

Delaware Continuum of Care 2019 Annual Report



Delaware Continuum of Care

“The Delaware Continuum of Care is a community-based collaborative that ensures a responsive, fair, and just approach to addressing homelessness, and strives to achieve housing for all.”

About the Delaware Continuum of Care (CoC)

The Delaware Continuum of Care (CoC) is a group of community members, service providers, leaders, advocates, and concerned citizens working together to develop solutions to homelessness in Delaware. The CoC meets quarterly, with active committees meeting more regularly, to share information, make decisions, and develop strategic goals. The CoC is committed to ensuring that homelessness in Delaware is as rare and brief as possible, and promoting effective collaboration to ensure that our most vulnerable neighbors are provided with high-quality and compassionate services that best meet their needs.

Continuum of Care Board of Directors

Carrie Casey, *Chair*, New Castle County Community Services

John Bates, *Vice Chair*, Ministry of Caring, Inc.

Brandy Nauman, Sussex County Development & Housing

Deb McKenna, Peoples Place

Deborah Gilbert White, HerStory Ensemble

Dmitry Pilipis, Community Legal Aid Society, Inc.

Jo Allegro-Smith, Community Resource Center, Rehoboth

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Julio Sanchez, Sussex County Probation & Parole, Dept. of Corrections

Kim Brockenbrough, Community Volunteer

Kimberly Ellis, Catholic Charities

Marcey Rezac, Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Marlena Gibson, Delaware State Housing Authority

Paula Witcher, Veterans Multi-Service Center

Renee Beaman, Division of State Service Centers

Ruthann Messick, Food Bank of Delaware

Stephanie Staats, YWCA of Delaware

Susan Kent, Love, Inc. of Mid-Delmarva

End of Term (2019)

At the conclusion of 2019 four members of the Delaware Continuum of Care concluded their terms of service with the Board of Directors. The CoC wishes to thank these public servants for their time and contributions to Delaware's homeless service system. Board members who completed their CoC Board service in 2019 were:

Cathy McKay, *Vice Chair*, Connections Community Service Programs

Nikki Gonzalez, Code Purple Sussex County

Meghann Karasic, Community Legal Aid Society, Inc.

Donna Snyder-White, 2-1-1

About Homelessness in Delaware

- On January 30, 2019, Delaware held its annual Point In Time count (PIT), a one night census of persons experiencing homelessness. There were, 921 people experience homelessness overnight during the 2019 PIT. This represents the best estimate of homelessness on any given night in Delaware.
- Approximately 18% of people who experience homelessness in Delaware are chronically homeless, meaning that they are diagnosed with a disabling condition and have experienced homelessness on the streets or in emergency shelters for more than 1 year.

2019 In Review

Delaware's CoC continued its commitment to ending homelessness in Delaware and advocating for affordable housing. Here are some of the major accomplishments and improvements that the CoC accomplished in 2019:

1. Summer Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, Sussex County

Due to an increase in homelessness in Sussex County, the Delaware Continuum of Care requested an additional Point In Time count be conducted. The number of persons experiencing homelessness overnight during the 2019 PIT (181) was 53% greater than those counted in 2018 (118). As a result, Housing Alliance Delaware led the state's first summer PIT count exclusively in Sussex County in August 2019. Basic data from this count is:

- *58 Unsheltered households were surveyed*
- *59 Sheltered households were surveyed*
- *Total of 8 minors were included in households*
- *25 households reported having a permanent disability*
- *36 households reported experiencing homelessness 4 or more times in the last 3 years*

2. Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Certification

Housing Alliance Delaware staff provided Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Certification Training on October 31, 2019. Four Rapid Re-Housing providers received their certification as responsive RRH Providers. Certificates were presented to Catholic Charities, Family Promise of Northern New Castle County, Ministry of Caring, Inc., and YWCA of Delaware. RRH providers had to explain their RRH projects, demonstrate client placement success

stories, share strategies to engage landlords, and articulate their program's challenges, and areas for improvement in order to become RRH certified.

3. A Seat at the Table of Collaboration

Centralized Intake (CI) staff have participated in a pilot project to address family homelessness in the Wilmington schools of the Christina School District. This project, an initiative of Governor Carney's Family Services Cabinet Council, is using a by-name list and weekly meeting model to identify and refer families experiencing homelessness in this area. Coordinated by the Delaware State Housing Authority, it is a unique effort bringing together the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Christina School District, nonprofit rapid rehousing providers (YWCA, Ministry of Caring and Family Promise), Dual Generation Center at Stubbs Elementary, and the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Families (DSCYF). It is working hands-on with families, but also focused on helping all better understand needs, barriers and gaps in the systems helping families who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness so we can improve our system response across these points of entry and services.

The Continuum of Care has also supported several federal applications from Delaware for additional rental assistance vouchers, including responses to recent HUD NOFAs for additional Section 811 Mainstream and Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers. The applications for Section 811 Mainstream Vouchers in particular would allow individuals who are receiving Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), but no longer require intensive supportive services, to "move on" from PSH with Mainstream Vouchers and thus increase availability of CoC PSH units. While the 2019 application was not successful, Delaware plans to continue to seek additional Mainstream Vouchers in future funding rounds.

4. Sustained an End to Veteran Homelessness

In 2015 Delaware's Governor Markell, local mayors and elected officials throughout the state participated in the national Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness. Since then, local leaders, non-profit organizations, volunteer groups, government agencies, housing agencies, and many other dedicated people throughout Delaware have been working tirelessly to find permanent housing for veterans experiencing homelessness. Other efforts were aimed at connecting veterans to supportive services in the community, and tracked their progress. This effort has promoted the establishment of cross agency partnerships. Importantly, on November 10, 2016, Delaware became the third state to effectively end veterans homelessness. **In the five years since the launch of the initiative 955 veterans have been moved from homelessness to permanent housing. Momentum on the initiative to end veterans homelessness has not waned, with the number of veterans housed growing by 46% from 2017 through 2019.**

5. 2019 Continuum of Care Funding Competition

Annually, the Delaware CoC submits a competitive application to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for federal funds to support the homeless response system. In 2019, the CoC contracted with consultant firm, Diana T. Myers & Associates (DMA) to assist with the HUD application submission.

In 2019, the Delaware CoC requested **\$8.65 million** from HUD to fund the following types of projects: *Rapid Re-Housing, Joint Transitional Rapid Re-Housing, Homeless Management Information System, Transitional Housing, Centralized Intake, Permanent Supportive Housing, Continuum of Care Planning*. In January 2020, HUD announced Tier 1 awards, in the amount of \$7,825,678 to the State of Delaware.

The 2019 funding application includes \$791,000 (Tier 2) in new Permanent Supportive and Rapid Re-Housing program funding. HUD will release Tier 2 award information at a later date.

6. Centralized Intake New and Improved Processes

Centralized Intake (CI) has expanded its scope of services to those experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness. CI staff began targeting repeat shelter stay individuals and linking these persons to community resources that provide supportive services, using a person-centered approach.

The Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence initiated a collaboration with Centralized Intake to ensure all Intake Specialists are trained to effectively and efficiently assist victims/survivors of domestic violence. CI staff now use de-identifying information when collecting data of victims/survivors of domestic violence, a best practice in the field.

CI Specialists increased the number of sites visited statewide, where persons experiencing homelessness can be assessed using the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Tool (VI-SPDAT). This effort allows persons experiencing homelessness to be met where they are, in their community.

Centralized Intake implemented a convenient method for individuals experiencing homelessness to make contact with Intake Specialists. Housing Alliance Delaware installed a toll-free number 1-833-FIND BED (1-833-346-3233) to streamline access for shelter assistance. Individuals and households are now able to call or text the toll free number to be connected with an Intake Specialist. Under the new system, CI Specialists are still accessible by e-mail at intake@housingalliance.org.

7. CoC General Committee and Membership Increase

The Delaware CoC boasts over 195 General Committee Members who work and volunteer to end homelessness in Delaware. The CoC had a record number of persons attend the Annual Membership Meeting in October 2019 and will continue to encourage persons to be active participants with the CoC. The CoC operates six active sub-committees: Advocacy, Coordinated Entry, Point-in-Time, Service Solutions, System Performance and Outcomes, and Veterans. Meetings are open to the public and membership is free. For more information or to become a member, please contact Cher Chandler at cchandler@housingalliance.org.

Looking Ahead . . .

1. 2020 Point-in-Time

The Continuum of Care hosted its annual Point-in-Time (PIT) on January 29, 2020. One-hundred twenty-four volunteers registered for the event. In preparation for the 2020 PIT, HAD staff revised the survey tool to make it more user-friendly and quicker. HAD conducted in-depth training for PIT volunteers in all three counties.

There was an overwhelming response to the request for donations for care packages for the 2020 PIT. The donations from organizations, agencies, and individuals volunteering allowed PIT volunteers to be able to provide care packages to everyone surveyed.

2. Advocacy and Policy

Advocating for those experiencing homelessness is a major focal point of the Delaware CoC. The Advocacy and Policy committee works diligently fighting for the rights of persons who are homeless.

A crucial area the committee is currently responding to is the criminalization of persons faced with homelessness. Advocacy and Policy members and staff are active in legislation in Delaware and nationally. This group has an overall wealth of expertise in advocating on multiple platforms and conducts extensive research on methodologies used in other states and communities that have been successful, and works hard to implement changes in Delaware.

Yet, there is still much work to do in Delaware. While we have some of the best in the business advocating in legislation, advocacy for those experiencing homelessness should be an 'all hands on deck' initiative. The CoC will continue to stress the importance of advocacy and support policy changes for this vulnerable population.

3. Building Sustainable Partnerships

The CoC is focused on increasing relationships and building partnerships with all organizations serving and/or providing resources for persons experiencing homelessness. Collaborating with youth-serving organizations is a top priority, for the CoC, specifically youth ages 18-24 years. Housing Alliance Delaware staff are actively engaging with these providers and working to establish formalized partnerships.

In 2020, the CoC will invite more subject-matter experts in the field of homelessness, domestic violence, affordable housing and development, and other community partners, to support existing and new projects, to expand the knowledge base of staff and volunteers.

Housing Alliance Delaware plans to provide community-based forums to inform persons of the Coordinated Entry process and explain the Rapid Re-Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing Programs. HAD understands the need for informational sessions and will work toward setting up provider/project/community forums to answer questions of those serving the homeless population.

4. Coordinating Our Response to Homelessness

The CoC will continue to address homelessness among families with children, youth, chronically homeless households, people with mental health or substance use disorders, people fleeing domestic violence, and other underserved populations in our community. We will continue to work together strategically to end homelessness for all Delawareans.

5. FY20 NOFA Competition

The Delaware CoC is planning ahead for the HUD FY20 Collaborative Application. Using the debrief materials provided by DMA consultants, the CoC Board, Scoring Committee and HAD staff are working to make certain all renewal and new applicants have the support and technical assistance needed to submit a comprehensive application (DV Bonus, Joint TR-RRH, RRH, PSH, Transitional). DMA has provided their expertise to help the CoC successfully prepare for the FY20 NOFA Competition.

6. YMCA PSH Closure

The CoC has formed a Task Force that is specifically working to address the April 2020 closure of the Wilmington YMCA PSH program. Currently, there are 34 men housed in this program, at least 22 will need assistance securing alternative housing. The Task Force is meeting weekly to find housing for the remaining residents.

7. 2020 Day for Housing

Housing Alliance Delaware will host its annual Day for Housing event. Day for Housing draws statewide advocates of fair housing, affordable housing, and ending homelessness. Several legislators and other policy makers attend Day for Housing to listen to the voices of advocates and learn more about the needs of the community.

Voting Delaware CoC Members

Br. Peter Avitabile
Brandy Nauman
Capt. Tim Sheehan
Carrie Casey
DeBorah Gilbert White
Debra McKenna
Dmitry Pilipis
Heather Mackson
Jimia Redden
Jo Allegro Smith
John Bates
John Cook
Judson Malone
Julio Sanchez
Kim Brockenbrough
Kimberly Ellis
Kristi Felts
Linda Brittingham
Marcey Rezac
Marlena Gibson
Mary Ann Marshall
Paula Witcher
Renee Beaman
Ruthann Messick
Stephanie Staats
Stephen Metraux
Susan Kent
Terrie Williams
Tyler Shade