



Message from Executive Director



It all connects back to a safe and decent affordable home.

PA Governor Josh Shapiro recently signed an [executive order](#) creating a Behavioral Health Council to recommend how to improve access to mental health care and addiction treatment.

The Housing Alliance urges the Governor and the Administration to include a dedicated focus on the impact of a lack of affordable housing for people struggling with mental health and / or addiction. If a person does not know where they will sleep tonight or is worried that they will be evicted or that their roof is leaking, it is severely more difficult for them to focus on their mental health and / or addiction treatment.

Housing stability can also serve as a mental health preventative measure. Housing instability leads to stress which leads to both physical and mental health challenges for adults and children.

- One study found that in the 2 years following an eviction, people were more likely to visit the emergency room or require hospitalization for a mental health condition than were their non-evicted peers. (Robert Collinson and Davin Reed. 2018. "[The Effects of Evictions on Low-Income Households](#),")
- A study of low-income urban mothers found that those who had experienced eviction had higher rates of material hardship and depression than those who had not been evicted, and these effects persisted for as long as 2 years after the forced move. (Matthew Desmond and Rachel Tolbert Kimbro. 2015. "[Eviction's Fallout: Housing, Hardship, and Health](#)," *Social Forces*.)

The factors that lead to a need for mental health care and addiction treatment are numerous. Housing has to be part of the solution.

Speaking of eviction and what we can do about it...

Check out our NEW toolkit on designing two types of eviction prevention models - mediation and expanded legal representation. We call the Toolkit a "[Plug and Play](#)" because we designed it so you could adapt it to your local circumstances.

There's proof that these models work:

- 80% of the time, mediation *could* help a tenant and landlord resolve their conflict outside of a courtroom.
- And legal representation alone *can* avoid an eviction judgment 74% of the time (Stout. "Connecticut Eviction Right to Counsel Annual Independent Evaluation January 31 to November 30, 2022" Prepared for: Connecticut Bar Foundation December 30, 2022)

Find out how to implement one or both of these models by [clicking here](#).

In partnership,



Phyllis Chamberlain
Executive Director

What's Happening in Harrisburg

(This is how you stay in the know.)

PHARE and Whole Home Repair Funding Along with Multiple Other Important Policy Issues Still Undecided as a Result of Continued State Budget Stalemate

The state budget is made up of a number of separate bills – some of which are not required to be completed each fiscal year. The general appropriations bill (HB 611) which includes overall spending levels was passed into law August 3, 2023 but funds cannot be spent without an enabling Fiscal Code bill.

Impact of the Lack of Fiscal Code Legislation: HB 1300—the current Fiscal Code legislation—has now been traded twice between House and Senate with the bill currently awaiting consideration by the Senate Rules Committee after last passing the House 121-82. Funding for the Whole Home Repairs Program awaits a final Fiscal Code bill to be enacted. While \$50 million for Whole Home Repairs passed as part of the General Appropriations bill, the funds cannot be spent without an enabling Fiscal Code along with many other important state programs.

Optional Tax Code Legislation: A potential [PHARE](#) Cap increase from \$60 million to \$100 million lies in the fate of Tax Code legislation, HB 1219, which is waiting to be considered by the Senate Committee on Finance after passing the PA House 102-101. PHARE is only one of many proposals included in this omnibus legislation, which is considered the least likely of code bills to pass this year.

More about PHARE: [PHARE](#) is also still in play as two free standing bills—Senator Elder Vogel’s SB 532 which was approved by the Senate Urban Affairs Committee in June and former State Representative Sara Innamorato’s HB 1316 which passed the House in June. While it is still possible that PHARE can be increased through one of these free-standing bills, it is more likely that we will ultimately succeed in increasing PHARE through a tax code provision.

We are certain that all legislators appreciate the need to address affordable housing, but a divided General Assembly will continue to present obstacles to efficient policy making in the foreseeable future. It is more important than ever to broaden our coalition of housing advocates and present a unified message on the need for creating new units and preserving homes.

Events and Webinars

(Our biggest event of the year is upon us!)



Homes Within Reach Conference- Register TODAY!

December 6-8 in Hershey, PA

Join us as we continue to focus on programs and policies that address systemic disparities and promote the inclusion and growth of people of all backgrounds at our 19th annual Homes Within Reach Conference: *Unlocking Solutions, Changing the Landscape*.

To view the conference schedule, [click here](#).

The Homes Within Reach Conference provides an opportunity for housing professionals, service providers, tenants, landlords, local government, community builders, and those passionately committed to ensuring a home for every Pennsylvanian to come together to learn, connect, and network.

To register, [visit our conference website](#).

We'd also like to take this opportunity to highlight the **THIRD DAY** of our conference as the focus will be to ensure that your voice is heard by the Department of Human Services (DHS).

In a special interactive format, you will have the opportunity to provide critical feedback on the strategies and housing and tenancy related programs to be funded through medical assistance programs DHS would like to implement. Secretary Arkoosh will provide updates on applying for an 1115 waiver, that allows states to innovate and expand coverage in Medical Assistance programs for health-related social needs and can provide the opportunity to create new and strengthen existing housing and tenancy related support for the most vulnerable Pennsylvanians. Then we will expand that conversation out to look at what other pressing housing needs DHS should prioritize in the Housing Strategic Plan to be released next year.

We'd also like to announce our Resident Empowerment Award Winner for 2023:



They will receive the award at the Housing Alliance's 19th Annual Homes Within Reach Conference. HDC MidAtlantic will be honored on the first evening of the conference beginning at 7:00 PM during the Welcome & Awards Dinner.



Without a stable place to call home, people often struggle to survive.

“Housing provides the stability that a person needs to move from ‘surviving’ to ‘thriving’ – to achieve their own life goal and dreams. And HDC Mid Atlantic is an example of a housing provider that is not just providing affordable housing but is actively supporting and partnering with residents to use this new-found stability as Dana Hanchin would say, exert control over their lives. This focus on listening to and engaging residents as peers helps individuals and makes the organization stronger.” – Phyllis Chamberlain, Executive Director at the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania

“At HDC, we believe in partnering with residents as they act on their personal goals and opportunities and overcome challenges. We support residents as they build power, use their voices, and exert control over their lives.” – Dana Hanchin, President and Chief Executive Office at HDC MidAtlantic

To learn more about their work, visit <https://hdcweb.org/>

Ways to Support the Housing Alliance

(Sign on as a HWR Conference Sponsor!)

Are Sponsorship Opportunities for the Homes Within Reach Conference Still Available? The answer is YES; but please confirm with Alison as soon as possible!

Deadline is Friday, October 27th.

If you'd like to take advantage of the more than 850 conference participants and their networks, visit our [sponsorship website](#) to reserve your table today.

Questions can be directed to Alison at alison@housingalliancepa.org.

Resource Spotlight

(You don't want to miss these opportunities!)



Eviction Disparities in Communities of Color Fact Sheet Available

The Housing Alliance is releasing another new eviction fact sheet. This month's spotlight is on eviction disparities in communities of color. A study by USA Today shows that if you're a Black woman in the United States, your risk of eviction surpasses that of any other demographic. Eviction is not just a consequence but a cause of

poverty, and the disproportionately high eviction rates among Black women demonstrates the intersection of race, gender, and poverty and the alarming impact of eviction on marginalized communities.

To access our fact sheet, [please click here](#).



Housing Alliance Staff and Interns are simply the BEST!

We wanted to take a moment to share with you our staff directory as you probably have interacted with many of these fabulous people when it comes to your involvement with the Homes Within Reach Conference. Whether you're a member, a speaker at the upcoming Homes Within Reach Conference, a sponsor, or board member, we wanted to make sure that you have our staff contact information right at your fingertips!

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