

Issued: 6/3/2024

Home4Good
Request for Proposals
Continuum of Care PA-603 serving Beaver County, PA

Home4Good is a collaboration between the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh (FHLBank Pittsburgh) and the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) to provide grant funds to help those who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. Beaver County has been allocated \$76,000 and the Community Development Program (CDP) is now accepting proposals for this funding opportunity.

Home4Good is designed to support projects, programs or activities in Pennsylvania that lead to stable housing for individuals and families who are currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. To be eligible for funding consideration, projects must address one of the following program goals:

- **Critical Need:** Any project, program or activity serving homeless individuals and families that is determined to be critically needed by the relevant community or CoC area entity for the Region/County.
- **Innovative Solutions:** Projects, programs or activities that provide innovative solutions that seek to end homelessness.
- **Prevention and/or Diversion:** Projects, programs or activities that assist households seeking to avoid homelessness by maintaining their current housing situation or being diverted to alternative options.

Eligible applicants include organizations that provide services which prevent and/or reduce homelessness in Beaver County, PA. Eligible organizations include, but are not limited to: Units of local government, Nonprofit organizations (including faith-based organizations), Redevelopment and/or housing authorities, Health care providers focused on healthy equity and/or homelessness prevention programming, and Economic and community development organizations, housing corporations, etc.

Eligible activities are those which seek to end homelessness. Funds cannot be used for hard development cost (costs associated with real estate, construction/rehabilitation, etc). A list of possible eligible Home4Good funding activities can be found in the *2024 FHLBank Pittsburgh & PHFA Home4Good CoC Block Grant Application* (please note that eligible activities may extend to those not on list).

Projects that receive funding through 2024 Home4Good funding are required to serve households who are either experiencing homelessness or in danger of becoming homeless. People who can be defined as homeless include:

- Persons who are sleeping in places not meant for human habitation (e.g., cars, parks, streets/sidewalks, etc.)
- Persons sleeping in emergency shelters
- Persons graduating from a transitional housing program specifically for homeless persons
- Persons being discharged from an institution or foster care with no permanent residence available
- Persons who would be discharged from an institution if there was a permanent residence available
- Displaced victims of domestic violence
- Persons who are “doubled-up” and are in a situation of overcrowding, which is defined as: Efficiency - 3 or more people; 1 Bedroom - 4 or more people; 2 Bedrooms - 6 or more people; 3 Bedrooms - 8 or more people; 4 Bedrooms - 10 or more people

All relevant material and instructions can also be found under “Invitation to Bid & Proposals” at:

<https://beavercountypa.gov/departments/community-development>

CDP is also requiring any applicants who receive Home4Good funding to report on a set of core metrics and performance metrics (if applicable) as outlined in the *2024 FHLBank Pittsburgh & PHFA Home4Good CoC Block Grant Application*. If a project currently participates in Homeless Management Information System, it will be required to continue to do so. Those that do not participate in HMIS will be strongly encouraged to do so. Failure to meet reporting requirements could impact funding. CDP is also requiring that proposals address the PA-603 Strategic Planning Tool (see attached).

Below is the matrix by which programs will be scored for final selection and inclusion in Beaver County's application to PHFA and PHLBank Pittsburgh. Strong proposals will provide detailed responses to each of these topics. Failure to fully address the topics below will result in lower scores and less chance of being selected for funding.

Proposal Topics	Details	Points
Program Goal	One of the Home4Goal Program Goals is identified and justified.	2 pts
Strategic Plan	Project addresses the PA 603 Strategic Planning Tool.	2 pts
Target Population	Target population meets the Home4Good homeless definition.	2 pts
Project Design	Project is fiscally feasible.	2 pts
Project Design	Project meets the needs of the target population.	2 pts
Project Design	Project effectively addresses the program objective.	2 pts
Project Design	Project design considers equity in service delivery and outcomes so to benefit households in a manner which is appropriate for the demographic makeup of the geographic area served.	2 pts
Project Design	Project provides actual housing to target population.	2 pts
Project Design	Project demonstrates strong partnerships to enhance outcomes.	2 pts
Projected Outcomes	Proposal includes outcomes and method for tracking them.	2 pts
Reporting Requirements	Details how the agency will meet the reporting requirements on time and without prompting.	2 pts
Budget	Budget includes all costs and all funding sources.	2 pts
Budget	Budget demonstrates a plan to consistently spend down funds over the grant year.	2 pts
Experience with Homelessness & Agency Eligibility	Proposal details agency's eligibility and experience with addressing homelessness.	2 pts
Experience with Grants	Proposal details the applicant's experience with administering grant funded programs.	2 pts
TOTAL	////////////////////////////////////	30 pts

Proposals should be submitted to the attention of Holly Santa and mailed or dropped off at: 1013 8th Avenue Beaver Falls, PA 15010 by noon on July 24th 2024.

Questions can be directed to: ciabatonidina@gmail.com

All relevant material and instructions can also be found under "Invitation to Bid & Proposals" at: <https://beavercountypa.gov/departments/community-development>

2024 FHLBank Pittsburgh & Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency - Home4Good Continuum of Care (CoC) Block Grant Application

I. CONTINUUM OF CARE INFORMATION

CoC Name: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Name of CoC Representative: _____

Email of CoC Representative: _____

Phone: _____

Other Contacts (If Applicable): _____

II. APPLICATION PROCESS

Home4Good is a collaborative initiative between the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh (FHLBank Pittsburgh) and the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) to provide grant funds to help those who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.

In 2024, block grant applications will be submitted and considered under the following process:

1. CoCs will be responsible for identifying and selecting projects in their region in need of funding. CoCs must identify and select projects in a diverse and equitable manner so as to benefit families and individuals which is appropriate for the demographic makeup of the geographic area served. CoCs should submit projects who are most in need of funding, according to the CoC's strategic priorities.
2. CoCs will submit an "Application Package" which includes a completed and signed PDF "CoC Block Grant Application" and an Excel "Worksheet of Projects" to PHFA and FHLBank Pittsburgh by the Home4Good deadline, July 31, 2024 to home4good@fhlpgh.com and home4good@phfa.org.
 - a. "Worksheet of Projects" will be prepopulated with the CoC's total allocation. Requested projects must match the allocation listed.
3. FHLBank Pittsburgh and PHFA will review the application package and select award recipients, to be announced on or before December 31, 2024. PHFA will contract with the Continuums of Care to disburse funds. CoCs will then be responsible to distribute funds to selected projects.
4. CoCs will be required to submit Home4Good progress reports semi-annually to PHFA on the impact and use of funds for all awarded projects.

For their role in making recommendations and completing Application Packages, Continuums of Care can be compensated up to five percent (5%) of the total amount approved in their district. There are no reporting requirements for the CoC compensation funds.

2024 Timeline

Home4Good Grant Applications Released

June 3

CoC Block Grant Application and Worksheet of Projects Due to FHLBank and PHFA

July 31

Home4Good Awards Announcement

On or Before December 31

III. PROGRAM INFORMATION

Home4Good is designed to support projects, programs or activities in Pennsylvania that lead to stable housing for individuals and families who are currently experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless. To be eligible for funding consideration, projects must address one of the following program goals.

- **Prevention and/or Diversion:** Projects, programs or activities that assist households seeking to avoid homelessness by maintaining their current housing situation or being diverted to alternative options.
- **Innovative Solutions:** Projects, programs or activities that provide innovative solutions that seek to end homelessness.
- **Critical Need:** Any project, program or activity serving homeless individuals and families that is determined to be critically needed by the relevant community or CoC area entity for the Region/County.

Eligible Organizations:

In 2024, block grant applications are submitted by CoCs on behalf of eligible organizations. Eligible organizations are those that provide services which prevent and/or reduce homelessness in Pennsylvania. Eligible organizations include, but are not limited to:

- Units of local government (counties, cities, boroughs, townships, town and home rule municipalities),
- Nonprofit organizations, including faith-based organizations,
- Redevelopment and/or housing authorities,
- Health care providers focused on health equity and/or homelessness prevention programming,
- Economic and community development organizations, housing corporations, etc.

Eligible Funding Activities:

Eligible activities for Home4Good include any program, project or activity which seeks to end homelessness. Home4Good funds cannot be used for development hard costs (costs associated with real estate, construction/rehabilitation, etc.). Other eligible funding activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Homeless outreach.
- Housing models designed to serve youth.

- Eviction prevention and homeless diversion support including providing security deposits, rent/utility assistance, employment/transportation assistance, gift cards for groceries, etc.
- Landlord engagement and outreach to increase availability and access to affordable rental units
- Non-time-limited supportive housing.
- Support Services for households experiencing homelessness. This includes screening and intake done through the Coordinated Entry process, as well as employment assistance (skill development, job training, etc.), and recovery support for individuals and families.
- Coordinated entry support/capacity building.
- Transitional housing to facilitate the movement of individuals and families to permanent housing.
- Rapid re-housing that provides housing coupled with supportive services.
- System enhancements and/or operating expenses related to the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to increase capacity, expand services, and/or improve the ability to serve clients.
- Flexible funding to improve the CoC/community's ability to end homelessness. This may be through system changes, new partnerships, a particular type of intervention or targeting a particular sub-population.

Projects/programs that receive funding through the 2024 Home4Good are required to serve households who are either experiencing homelessness or in danger of becoming homeless. Homeless is defined as follows:

- Persons who are sleeping in places not meant for human habitation (e.g., cars, parks, streets/sidewalks, etc.),
- Persons sleeping in emergency shelters,
- Persons graduating from a transitional housing program specifically for homeless persons,
- Persons being discharged from an institution or foster care with no permanent residence available,
- Persons who would be discharged from an institution if there was a permanent residence available,
- Displaced victims of domestic violence, or
- Persons who are “doubled-up” and are in a situation of overcrowding, which is defined as:

Unit Occupancy – for purposes of determining overcrowding:

- Efficiency - 3 or more people
- 1 Bedroom - 4 or more people
- 2 Bedrooms - 6 or more people
- 3 Bedrooms - 8 or more people
- 4 Bedrooms - 10 or more people

FHLBank Pittsburgh Member Financial Institution Participation

FHLBank will provide the opportunity for its Member Financial Institutions to offer support to Home4Good applications. FHLBank will coordinate and collect member support forms on behalf of applicants. CoCs have no responsibilities to reach out to FHLBank members unless otherwise requested.

Compliance and Reporting

CoCs will be required to collect data from the service providers and complete and submit a semi-annual progress report to report on the impact, accomplishments, and overall use of funds until all awarded funds are expended. A final close-out report must be provided to PHFA within 30 days of the final expenditure of Home4Good funds.

If service providers are not in compliance with current reporting requirements, approval for funding could be impacted.

All grantees will be expected to report on a set of core metrics and, if applicable, performance metrics, as outlined below. Any grantees currently participating in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) will be required to provide HMIS data to PHFA.

Core metrics required for all Home4Good grantees include:

- Number of individuals served.
- Demographic data on age, gender identity and race.
- Geographic dispersion of services (urban vs. rural).
- Number of Veterans served (if captured/disclosed).
- Number of ex-offenders served (if captured/disclosed).
- Number of individuals identifying themselves as a victim of domestic violence, person with a disability, or person with a substance abuse issue (if captured/disclosed).

Performance metrics include, but are not limited to:

- Reduction in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness, including Veterans, those experiencing chronic homelessness, families, unaccompanied or parenting youth, individuals, and those unsheltered.
- Reduction in the length of time individuals remain homeless.
- Reduction in the extent to which individuals, who exit homelessness to permanent housing destinations, return to homelessness.
- Increase in access to jobs and income among individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Reduction in the number of individuals who become homeless for the first time.
- Increase in successful housing placement.
- Increase in homelessness prevention.

Home4Good Contract and Funding Cycle:

The Home4Good program is funded by the Board of Directors of the FHLBank Pittsburgh and PHFA. The 12-month contract term will commence on the execution date of the contract and remains contingent on approved funding from FHLBank Pittsburgh and PHFA. The expectation is generally that the funds awarded will be expended within the 12-month term. Those awarded funds should not expect funding to be extended/renewed beyond the term for which the funds are being awarded.

IV. APPLICATION INFORMATION

1. Description of how the projects/programs listed on the 2024 Worksheet of Projects were determined and how they align with your CoC's strategic priorities:

2. Please confirm that by applying for Home4Good funds, the Continuum of Care commits to utilizing/distributing such funds in a diverse and equitable manner so as to benefit families and individuals in a manner which is appropriate for the demographic makeup of the geographic area served.

- YES
- NO

3. Please confirm that by submitting the Application Package your CoC accepts responsibility for providing semi-annual progress reports (due to PHFA on March 31, 2025 and September 30, 2025) for each of the awarded projects.

- YES
- NO

Reporting Contact: _____

Reporting Contact Email: _____

Reporting Contact Phone: _____

4. Describe how you are qualified to make the confirmations/certifications on this form and sign/submit the CoC Block Grant Application Package on behalf of your CoC:

5. Please use the space below to detail if any service provider listed on the corresponding "Worksheet of Projects" has opportunities within their organization for FHLBank Member Institution involvement. (i.e volunteer or other engagement opportunities, Affordable Housing projects, financing or deposits which require FHLBank Member financing, services or support)

Please mark Yes or No in "Worksheet of Projects" column I and use space below to detail the opportunity. This information will only be shared with FHLBank Member Institutions who inquire about specific opportunities.

Service Provider/Project Name	Opportunity

I, the undersigned authorized representative of the Continuum of Care listed above, certify that all information included within the 2024 Home4Good Application Package is true and correct.

Signed by: _____ Name (Print): _____

Title: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____

*The complete Application Package must be received by FHLBank Pittsburgh and PHFA no later than **July 31, 2024** to be considered for funding. Complete Application Packages should be emailed to home4good@fhlb-pgh.com and home4good@phfa.org*

FHLBank Pittsburgh and PHFA will have final approving authority of all projects that are submitted.

PA-603 COC – 2021- 2024 STRATEGIC PLANNING TOOL

The PA-603 Steering Committee is committed to the goal of ending homelessness in Beaver County by operating a system of partners that quickly identifies, engages, and rehuses households who face a housing crisis. The Steering Committee will use this tool in addition to the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action plans to guide their decision making over the course of the next 3 years (2021-2024). It will be updated as determined necessary by data and outcomes.

METRICS OF SUCCESS

Reduction in rate of return to homelessness

Reduction in length of time homeless

Increase exits to permanent housing

STRATEGIES

1. Monitor system and program outcome data regularly and develop strategies for improvement.

2. Ensure coordinated entry into the homeless system with an order of prioritization, efficiency, and equity

3. Engage more landlords in our efforts

4. Address disparities (racial, gender, abilities) in referrals and outcomes

5. Continue to build diverse partnerships in our work

6. Increase employment and income opportunities

7. Create an affordable housing collaboration

8. Develop specific strategies to address gaps in services including seeking additional & flexible funding

GAPS IN SERVICE

1. Lack of affordable housing options

2. Disparate outcomes

3. Insufficient Permanent Supportive Housing

4. Lack of case management/supports both pre and post housing placement

5. Memorandums of Understanding with critical partners

6. Timely access to medical services (i.e. through a mobile medical team)

7. Meeting unique or unexpected needs

8. Lengthy admission processes into housing programs

9. Housing needs of people with complex issues i.e. MH, elderly, incarceration histories, and teens/young adults

10. Wait times that lengthen homelessness

11. High eviction rates



PA-603 Continuum of Care Strategic Plan to End Homelessness In Beaver County, PA

PURPOSE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING TOOL

The Strategic Planning Tool is meant to be used as a reference to guide decision making and to help make funding decisions. It is used by the CoC Governing Board, the CoC Coordinator, and the Collaborative Applicant. Entities who apply for some homeless funds are asked to structure their proposals around the needs identified in this document. The Governing Board reviews the Strategic Planning Tool annually and formally updates it every 3 years. Input is gathered from CoC and ESG funded programs, the Housing & Homeless Coalition members, and the Lived Homeless Expertise committee. The CoC Coordinator also provides data to inform the process.

CONTEXT OF HOMELESSNESS IN BEAVER COUNTY

PA-603 CoC is made up of partners working in coordination with various housing programs to end homelessness in Beaver County. Ending homelessness means the experience of homelessness is a rare occurrence and when it does occur it is brief and non-recurring. The Housing & Homeless Coalition is comprised of 296 distinct service and resource partners and advocates. Of these partners approximately 50 regularly attend monthly partner meetings. 16 different programs provide housing to homeless people and include: 3 Permanent Supportive Housing programs, 2 Transitional Housing programs, 6 Rapid Rehousing programs, and 5 Emergency Shelters. These housing programs provide 397 beds for people who are homeless (2024 HIC). On the night of January 23, 2024, 94% of those beds were filled (372 people). This represents an increase from the last three years and it exceeds the pre-pandemic levels of 330 people reported on the 2020 HIC. Numbers peaked at 444 people during the height of the pandemic in 2021 as reported on that year's HIC so FY 2024 still demonstrates a decrease from that peak. Length of time homeless had steadily decreased over the last two years (FY 2021 and 2022 System Performance Measures). But it increased in 2023 by an average of 40 days which is not surprising given the extraordinarily tight affordable housing market in Beaver County (FY 2023 System Performance Measures). In fact, in 2023 the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania estimated that Beaver County only has 68 affordable housing units for every 100 extremely low-income households. And the Housing Authority of the County of Beaver (the largest affordable housing provider in the County) is at full capacity for the first time in memorable history.

METRICS OF SUCCESS

The PA-603 CoC has a wealth of data to determine progress toward the goal of ending homelessness in Beaver County. The Governing Board has adopted the three metrics indicated on the Tool to determine progress toward meeting that goal. These metrics further guide the Governing

Board’s planning efforts and their development of strategies to improve performance and overall progress toward the goal. The chart below demonstrates these outcomes over the last four years.

Metric of Success	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Avg length of time homeless for ES	77 days	60 days	66 days	104 days
Avg length of time homeless for ES and TH	125 days	74 days	70 days	111 days
Exits to PH from ES, TH, RRH	49% (347 people)	48% (380 people)	51% (395 people)	60% (290 people)
Exits to PH or maintenance of PH from PSH	95% (231 people)	98% (196 people)	91% (197 people)	92% (177 people)
Returns to Homelessness	16% (68 people)	16% (70 people)	15% (64 people)	11% (58 people)

ANALYSIS OF METRICS OF SUCCESS

Comparing FY 2023 to FY 2020, PA-603 CoC has increased the average length of time homeless by 27 days for ES and decreased it by 14 days for ES & TH combined. The increase could be attributed to the newly opened Men’s Emergency Shelter. Exits to PH from ES, TH, and RRH increased by 11% since 2020. Exits to PH (or maintenance of PH) from PSH decreased by 3% from 2020 to 2023 but FY 2023 shows 1% improvement from last year. It should be noted that 2021 has a very high exit rate to PH likely due to the introduction of Mainstream Vouchers which the Housing Authority prioritized for households exiting PSH and RRH. The metric of exits to PH needs further analysis to develop strategies to continue the improvement of the last year. Returns to homelessness showed a significant improvement from FY 2020 with a 5% decrease. This could be attributed to the massive influx of homeless prevention funds into the County during the pandemic.

STRATEGIES

The Strategies identified on the Strategic Planning Tool will advance the goal of ending homelessness as described below. The numbers correspond with the strategies numbered above.

1. Monitoring data enables the CoC to gauge its progress toward the goal of ending homelessness. The CoC needs to develop a formal process for this analysis and for developing strategies to enhance this progress. The Governing Board is currently taking this issue under consideration.
2. Fair and equitable access to CoC services will help ensure efficient and effective service delivery to all homeless households. Coordinated Entry (CE) implemented the referral system through HMIS thereby expediting access to the housing programs. The CoC updated the CE tool to reflect

changing needs and to be more inclusive and respectful. The Lived Homeless Expertise committee provided valuable insight into this effort. The CE tool has been embedded into the HMIS system thereby streamlining the data collection and HUD reporting.

3. Landlords are a critical partner in quickly housing homeless households and for providing PH options upon exit. Although our programs tend to have strong partnerships with many landlords, the CoC does not have a formal process to recognize those efforts. Further, there is very limited landlord representation on the Housing & Homeless Coalition. Currently one landlord regularly attends the monthly Coalition meeting and she is also an active member of ACRE (the local landlord association). Enhancing efforts to invite more landlords to the monthly meeting would be beneficial. As ERAP is coming to an end, there may be opportunity to continue partnership with some of the landlords who engaged with ERAP.
4. The CoC is aware of disparities in how different people enter the CoC and move through our CoC. While CoC partners are aware that many systemic factors have an impact on these disparities, they also want to determine which factors are within their control so they can address them. During the Summer of 2023 a cohort of partners attended a HUD Community Workshop series to review CoC data for disparities and to develop strategies to address them. One of their goals is to develop a local committee to continue this work on an ongoing basis.
5. The CoC recognizes that no two homeless situations are the same; therefore, households benefit from different combinations of supports and services to resolve their unique housing crises. To do this, we need broad partnerships of diverse services and resources, and across sectors. We currently have 296 entities represented in our Housing & Homeless Coalition with approximately 50 who regularly attend the monthly partner meeting. We are always inviting new partners into the work. And current partners are encouraged to invite new people as well. Since they are out navigating the resources, they often encounter new people who could play a stabilizing role in homeless situations. This enables the CoC to grow its membership every year and continue to offer the unique complement of services from which a household facing a housing crisis may benefit.
6. The CoC recognizes stable income as a significant factor in achieving long-term housing stability. CoC partners do coordinate with job training and education resources and the CoC Coordinator is in the process of growing these efforts. The housing programs also screen households for other sources of income for which they may be eligible, and they work to connect the households with these resources. Our CoC funded programs decreased income by 1% for stayers in the last year (FY 2023 System Performance Measures). It is worth noting here that this is still significant since there was a 5% increase between the previous two years. These same programs saw an 8% increase in income for households who left the program during the last year (FY 2023 System Performance Measures). This increase occurred on the heels of a 7% decrease the previous year demonstrating significant progress for this population. This issue will continue to be addressed by the programs and the CoC will continue to pull in partners to assist.
7. As detailed above, Beaver County continues to face an affordable housing shortage. Partners have requested an affordable housing collaboration to help develop more affordable housing in the County. The County is currently implementing \$2 million to develop affordable housing for homeless people through HOME ARP funds. Additionally, private developers have developed new affordable housing. In fact, the

Housing Alliance of PA indicated an increase of 11 affordable units for 100 extremely low income households from 2022 to 2023. However, there is still a shortage as evidenced by the Housing Authority of Beaver County being at full capacity. Further, lengths of time homeless have increased due to the time it takes to locate and secure available affordable housing.

8. The CoC has identified several gaps in vital services and is committed to developing strategies and funding to address them. Requests for Proposals for homeless funds include the Strategic Plan and require that proposals address it. This ensures that new funding is being directed at the identified gaps. Further strategies include identifying relevant partners and experts to address the gaps, considering reallocation of funds as needs change, securing new funds, securing flexible funds, and learning best practices for addressing the gaps.

GAPS IN SERVICE

The CoC Coordinator, CoC partners, and the Governing Board identified these 11 gaps in services as having a negative impact on ending homelessness in Beaver County. Each is detailed below according to the number of the gap as listed above.

1. Beaver County only has 68 affordable housing units for every 100 extremely low-income households. This shortage impacts how long a homeless household remains homeless while looking for housing. It also lengthens the time in a program while a household looks for affordable housing when ready for exit. And finally, as a household may need to move or is evicted, the lack of affordable housing makes it more likely that the household will become homeless again.
2. The CoC is committed to embedding equity into our programs so that all homeless households have equal access to the appropriate level of housing supports, within reasonable timelines, and the opportunity to establish long term stable housing without returns to homelessness.
3. Over the last year, our PSH programs (in total 3 programs comprised of 160 beds) were primarily at full capacity. This led to significantly longer wait times and households being placed in available programs that did not best meet their needs. It has also placed increased demand on the RRH programs.
4. Partners have identified the need for more case management support after a homeless household is housed. The CoC recognizes that challenges to housing do not disappear with housing alone. For long term housing stability ongoing case management support is increasingly needed – even if only as a safety net to prevent returns to homelessness. Partners have also highlighted the need for case management for people without behavioral health challenges as this population is often not eligible for traditional case management services. Some support models that partners have suggested include: open table and Family Group Decision Making.
5. PA-603 is a stand alone CoC within the geographical boundaries of Beaver County, PA. Beaver County is a small county where many partners have worked on the issue of homelessness for extended periods of time. This means that partnering is often seamless and non-contractual.

However, CoC partners recognize the value in formalizing these partnerships so that consistent service is rendered. There is also value in being able to point to these formal partnerships when applying for funding and when demonstrating the cohesion within our CoC partnerships.

6. Unhoused people often face complicated medical and behavioral health challenges. However, they often have difficulty accessing much needed medical care outside of emergency settings. This delay can result in conditions becoming chronic (and therefore more difficult to treat) and increased vulnerability due to weakened immunity. Furthermore, the PSH programs require that eligible households have a documented disability. With complicated access to medical care, this lack of documentation often delays their housing. A dedicated medical mobile outreach team could bring critical care directly to people where they are and streamline the documentation process to establish PSH eligibility.

7. People face homelessness for a vast variety of reasons making their situations complex in unique ways. However, the majority of the funding CoC partners receive to provide housing are highly regulated and for very specific costs. These funds make it difficult to meet the complex and unique circumstances of every unhoused household. Continuing to grow our partnerships can help meet these needs as can securing flexible sources of funding.

8. People with lived homeless expertise have shared that some of our programs have very lengthy admission processes which can often lead to households disregarding those housing options. CoC partners are encouraged to review their processes to ensure the most efficient and streamlined procedures. Further, our CoC Policies & Procedures mandate that CoC partners actively seek input from people with lived homeless expertise to inform their processes and approaches.

9. CoC partners report households are presenting with increasingly complex situations – such households include teen/young adult, previously incarcerated, elderly, and/or those with mentally illness. Children under 18 years of age do not have the option for emancipation in Beaver County. This means that unaccompanied children are still viewed as part of a family unit by our Child Welfare partner. Landlords are not likely to rent to persons under the age of 18. And those aged 18-21 often struggle with maintaining independent living initially. We work to address this with supportive services, but programs tailored to meet the needs of unaccompanied children and young adults are needed to better meet their unique needs. The CoC Coordinator is in conversation with our Child Welfare partner and other CoC partners to address this critical gap.

People leaving jail face many challenges to secure housing including a criminal history that often serves as a barrier to housing. We currently have an agency who connects with people in jail who are readying for release. This enables the incarcerated person to start working on housing before they are out in the community with no money and limited supports. This population could benefit from expanding this program and/or developing additional programs similar to it.

Elderly households face many challenges to secure housing including but not limited to low incomes and the need for in-home supports to live safely and healthfully. Partnering with our Office on Aging and other elderly focused service partners enables the CoC to bring specialized supports to these households but there continues to be a gap for those elderly adults with complex medical and behavioral health needs.

Our CoC continues to struggle with a small segment of the population who does not meet the criteria for institutional residential settings but who face many emotional and behavioral challenges to living safely, healthfully, and independently in the community. The CoC works very closely with Beaver County Behavioral Health and numerous other behavioral health treatment providers, but stably housing households with complex behavioral health needs remains a very real challenge in the CoC.

10. Many factors impact the length of time a household remains homeless - limited affordable housing options, insufficient case management support, delayed referrals, poor communication between partners etc. The CoC recently implemented three strategies to reduce the time homeless – creation of a new Men’s Emergency Shelter, streamlined CE referral process, and efficient data sharing. Lack of affordable housing continues to impact the length of time homelessness in two ways. The first way is the length of time it takes the program to find affordable housing for the household. The second way is upon exit when the household seeks affordable housing to which they will exit. Long lengths of homelessness not only increase the negative consequences that the household experiences but it also causes the homeless system to “back up”. When the programs have limited housing capacity because households are unable to move on, then the currently waiting homeless people remain unsheltered or in emergency shelter for longer periods of time which is not a best practice. The goal of the CoC is to make homelessness a rare and BRIEF experience when it happens. Expanding affordable housing as well as the capacity of the permanent housing programs could help shorten this length of time.

11. An analysis conducted by the Housing Alliance of PA compared eviction rates prior to the pandemic (2018-2019) to those after the pandemic (2022-2023). Beaver County’s post pandemic eviction rates both exceed pre-pandemic levels as well as the 2022-2023 State eviction rate. Beaver County is one 16 counties in the State that exceed the state average. It should be noted that the Emergency Rental Assistance Program which was in operation throughout the pandemic is slated to close at the end of May 2024. This likely means that without intervention (i.e. increase in homeless prevention funds, increase in rental assistance for eviction prevention, mediation, coordination with the local magistrates etc) that we will see an increase in homelessness as a result of these high eviction rates.

CONCLUSION

The Strategic Plan is meant to guide the CoC’s efforts toward the goal of ending homelessness in Beaver County. It identifies the measures that are used to gauge progress toward that goal and provides data to demonstrate that progress. It explores gaps in services that slow that progress, and it outlines strategies to fill those gaps. The Strategic Plan is formally updated every 3 years by the Governing Board and reviewed annually (by the Governing Board, the Housing & Homeless Coalition, and the Lived Homeless Expert committee) and updated as needed. The CoC Coordinator amasses input from partners throughout the year and pulls data to further inform the process for updating the plan. Anyone with input or questions on the Strategic Plan may reach out at any time to the CoC Coordinator, Dina Ciabattini, at ciabattinidina@gmail.com or 724.987.0714.