

Vote For Homes
2015 Mayoral Election Issues and Recommendations
Spring 2015



Each year, approximately 14,100 Philadelphians access shelter¹ and need housing, jobs, and services to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty. Permanent housing costs less than shelter, inpatient hospital stays, and prisons, while providing better outcomes. Providing effective connections to housing and services, though challenging, should create the best outcomes at the best cost. The Vote For Homes coalition has developed the recommendations below to help candidates form their positions on housing, jobs, and services to end and prevent homelessness in Philadelphia.

Affordable Housing:

FACTS: There are more than 110,000 households on the PHA waiting list², with households waiting an average of 10 years or more for a unit (about 400 PHA units turn over each year³). Permanent housing not only costs less (under \$30 per day) but creates better outcomes than shelter (\$34 per day). Housing development is an economic driver, creating a return of \$1.62 to \$2.28 for every \$1 of investment.⁴

ACTIONS:

- Double the resources in the Philadelphia Housing Trust Fund to preserve and expand the number of affordable homes
- Ensure systems coordination, collaboration, and transparency for the best use of resources
 - Mix city/state/federal funding streams and coordinate programs funded at each level to best advantage, including exploring innovations such as inclusionary zoning and “tiny houses”
 - Quickly transition people out of shelter and provide more and better services, including family supports
 - Coordinate and plan for housing and services together with PHA, which currently serves 80,000 low-income Philadelphians in 31,000 units, including continuing the existing “Blueprint” program providing housing opportunities for 300 families and 200 single individuals annually
- Provide housing for homeless young adults, including those who are LGBTQ (an estimated 40 percent of the population⁵) and/or aging out of foster care (approximately 300 annually in Philadelphia⁶).

¹ 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (available upon request from OSH)

² Philadelphia City Council Resolution 140577

³ Testimony of Kelvin A. Jeremiah, President & CEO of the Philadelphia Housing Authority, to City Council, February 9, 2015.
http://www.pha.phila.gov/media/135937/504_testimony_final020915.pdf

⁴ <http://www.housingalliancepa.org/node/1219>

⁵ <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Durso-Gates-LGBT-Homeless-Youth-Survey-July-2012.pdf>

⁶ <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/5101-foster-care--youth-age-18-21-aging-out-to-a-non-family-setting#detailed/5/5429/false/842,760,738,639,638/any/11538>

Jobs, Income & Hunger:

FACTS: The median income for a household in Philadelphia is \$34,207, or about 2/3 of the national average of \$50,502.⁷ Philadelphia ranks 24th out of the 25 largest cities in household income⁷ – above only Detroit. More than one in three Philadelphia kids lives under the poverty line⁷ and one in four Philadelphians is at risk of hunger.⁸

ACTIONS:

- Extend and expand the Benephilly centers to connect people to their maximum public benefits
- Develop, support, and expand programs such as free Community College, PowerCorps PHL, First Source, and others to help ensure jobs for single parents, teens, people with addiction, returning citizens, and people with disabilities
- Fully implement and expand the “Shared Prosperity” anti-poverty program with a focus on hunger and homelessness
- Support and advocate for a Federal minimum wage of \$12.50 with cost-of-living adjustments

Human Services:

FACTS: 1 in 3 Philadelphia households has a member with a disability.⁹ Each year, approximately 45 people die while homeless, most from addictions¹⁰; Street Outreach engages approximately 6,000 unduplicated individuals on the streets each year. Incarceration costs over \$42,000 per inmate per year in Pennsylvania (or more than \$420 annually per PA household)¹¹ for each of the State’s average 50,000 inmates.

ACTIONS:

- Advocate for Medicaid support for services within permanent supportive housing, including addiction and other services
- Partner with existing organizations to create new education and employment supports for people who are homeless, including teens
- Consider a one-stop model for allocating social services according to geography, like the Community Umbrella Agency model in the Department of Human Services
- Provide for better diversion from prison, including mental health court and wrap-around services to reduce recidivism

Vote For Homes coalition is a nonpartisan advocacy effort focused on the issues of affordable housing, living-wage jobs, and quality services in Philadelphia. Since 1999, Vote For Homes has registered more than 16,000 voters and mobilized thousands to vote. For more information, contact Jennine Miller at jenninemiller@projecthome.org or 215-232-7272, x3042.

www.voteforhomes.org

⁷<http://sharedprosperityphila.org/jobs-and-training/>

⁸http://b.3cdn.net/phillyhunger/eb5b5b720977bd0b8b_70m6berfw.pdf

⁹http://www.disabilityplanningdata.com/site/county_household_table.php?cntyname=Philadelphia&state=pennsylvania&submit=submit

⁹ <http://www.phila.gov/health/pdfs/2009-2010%20Homeless%20Death%20Review%20Report.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.vera.org/files/price-of-prisons-pennsylvania-fact-sheet.pdf>