expertise as well as accessibility and language fluency that can be enlisted and resourced to support these efforts.

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PARTNERS THAT SERVE AS ENGAGEMENT ANCHORS

- **Build on our existing community engagement network but find opportunities to strengthen coordination and capacity.**

As the graphic above illustrates, Philadelphia has multiple points of entry for community engagement. There is great value in having NACs, NECs, RCOs, BenePhilly centers, and more in the same neighborhood, performing their unique functions. That leads to more opportunities for residents to connect with city government and services, and for government to hear from residents through our community partners. City government should play a stronger coordination role when engagement is happening within the same geographic or constituent community and help share results of engagement with

other departments or entities. This could include curating a repository of the results of community engagement activities, annual convenings of service providers, and ensuring adequate resources in contracts to support engagement activities.

VALUE RESIDENT EXPERTISE AND EFFORT

- **Compensate residents for the expertise and time.**

When government asks residents or community members to assist us in designing policy, programs, or strategies, we should compensate them more often than we currently do. This may not be practical for engagement processes where the general public is invited to participate, but should be more common when a unique group is asked to provide expertise about their particular lived experience. Compensation, even at nominal amounts such as \$25 or \$50 for an hour of their time depending on the project budget, demonstrates that we recognize the value of their lived experience just as we value the experience of the staff being paid to run the community engagement.

Compensation should be offered in the most accessible form possible while complying with appropriate accounting standards and proper handling of public funds, so that residents can use the compensation to pay bills or buy groceries in their own neighborhoods.

- **Report back to the public how their input was used.**

Community engagement should be additive to the community, not extractive. That requires that residents who are asked to provide their input are later informed how their input was used. This could be as simple as an email or postcard to residents who provided their information with ways to access the final plan or details on the policy or could include in-person gatherings to share back with the community. It could also include a summary of the major themes of feedback that was heard, and brief responses to that input.

STRATEGY 4: EXPAND BENEFITS ACCESS, CASH ASSISTANCE, AND DEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION AROUND SERVICE DELIVERY

Local, state, and federal benefits provide opportunities to create stability that individuals and families need to achieve upward mobility. These include assistance with utilities and housing, health care and food access, cash through tax credits or direct payments, and other programs.

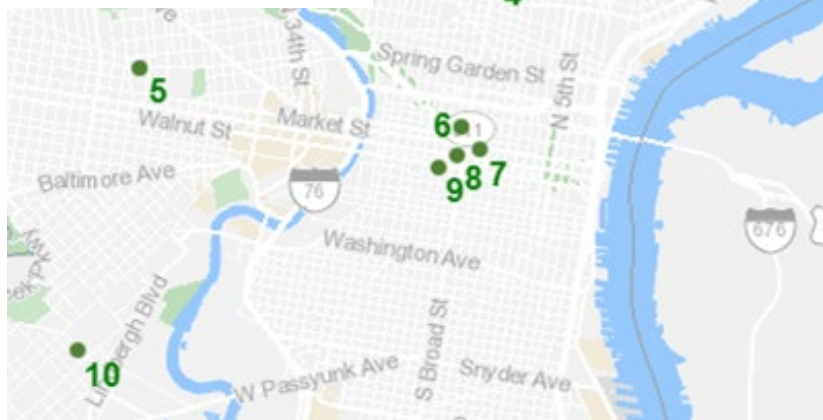
But accessing those benefits amounts to a time tax on low-income residents who must navigate bureaucratic hurdles to get enrolled and stay enrolled. **Applications can be confusing and overwhelming**, and annual renewal certification procedures lead **very vulnerable individuals to be removed from the rolls**.

Income eligibility rules vary program by program, and **typically make ineligible any applicant just pennies over the limits** no matter how significant their family need. **Identification and documentation rules can exclude our most vulnerable residents**, including those who have experienced significant trauma such as domestic abuse, floods or fires, and homelessness. Language access has improved for Spanish speaking residents, but **remains inconsistent for other languages**, both in the availability of application forms in a variety of languages, as well as staff that can assist or answer questions in multiple languages.

Philadelphia has taken important steps in the last decade to improve benefits access. This includes the creation of the BenePhilly centers in 2013, funded and overseen by CEO, and new methods for identifying and outreaching to potential enrollees using local administrative data, and investment in outreach tactics such as phone calling, texting, and door knocking. It also includes the creation of The Promise, a partnership of the City of Philadelphia and the United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey, which invests in additional benefits access collaborations.

BenePhilly Centers 2022

1	PA CareerLink Philadelphia, Northwest
2	Esperanza
3	Impact Services
4	Campaign for Working Families
5	Families Forward Philadelphia
6	Office of Reentry Partnerships
7	Office of Community Empowerment & Opportunity (CEO)
8	Philadelphia FIGHT
9	Utilities Emergency Services Fund
10	Catholic Social Services: Southwest



The need to deploy significant new resources and benefits due to the COVID-19 crisis led to more improvements in benefits access to include opportunities for virtual or telephone access.

Still far too many residents are not receiving the benefits they are eligible for, and it is still too common that Philadelphians must navigate multiple local, state, and federal systems to access benefits rather than finding one-stop-shops. Philadelphia can continue leading locally by growing its benefits access work, pursuing modernizations that technology makes possible, streamlining systems, and advocating for similar efforts at the state and federal level.

BOOST INVESTMENT IN BENEFITS ACCESS POINTS OF ENTRY

- **Invest more in the community-based outreach and enrollment model of BenePhilly.**

BenePhilly centers employ benefits access specialists that complete applications with residents for benefits, most commonly SNAP, Medicaid, and LIHEAP, but also assist with a range of other local, state, and federal applications. The centers are currently co-located at community organizations, complimented by the Benefits Access Unit (BAU) housed at CEO that operates a mobile unit to attend community fairs and resource events, as well CEO staff that operate on time-limited stays at family shelters, re-entry hubs, and other locations. The location of these centers in the community, accessible for residents to physically visit and visually notice their presence in the neighborhoods, is an important strategy to connect with residents that are either unable to navigate a virtual environment, or who prefer a trusted, knowledgeable person to help them through a difficult process. But limited resources mean large parts of Philadelphia lack a fixed BenePhilly center, such as West Philadelphia, the Northeast and Northwest, despite significant need. Additional resources are needed to expand centers to more neighborhoods.

- **Expand BenePhilly to include portable and self-guided options.** Some groups would be more effectively reached through portable and self-guided options (such as kiosks with user-friendly software) including students, people in re-entry, persons with disabilities, people seeking health care, and members of smaller ethnic populations and language groups that would benefit from culturally attuned outreach and assistance. Making the tool available beyond the BenePhilly centers—a “No Wrong Door” approach in which there are many points of entry into the BenePhilly system—would also allow a greater reach by other city departments, community partners, and neighborhood institutions.

UPDATE TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND COORDINATION

- **Upgrade benefits access platform and systems to streamline applications to local, state, and federal benefits, easily add new benefits.** Investments in technology that would allow new benefits programs to be quickly and easily added for BenePhilly screening and enrollment, as well as that can port screening information automatically into multiple benefits applications, would increase benefits access for Philadelphians as well as our ability to manage and track data. It could also facilitate multi-departmental collaboration around a single benefits access tool and encourage more uniform or aligned applications.
- **Improve telephonic benefits access.** BenePhilly centers could serve more Philadelphians if they could take applications over the phone, which is currently limited when clients need to produce paper documentation or provide a physical signature. Simplifying documentation and identification requirements for local, state, and federal benefits could improve access particularly for individuals with physical limitations, lack of transportation, or who may not be able to make in-person appointments during regular business hours. A more sophisticated telephone system that combines technology with added staff capacity would also allow city-wide outreach efforts and manage significant call volume flow through multiple community partners. This system should also allow callers to select their language of choice to be routed to specialists that can either speak that language or can efficiently patch in an interpreter.

ADVANCE POLICY TO PROMOTE FLEXIBLE CASH ASSISTANCE, ELIMINATE THE BENEFITS CLIFF, AND ASSIST ENROLLMENT AND RECERTIFICATION

- **Continue experimenting with flexible cash assistance programs.** Mayor Kenney joined [Mayors for a Guaranteed Income \(MGI\)](#) to be part of a growing network of cities that recognize the powerful impact that direct, recurring cash payments can have in providing upward mobility opportunities for residents. Philadelphia is currently exploring several pilot programs offering cash assistance, including a CEO project with TANF recipients, and a [project with the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation \(PHDC\)](#) with households on waitlists with the Philadelphia Housing Authority. Philadelphia should continue exploring these programs, expanding their reach, and evaluating their impact on upward mobility.


- **Create local best practices around "benefits cliff" avoidance and to encourage upward mobility.** Applicants that are just pennies over income limits for benefits programs are disqualified, no matter how great their need. Not only does this deny residents access to benefits and services that could significantly improve their quality of life and opportunity for upward mobility, it creates a negative incentive to earn or work for fear that an increase in income will cost them more in lost benefits. Flat income limits also fail to consider residents debt to income ratio—a key Mobility Metric noted in this report—which also leads to exclusion of households that have significant credit card or student loan debt. Exploring more ways to make residents eligible for programs who are saddled with consumer debt based on their debt-to-income ratio would also expand access to more residents.

Philadelphia should lead locally where we have flexibility to stagger income eligibility so as not get residents caught in the benefits cliff. For example, programs could allow for full benefits up to 200% FPL then stagger the value of the benefit for households that exceed that income up to a certain limit. Philadelphia's water Tiered Assistance Program (TAP) is an example other programs could emulate: residents receive the full benefit at 150% FPL, but a partial benefit if between 151% and 250% FPL.

Programs that are specifically designed to support upward mobility may be designed to allow a grace period if a resident's income increases beyond program eligibility before they are terminated, allowing transition time for benefits that are critical to family stability.

- **Explore more opportunities for auto-enrollment, auto-recertification, and cross-enrollment for local, state, and federal programs.** Most benefits programs require that eligible residents submit applications to enroll, which requires significant outreach and education efforts, as well as help navigating application processes. That's why more jurisdictions, including Philadelphia, are exploring automatic enrollment or cross-enrollment in benefits programs: In the summer of 2022, the Philadelphia Water Department used local data to automatically protect water customers who are known to be low-income due to their participation in City services from water shut-offs.

Philadelphia should continue to pursue auto or cross-enrollment in local programs where feasible, as well auto-recertification to keep people enrolled, as well as data sharing agreements with state and federal partners to make this work feasible. The biggest impact could be made by policy changes at the state or federal level. For example, the 2021 federal Child Tax Credit broke new ground when the IRS auto-enrolled every child it had a record of as a dependent on federal returns. This significantly decreased the burden at the local level on getting residents to claim



the benefit by allowing efforts to be focused on a much smaller pool of non-filers. State and federal policy makers should continue innovating in ways like this to maximize participation.

- **Reduce barriers to annual re-certification or renewal in benefits programs.**

The COVID pandemic led to many state and federal programs to automatically renew access for participants for another year during the crisis, showing we can do what it takes to keep people in enrolled when it is a priority. Federal guidelines should be updated to allow states to regularly auto-renew residents. Philadelphia should also embrace more opportunities to automatically renew benefits or make the annual re-certification process simpler. The homestead exemption is a great example of this; once a homeowner applies for and receives the homestead exemption, it is automatically granted in future years.

Annual renewals could be eliminated for households whose income is unlikely to increase, such as seniors. Low-income residents could be renewed by simple postcard, text, and email asking them to affirm they still wish to receive the benefit, only prompting the need for additional documentation if their situation has changed significantly.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

OPERATIONS

1. Three of our four recommendations are already in some form of operation at city departments now, providing a base to build upon, scale up, and expand to more departments. The fourth recommendation on outcomes-based evaluation would require new cross-departmental leadership to effectively operationalize.

CHAMPIONS & POLITICAL SUPPORT

2. Mayor Kenney issued an Executive Order advancing recommendations to strengthen data management in February 2021.
3. The Mayor's Office of Civic Engagement and Volunteer Service was awarded an Operation Transformation Fund (OTF) grant in May 2022 to create an Equitable Community Engagement Toolkit, demonstrating a commitment from city leaders to invest community engagement practices.
4. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) conducted design-focused research into Philadelphia's benefits access landscape and made complimentary recommendation for how our local benefits access ecosystem could be strengthened, reinforcing the need for cross-departmental collaboration and growth. The Promise, a fund at the United Way created to advance recommendations in the Poverty Action Plan, has also made new investments in benefits access.

FUNDING

5. Additional funding would need to be identified to fully scale up the benefits access work and invest in the technology and resources to connect to more Philadelphians.
6. New resources may be needed for some departments to fully participate in IDEA through hiring of data management staff and procuring quality data management systems.
7. Some departments may need additional funds to authentically incorporate community engagement strategies into their work, particularly in providing adequate translation, interpretation, and accessibility, as well as compensating residents for their participation.
8. Funding may also be needed to develop and incorporate new performance evaluation tools and strategies, and to coordinate it with the city's existing racial equity strategy work led by the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

APPENDIX 01: PHILADELPHIA'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Financial Empowerment Centers

Financial Empowerment Centers (FEC) educate, empower, and protect people with low incomes. They provide financial counseling that is free, high quality, personalized (one-on-one), and confidential. FEC counselors are employees of Clarifi, the region's leader in financial counseling. They are trained to help clients shift from debt management to saving. Anyone who wants free financial counseling can make an appointment by calling (855) FIN-PHIL. Counseling sessions are available in English and Spanish. Support in other languages may be available upon request.

BenePhilly Centers

BenePhilly offers free, one-on-one help to enroll Philadelphia residents in public benefit programs. These programs can help you afford some expenses, such as prescription drugs, health insurance, food, property taxes, heat and other utilities, paying for college, and disability benefits. A BenePhilly counselor can fill out public benefit applications with you and follow up on the status of your applications.

Neighborhood Advisory Committees (NACs)

The City has a lot of programs that support its core objectives. But not everyone knows about them. Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) organizations help residents learn about City programs that could benefit them. NACs provide information about initiatives to: promote neighborhood sustainability, prevent homelessness, preserve housing, reduce energy costs, develop resident job skills, mentor youth, and engage residents.

Housing Counseling Agencies

Staying in your home can be a challenge. Housing counseling can help. Home ownership brings both rights and responsibilities. Home maintenance can be costly. Tenants and landlords don't always see eye-to-eye. A financial crisis could bring a family to the brink of foreclosure or eviction and maybe even homelessness. City-funded housing counseling agencies can help. Housing counselors can help prepare people to buy a home. They assist tenants fighting eviction. They help homeowners facing foreclosure. And they can help address specific issues facing seniors and people with disabilities.

Trained housing counselors offer free group and individual counseling on: mortgage and tax foreclosure prevention, credit repair and maintenance, budgeting and money management, rights and responsibilities of homeowners, mortgage application and purchase process, tenant/landlord issues, home repair, and fair housing rights.

Neighborhood Energy Centers (NECs)

The Division of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) supports the Energy Coordinating Agency's (ECA) [Neighborhood Energy Centers \(NECs\)](#). Neighborhood Energy Centers provide information on how to save on utilities and get help paying energy bills. At NECs, residents can: apply for bill payment assistance, learn how to conserve water, gas, and electricity, and get energy counseling.

Registered Community Organizations (RCOs)

Registered Community Organizations (RCOs) are community groups that are concerned with the physical development of their community. RCOs: get advance notice of projects that will be reviewed by the Zoning Board of Adjustment or the Civic Design Review Committee, organize and conduct public meetings where community members can comment on planned developments in their neighborhood, get notified by the [Philadelphia City Planning Commission](#) (PCPC) whenever a zoning variance or special exception is requested or a development requiring Civic Design Review (CDR) is proposed.

PhillyCounts

Philly Counts mobilizes and empowers communities. They focus on the most pressing issues facing our neighborhoods. Philly Counts coordinates community engagement efforts with a network of staff, volunteers, neighborhood leaders, and community-based organizations, and has worked on the 2020 Census, the COVID-19 response, mutual aid initiatives, the Child Tax Credit, and the 2020 general election.

Community Resource Corps

Philadelphia residents face many barriers to accessing resources. These include digital, economic, language, literacy, and disability-related barriers. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened these challenges in our highest-need communities. The goals of the Community Resource Corps (CRC) are to: connect residents to resources, conduct neighborhood outreach, and build the City's capacity for strategic community engagement. The CRC also serves as a professional development program for its members. AmeriCorps members serve one-year terms of service.

Steering/Advisory Committees, Commissions

Philadelphia has several commissions that offer guidance to the Administration, including the Philadelphia Youth Commission, Millennial Advisory Committee, Commission on African American Males, Philadelphia Commission for Women, the Commission on Faith-Based and Interfaith Affairs, the Mayor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, the Mayor's Commission on People with Disabilities, and the Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs.

Public Comment Processes

Members of the public can offer written or verbal public comment before City Council's regular [Stated Meetings](#), and during public hearings held by [Council Committees](#). Some departments also accept public comment on their plans and amendments that involve spending federal funds, including [DHCD](#) and the [Office of Homeless Services](#).

APPENDIX 02: PHILADELPHIA PROGRAM & POLICY INVENTORY

Name of Report	Program/Policy	Mobility Metrics	Background	Department Leading
Respond, Recharge, Restart, Reimagine	COVID-19 Rental Assistance Program	Affordable housing: Ratio of affordable housing units per 100 households with low-, very low-, and extremely low-income levels	Four rounds of rental assistance distributed nearly \$263m to more than 41,500 households remain in their homes.	PHDC
Respond, Recharge, Restart, Reimagine	Philadelphia Worker Relief Fund	Income: Household income at the 20th, 50th, and 80th percentiles	Emergency direct cash assistance to workers and families impacted by COVID-19 who were left out of all federal and state relief	The Mayor's Fund
Respond, Recharge, Restart, Reimagine, Housing for Equity	Shallow Rent for Tenants	Affordable housing: Share of households experiencing severe rent burden, or paying more than half of their income towards rent	A rental assistance program for tenants for whom even an income-restricted rental unit is unaffordable. It is currently assisting 394 households, at least 20 percent of which have lost income due to COVID-19. The subsidy will provide up to \$300 per month for up to one year or until a household is able to afford the rent on their own, whichever is sooner.	DHCD
Respond, Recharge, Restart, Reimagine; Housing for Equity	Philly First Home	Affordable housing: Ratio of affordable housing units per 100 households with low-, very low-, and extremely low-income levels	PHDC and its program partners have continued to process applicants to this first-time homebuyer program remotely. Eligible participants earn less than 120 percent of Area Median Income, and 80 percent of them are minorities	DHCD

Respond, Recharge, Restart, Reimagine	New Models for Homeless Housing	Affordable housing: Ratio of affordable housing units per 100 households with low-, very low-, and extremely low-income levels	Planning and Development is working with the Office of Homeless Services and the Philadelphia Housing Authority to develop innovative approaches to housing our most vulnerable residents, including tiny home congregate living and modular units.	OHS
Respond, Recharge, Restart, Reimagine	Employment Resources to Support Re-Attachment to the Workforce	Employment: Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54	Philadelphia Works partnered with the City on a short-term transitional jobs program in early spring that provided 50 dislocated workers immediate income while supporting the City's efforts to stand up neighborhood based food distribution sites	Office of Workforce Development/Department of Commerce
Respond, Recharge, Restart, Reimagine; Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Eviction Diversion Pilot Program	Affordable housing: Ratio of affordable housing units per 100 households with low-, very low-, and extremely low-income levels	City, PHDC, Philadelphia Legal Assistance, Community Legal Services, and Good Shepherd Mediation Program launched this program to assist tenants facing a COVID-related hardship work out a payment agreement w/ landlord to avoid eviction	DHCD, HHS
Respond, Recharge, Restart, Reimagine	Philadelphia Accelerator Fund	Affordable housing: Ratio of affordable housing units per 100 households with low-, very low-, and extremely low-income levels	an investment vehicle to support affordable housing, and community development	Philadelphia Accelerator Fund
Respond, Recharge, Restart, Reimagine	Affordable Housing Tax Credit Projects	Affordable housing: Ratio of affordable housing units per 100 households with low-, very low-, and extremely low-income levels	Ten developments that include affordable housing, the developments will produce or preserve 1,958 affordable units, 184 of which will serve people who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness	DHCD; Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA)

Respond, Recharge, Restart, Reimagine	Re-Imagine Philadelphia	<p>Neighborhoods: Share of residents experiencing poverty living in high-poverty neighborhoods; Share of a person's neighbors who are people of other races/ethnicities; Transit trips index; Low transportation score cost index;</p>	<p>This Comprehensive Plan is a collaborative vision and strategic plan that guides 10-25 years of physical development and capital</p>	<p>Department of Planning and Development, Philadelphia City Planning Commission</p>
Growing with Equity	Philadelphia Works Workforce Training Grant	<p>Employment: Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54</p>	<p>Workforce and economic development training funds given to participating firms through the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program. Funds require businesses to match investments for workforce training.</p>	<p>Drexel University's Goodwin College of Professional Studies, The Urban League of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Energy Authority, EDSI (Educational Data Systems, Inc.)</p>
Growing with Equity	Invest in quality pre-K and early childhood education	<p>Access to preschool: Share of 3- to 4-year-olds enrolled in nursery school or preschool</p>	<p>The City will continue to expand PHLpreK free seats across Philadelphia, targeting low-income neighborhoods with proceeds from the Philadelphia Beverage Tax and will work to improve the quality and quantity of early childcare and career connected learning model</p>	<p>Office of Children and Families, Philadelphia School District, Mayor's Office of Education</p>

Growing with Equity	Invest in a quality public K-12 system	Effective public education: Average per grade change in English Language Arts achievement between third and eighth grades	To support and accelerate college and career readiness, the School District and City are working together to create a new Office of Career Connected Education and career connected learning model ¹⁹ that will connect students with employers suited to their interest and readiness, and aligned to curriculum.	Office of Children and Families, Philadelphia School District, Mayor's Office of Education
Growing with Equity, Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Philadelphia Housing Trust Fund	Affordable housing: Ratio of affordable housing units per 100 households with low-, very low-, and extremely low-income levels	Provide financing to acquire and preserve 17,000 units of existing affordable rental housing to prevent the loss of publicly-assisted and other low-cost rental units, the Eviction Prevention Program, pursue grant funds to support an Emergency Homeless Prevention Program with Flexible Rental Assistance	City Council, the Mayor and legal services agencies, DHDC
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Philadelphia Basic Income	Income: Household income at the 20th, 50th, and 80th percentiles	Cash transfers to provide stability and economic independence for households experiencing poverty, including those aging out of foster care, returning from incarceration, experiencing addiction and medical fragility, and fleeing domestic violence	Mayor's Office, PHDC, CEO
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Refund the City Wage Tax	Income: Household income at the 20th, 50th, and 80th percentiles	a credit against the full city portion of the wage tax, worth up to \$43 million, with returns between \$360 and \$1,706 for 60,000 low-income working families.	Department of Revenue
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Grow Benefits Access	Financial Security: share with debt in collections; Affordable Housing: share of households experiencing severe rent burden	A single benefits application, more enrollment sites, and a targeted outreach campaign, so that Philadelphians can tap into \$450 million in unclaimed annual benefits	CEO

Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Clean Slate for Returning Citizens	Overly punitive policing: Rate of juvenile justice arrests (per 100,000 juveniles)	An expanded and automated criminal record sealing system, that reduces economic barriers related to non violent offenses	Court of Common Pleas; Office of Criminal Justice
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Water Bill Debt Forgiveness	Financial security: Share with debt in collections	An expansion of the nation's first income-based water bill program, that allows 20,000 customers to erase debts over 24 months of timely payments.	Philadelphia Water Department, Department of Revenue; Water Revenue Bureau
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Government Fee Waivers	Financial security: Share with debt in collections	Impact study on low-income waivers, exemptions, and means tests for government fees and taxes, including payments for supervision, probate, and property transfer	CEO
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Philadelphia Housing Trust Fund	Affordable housing: Ratio of affordable housing units per 100 households with low-, very low-, and extremely low-income levels	A fund for affordable housing and homelessness prevention, which leverages state recording fees, Mixed Income Housing Program proceeds, and an unprecedented city appropriation of \$100 million.	DHDC; Planning and Development
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Pathways to Permanent Supportive Housing	Affordable housing: Ratio of affordable housing units per 100 households with low-, very low-, and extremely low-income levels	Navigable entry into emergency housing with linkages to a supportive housing network that provides rent subsidy and tailored wraparound services	OHS
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Increase Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)	Income: Household income at the 20th, 50th, and 80th percentiles	Using the state's estimated \$400 million balance in federal appropriation, to increase the monthly benefit amount for the first time since 1990, and to expand program eligibility.	DHS; HHS; CEO

Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Restore the General Assistance (GA) Program	Income: Household income at the 20th, 50th, and 80th percentiles	Higher monthly stipends (used to be \$200) over a longer period of time, during which individuals experiencing poverty can obtain approval for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), can serve as a caretaker for unrelated children, or can get back on their feet after fleeing domestic violence	OHS
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Expand the State Earned Income Tax Credit	n/a	Amending the Pennsylvania Tax Reform Code of 1971 to increase the credited percentage of a tax filer's income relative to household size.	Department of Revenue
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Grow Rent Subsidies	Affordable housing: Ratio of affordable housing units per 100 households with low-, very low-, and extremely low-income levels	Rental supports that bridge the gap between actual and affordable rent, to support cost-burdened tenants and owners, and to create and preserve mixed-income communities across the city. (PHL Rent Assist?)	Philadelphia Housing Authority; DHCD
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Automate Property Tax Relief Programs	n/a	Investing in technology and data sharing, so that eligible Philadelphians automatically receive benefits through City Council's tax relief programs, including the Homestead Exemption, the Senior Citizen Tax Freeze, Owner Occupied Payment Agreements, and the Longtime Owner Occupant Program (MyPath)	Department of Revenue

Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Build a Safe and Healthy Homes Toolkit	Does not connect	Expanding the scope of critical home repairs that keep families in their homes, based on safe and healthy home evaluations, through the coordinated work of the city's Basic Systems Repair Program, the Adaptive Modifications Program, the Weatherization Assistance Program, and the city's partnerships with the Philadelphia Energy Authority, Rebuilding Together, Habitat for Humanity, and the Energy Coordinating Authority, and the Philadelphia Energy Authority	PHDC/DHCD
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Modernize Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing	Affordable housing: Share of households experiencing severe rent burden, or paying more than half of their income towards rent	Not from public funds, generate more quality affordable units without public subsidy, particularly for tenants unable to afford upfront costs and unable to access fair chance housing, by piloting zoning and building code opportunities for accessory and smaller dwelling units, modular development, a group living designation, and transit-oriented development incentives	Planning and Development
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Fair Housing for All	Affordable housing: Share of households experiencing severe rent burden, or paying more than half of their income towards rent	A package of access to justice reforms designed to keep cost-burdened families in their homes, including but not limited to: court procedures for eviction record sealing; expanded tenant access to utility customer status; public investigation of predatory debt collection liens; and utility meter data sharing to help the city monitor rental licensure	Fair Housing Commission; DHCD

Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Adult Education in Every Neighborhood	Access to jobs paying a living wage: Ratio of pay on the average job to the cost of living	Expanding the campus footprint of the Community College of Philadelphia to increase application, enrollment, and retention; and by adapting community schools with university and community college programs that prepare adults for high priority, family-sustaining jobs, including but not limited to: ESL, literacy and GED training; proficiency certificates and Associate Degrees; post-secondary credential and workforce training for jobs requiring skilled training but no degree;	Community College of Philadelphia,
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Provide Job Training Stipends	Housing instability and homelessness: Number and share of public-school children who are homeless during the school year	Offset costs of transportation, childcare, medicine, and other daily essentials so that individuals can afford to transition from poverty-wage jobs to living-wage careers.	?
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Job Opportunities Investment Network	Income: Household income at the 20th, 50th, and 80th percentiles	A program that will align: a city commitment to mandate a wage rate to all employees and contractors; a state commitment to update the minimum wage; and private sector commitments to ensure that all jobs are family-sustaining.	CEO, National Fund for Workforce Solutions

Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan; Homeless Annual Report	Same Day Work and Pay Programs	Employment: Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54	No-barrier work opportunities, coupled with resources and services for homeless, unemployed, and underemployed individuals. The Mural Arts and CLIP currently administer work opportunities through the program, while the Office of Homeless Services provides peer specialists trained to connect individuals with complex behavioral needs to necessary services, housing, and future work opportunities. EX: Color Me Back	Office of Homeless Services, Managing Director's Office, CEO, Mural Arts Philadelphia, Mental Health Partnerships, SEPTA
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Dual Enrollment and Career and Technical Education (CTE)	College readiness: Share of 19- and 20-year-olds with a high school degree	More high school students are fast-tracked for high priority jobs, either through dual enrollment programs that allow them to earn an Associates Degree, or through CTE courses that teach students professional skills.	Phila School District
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Boost Summer Employment	Employment: Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54	Adding new job placements over the next five years. WorkReady currently places about half of its 18,000 youth applicants aged 12 to 24.	CEO
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Short-Term and Stackable Credentialing	Employment: Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54	High-demand skills to accelerate the transition from training to work. Successful models nationally provide "stackable" certificates that build career pathways,	Community College of Philadelphia,

Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Access to Building Trades	Employment: Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54	Memorandum of Understanding for the admittance of Career and Technical Education students from the School District of Philadelphia and the Community College of Philadelphia, based on an interagency alignment of credit hours for students, and a 120-day training program for returning citizens to build professional skills	Community College of Philadelphia; Philadelphia School District
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Access to Vital Records	Overly punitive policing: Rate of juvenile justice arrests (per 100,000 juveniles)	Developing a free, accessible, and ultimately electronic system for older youth, including those engaged in our child welfare or juvenile justice system, to access government records that they need to obtain a birth certificate, social security, or driver's license, in order to get a job, apply for college, open a bank account, or rent an apartment	Pa. Department of Vital Records; PennDOT
Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan	Explore Access to Childcare and Transportation	Transportation access: Transit trips index	Access to childcare and transportation particularly yields stability for 40,000 single heads of households.	SEPTA, Office of Children and Families? Office of Commerce?
Homeless Annual Report	The "Hi-Five" program	Affordable housing: Ratio of affordable housing units per 100 households with low-, very low-, and extremely low-income levels	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.	OHS

Homeless Annual Report	Color Me Back: A Same Day Work and Pay Program	Exposure to crime: Rates of reported crime; Work: Employment to population ratio; access to jobs paying a living wage	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.	Office of Homeless Services, Mural Arts Philadelphia, Mental Health Partnerships, SEPTA; CEO; CLIP
Housing for Equity	Emergency Homelessness Prevention Program with Flexible Rental Assistance	Affordable housing: Ratio of affordable housing units per 100 households with low-, very low-, and extremely low-income levels	Pilot a program to divert vulnerable families from homelessness modeled on the New York City HomeBase initiative. This program uses a data-informed assessment tool to identify households at high risk of homelessness due to loss of income, eviction, and other factors. The program provides flexible financial assistance and wraparound services scaled to the needs of eligible households in order to prevent shelter entry.	Office of Homeless Services
Housing for Equity	Adaptive Modifications Program (AMP)	Affordable housing: Ratio of affordable housing units per 100 households with low-, very low-, and extremely low-income levels	Increase funding to an existing initiative that helps low-income individuals with permanent physical disabilities, impaired mobility and in fragile health live more independently in their homes. AMP provides City-funded adaptations to a house or apartment that allow easier access and indoor mobility.	DHCD

<p>Housing for Equity</p>	<p>Advocate for Sufficient Housing Choice Vouchers</p>	<p>Affordable housing: Ratio of affordable housing units per 100 households with low-, very low-, and extremely low-income levels</p>	<p>Due to limits placed on the number of vouchers available, not every household eligible for a voucher is able to receive one. A coordinated advocacy effort should be undertaken to urge the Federal government to allocate additional Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV). This Program will be used to target housing for households at or below 30% AMI. PHA and the City will also continue to partner to maximize the use of Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) in new units developed by neighborhood-based and mission-driven nonprofits and other developers.</p>	<p>PHA</p>
<p>Housing for Equity</p>	<p>Realty Transfer Tax Offset</p>	<p>Affordable housing: Share of households experiencing severe rent burden, or paying more than half of their income towards rent</p>	<p>The Realty Transfer Tax can be a significant barrier to homebuyers purchasing their first home. Approximately three-quarters of the total transfer tax bill is collected by the City. To incentivize homeownership among low- and moderate-income households, the City should consider a mechanism to offset all or a portion of the Realty Transfer Tax for firsttime homebuyers meeting defined income requirements.</p>	<p>Department of Revenue</p>

Housing for Equity	Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention Program	Affordable housing: Share of households experiencing severe rent burden, or paying more than half of their income towards rent	The Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention Program that pauses the foreclosure process. It gives homeowners facing mortgage foreclosure the opportunity to attend a free conciliation conference with a housing counselor and attorney to negotiate new loan or tax payment terms with their mortgage company or with the City.	DHCD
Housing for Equity	Expand Access to Mortgage Financing	Affordable housing: Share of households experiencing severe rent burden, or paying more than half of their income towards rent	Encourage lenders to use alternative credit histories: Work with lending institutions to develop innovative financial products that will serve households ready for homeownership but unable to access a traditional mortgage due to low credit scores or a lack of credit history	Planning and Development
Housing for Equity	Expand Housing Counseling and Education	n/a	Increase opportunities for post-purchase education and counseling to reduce delinquency and foreclosure rates and ensure successful and sustainable homeownership	DHCD
CEO Strategic Framework	First Step Staffing	Employment: Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54	Provide economic opportunity and a path to self-sufficiency for those otherwise locked out of the employment system, including those experiencing or who have recently experienced homelessness, individuals who have been previously incarcerated, and military veterans.	CEO & First Step Staffing

CEO Strategic Framework	Center for Employment Opportunities	Employment: Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54	Works to reduce recidivism and increase employment. We provide people returning from prison immediate paid employment, skills training, and ongoing career support.	CEO & Center for Employment Opportunities
CEO Strategic Framework	Work Ready	Employment: Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54; access to jobs paying a living wage	Summer program for youth 12-24 providing jobs	CEO, JEVS
CEO Strategic Framework	Housing Security Working Group	Affordable housing: Ratio of affordable housing units per 100 households with low-, very low-, and extremely low-income levels	Member organizations design, implement, and advocate for practice, programmatic, and policy changes that can reduce eviction in Philadelphia. With CEO's support, the organizations regularly join forces to share updates from the field, co-conceive activities and interventions, support policy research and implementation, and leverage their resources and connections.	CEO
CEO Strategic Framework	BenePhilly Centers	Income: Household income at the 20th, 50th, and 80th percentiles	Offers free, one-on-one help to enroll Philadelphia residents in public benefit programs. These programs can help you afford some expenses.	CEO & Benefits Data Trust
CEO Strategic Framework	Financial Empowerment Centers	Financial security: Share with debt in collections	Financial Empowerment Centers offer professional, one-on-one financial counseling as a free public service to enable residents to address their financial challenges and needs and plan for their futures.	Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund, CSBG Funds, ClarifiPA CareerLink, People's Emergency Center
CEO Strategic Framework	Promise Corps	Employment: Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54	Promise Corps collaborates with school leaders, community members, families and youth advocates to directly support high school students in their post-secondary planning.	CEO; Americorps

CEO Strategic Framework	Fines and Fees	Financial security: Share with debt in collections	To increase opportunities for economic mobility for returning citizens and their families, provide jobs and housing	CEO; First Step Staffing, Center for Employment Opportunities, Clarifi and JP Morgan Chase
CEO Strategic Framework	Financial Inclusion for New Americans	Income: Household income at the 20th, 50th, and 80th percentiles	Financial support for those who are new to the country through Banking resources, financial counseling, etc.	Financial Empowerment Centers, CEO
CEO Strategic Framework	Bank On	Financial security: Share with debt in collections	The City of Philadelphia has partnered with Bank On to help residents get safe and affordable banking services. By using a Bank On-approved account, residents can avoid costly check-cashing services and unexpected fees. They can also get access to online banking and bill payments.	CEO, Banks like Bank of America, PNC, etc.
Fueling Philadelphia's Talent Engine	Workforce development	Access to jobs paying a living wage: Ratio of pay on the average job to the cost of living; Employment: Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54	Place employers at the center of strategies to advance local talent development in growth sectors of the economy.	Office of Workforce Development/Phila Dept of Commerce
Fueling Philadelphia's Talent Engine	Workforce development	Access to jobs paying a living wage: Ratio of pay on the average job to the cost of living; Employment: Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54	Increase apprenticeships and other industry driven work-based learning opportunities to close the skills gap and support career advancement to middle-skill jobs.	Office of Workforce Development/Phila Dept of Commerce
Fueling Philadelphia's Talent Engine	Workforce development	College readiness: Share of 19- and 20-year-olds with a high school degree	Connect all Philadelphia public school students to a high-quality work experience before graduation to prepare them for college and career.	Office of Workforce Development/Phila Dept of Commerce; Philadelphia School District

Fueling Philadelphia's Talent Engine	Workforce development; BenePhilly Centers	Income: Household income at the 20th, 50th, and 80th percentiles; Financial security: Share with debt in collections; Affordable housing: Ratio of affordable housing units per 100 households with low-, very low-, and extremely low-income levels	Strengthen work-related supports for Philadelphians living in poverty.	Office of Workforce Development/Phila Dept of Commerce; CEO
Fueling Philadelphia's Talent Engine	Workforce development	Access to jobs paying a living wage: Ratio of pay on the average job to the cost of living	Address reading, writing, numeracy and digital skill barriers in all adult workforce education and training.	Office of Workforce Development/Phila Dept of Commerce
Fueling Philadelphia's Talent Engine	Workforce development; Promise Corps	College readiness: Share of 19- and 20-year-olds with a high school degree; Student poverty concentration: Share of students attending high-poverty schools, by student race/ethnicity	Develop and implement population-specific strategies to promote career pathway success, starting with: Opportunity Youth and Young Adults (16-24), Returning Citizens, and Immigrants.	Office of Workforce Development/Phila Dept of Commerce; CEO
Fueling Philadelphia's Talent Engine	Workforce development	Access to jobs paying a living wage: Ratio of pay on the average job to the cost of living; Employment: Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54	Convene workforce stakeholders to pursue a coordinated set of policy recommendations that promote career advancement for all Philadelphians.	Office of Workforce Development/Phila Dept of Commerce
Fueling Philadelphia's Talent Engine	Workforce development	Access to jobs paying a living wage: Ratio of pay on the average job to the cost of living; Employment: Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54	Increase and align public and private dollars in support of shared workforce goals.	Office of Workforce Development/Phila Dept of Commerce
Fueling Philadelphia's Talent Engine	Workforce development	Access to jobs paying a living wage: Ratio of pay on the average job to the cost of living; Employment: Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54	Launch a common data dashboard to track progress toward shared goals.	Office of Workforce Development/Phila Dept of Commerce



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