



RHD is a national human service nonprofit organization that specializes in creating innovative, quality services which support people of all abilities. We were founded in 1970 with the development of a behavioral health outpatient program in Bryn Mawr, Montgomery County, and which still serves the community today. We currently operate more than 160 human services programs across the country, serving tens of thousands of people every year with caring and effective services. Our mission is to empower people of all abilities to achieve their highest level of independence possible and build better lives for themselves, their families and their communities. We provide services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, people with mental health challenges including specialized service for veterans, people in addiction recovery, individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and children and adolescents in school and community-based programs.

FAQ from the Valley Township Meetings

Background

- 1) What facility is being proposed at 1229 West Lincoln Highway?** RHD proposes to operate an adult-only Short-Term Supportive Housing Facility. The purpose of the facility is to provide short term housing for Chester County residents that have no other housing options. This facility seeks to alleviate, and eventually eliminate, the increasing homeless population in Chester County by providing an individually guided approach to finding gainful employment and stable long-term housing solutions for its residents.
- 2) How does a short-term supportive housing facility differ from an overnight homeless shelter?** The Short-Term Supportive Housing Facility is different from an overnight homeless shelter in many ways. Overnight homeless shelters accept walk-ins and, therefore, are typically located in high density cities or boroughs to provide an accessible and convenient location for the surrounding homeless population. These facilities are generally limited to providing only basic needs, such as shelter and food. Overnight homeless

facilities may rely on volunteers to staff and monitor residents, and generally close during the day. Furthermore, overnight homeless shelters are designed with limited privacy, utilizing large, shared rooms with bunks.

In contrast, the proposed Short-Term Supportive Housing Facility is designed to provide more comfort, safety, and support than overnight homeless shelters. The Short-Term Supportive Housing Facility will be designed similar to a hotel, both structurally and operationally. Residents will each have individual rooms for approximately 2-3 months with certain amenities provided, such as laundry rooms, linen services, and common areas. Additionally, the facility will **not accept walk-ins**, but rather residents will be referred to Chester County and selected after being vetted by Chester County and RHD. Because walk-ins are not accepted, the Short-Term Supportive Housing Facility can operate outside of a high-density area, thereby permitting additional investment into the facility and supportive resources for its residents. Additionally, the Short-Term Supportive Housing Facility will be open all day, have full-time staffing, indoor and outdoor security cameras, outdoor lighting, and a 24/7 emergency call line for community residents, among many other differences, as described below.

Residents

- 3) **What type of residents will be utilizing the Short-Term Supportive Housing Facility?** Residents include people with many different backgrounds who typically have lost their support system, such as loss of employment, illness that precludes employment, loss of a loved one, etc. Some residents do hold jobs, but have experienced an unfortunate event which requires short term assistance. Residents are people that are currently in our community.
- 4) **How are residents vetted prior to being approved for the facility?** Residents are referred to the County through a coordinated entry process. Once referred, the County provides an initial screening to review criminal backgrounds and conduct street outreach to confirm each person is a Chester County resident over the age of 18 and unsheltered. After the initial screening, RHD provides a second round of screening to determine whether the person is a candidate for short-term residency. If a candidate requires

immediate medical or behavioral health care or cannot live independently, they will be referred to another facility that can treat him or her.

- 5) **Will people from Philadelphia or other local counties be admitted?** No. This service is only for people who are Chester County residents.
- 6) **Will convicted sex offenders be residents at this site?** No. Because of our proximity to a school, no individual who is a registered sex offender will be able to reside at this site.
- 7) **Are families allowed to be in this program?** No, only adults over the age of 18.

Staff

- 8) **How many people will staff the program?** The program will have 20 employees. Shifts will vary with staffing from 2-9 people based on programmatic needs. At no time will the site be left unattended.
- 9) **What hours of the day will the program have staff onsite?** The program will have staff onsite 24 hours per day.
- 10) **Are background checks done on staffing?** Yes, RHD does vet all prospective employees. RHD has a robust HR department and we follow all applicable rules and regulations related to hiring. Background checks are part of the employment vetting process at RHD.
- 11) **Will RHD decide to use volunteers and not trained staff?** No. RHD will not use volunteers instead of paid staff at any time. Hiring staff will be a requirement as part of the County contract. Volunteers may be welcome to enhance the program when appropriate.
- 12) **Where will staff be hired from?** RHD is committed to hiring local staff when possible.

Facility

- 13) **What will the layout of the building look like?** Each resident will have their own bedroom. Some may have their own bathrooms. There will be communal spaces for residents such as dining and living areas. Three meals per day will be provided for each resident. Meals will be prepared offsite and heated at the facility. The building will be updated to be fully compliant with all current building codes, including sprinklers. A feasibility study was prepared by an engineer and architect to confirm the proposed use can be sustained in the building.
- 14) **What security features will be provided at the facility?** In addition to 24/7 staffing, cameras and outdoor lighting will be placed around the perimeter of the building to monitor activity on site. Each floor has security cameras, alarms, and doors that automatically lock. A 24/7 emergency call line with specialized staff trained in medical and behavioral health services will also be available for community members to reach the facility.
- 15) **Why was this site selected?** This site contains an existing, vacant office building that can accommodate up to 32 single-adult units. Because of the transportation services available (including through RHD and Chester County) and the fact that the facility does not take walk-ins, the building does not need to be located within a high density area, such as a city or borough. The site is centrally located within the County and situated on a highway corridor, convenient for transporting residents to job interviews, appointments, or other destinations. Several industrial and commercial properties are nearby, making it an attractive place for potential employees.
- 16) **Will transportation be provided for residents?** A mix of transportation services will be provided, such as on-site coordinated transportation shuttles, ride share services, and public transportation will be used.
- 17) **When would the facility open, if approved?** Late 2025.

Program

- 18) **What type of oversight will there be for the program?** The program is monitored annually by the County in three different spheres. Financial, programmatic, and facility monitoring will each take place independently throughout the year. The number of monitoring visits can be increased by the County at any time should a need exist. Any concerns from a monitoring visit are followed up by the County until all issues are satisfactorily resolved. Inspections can be scheduled or unannounced.
- 19) **What if there are problems with the community and residents in this program?** RHD will always have staff onsite, administrative oversight from our corporate office who will also be onsite on a regular basis. Contact information will be made readily available to community members should anyone want to be in touch at any time.
- 20) **Will drugs be allowed on site? Do you drug test?** No, drugs are not allowed on the premises. RHD does not drug test because, based on RHD's 50 years of experience, it is more effective to train staff to engage with residents on a daily basis and assess drug usage from personal encounters. If staff identifies signs and symptoms of current substance use, they will intervene. Interventions can include referrals for treatment and/or discharge from the program. If an individual is discharged from the program, the person will be referred to another temporary housing facility.
- 21) **Are there plans to expand in the future?** RHD does not plan to expand the facility in the future nor change the use of the building at any time. Any change in use would require review and approval by the Board of Supervisors after a public hearing.
- 22) **What happens during the day with the people living there?** People are actively working with case managers and staff to secure permanent housing. Where applicable, people may also be working on resume writing, job searching and/or interviewing. Some individuals may be addressing medical issues and other various appointments. While the residents are permitted to leave during the day, there is a curfew at night.

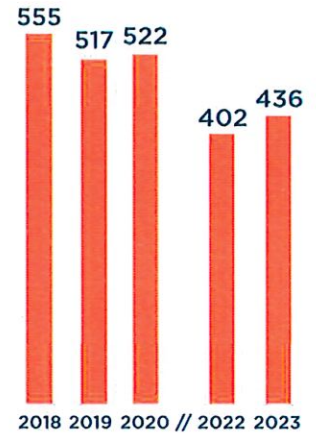
- 23) **Are visitors allowed?** No. Residents are not allowed to have visitors. Professionals working with the agency are allowed onsite.
- 24) **Are outdoor events planned at the facility as part of the program?** No, RHD does not plan on holding outdoor events on the property.
- 25) **How do we deal with overflow?** Once the maximum census was reached, individuals would be referred to other programs within the County.
- 26) **What happens after their 60-90 day stay? Will permanent housing be in Valley Township?** The goal for length of stay is 60-90 days. Some may find more permanent housing quicker and others may need more time. We would not discharge someone at a certain time just because they have reached a specific number of days at the program. We would continue to work with that person until more permanent housing is secured. Permanent Housing can be anywhere in Chester County. Often, folks want to go back to where they lived prior and had some community connections. The County holds biweekly case conferencing meetings with all necessary County departments to discuss each resident's path to finding stable housing and gainful employment.
- 27) **What happens if the use is no longer necessary because of a decline in the number of homeless people needing this service?** The facility would close and any subsequent use of the building would require approval and/or permits from the Township.

Homelessness in Chester County at one point in time.

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT

January 25, 2023

On the evening of Wednesday, January 25 and early hours of Thursday, January 26, 2023 the Chester County Department of Community Development (DCD) facilitated the annual Point-in-Time Count.¹ The purpose of this initiative is to determine the number of people currently experiencing homelessness on a given night, to better understand homelessness in Chester County and across the nation, and to support the Chester County Partnership to End Homelessness' efforts to prevent and end homelessness.



Homelessness Over the Last 5 Years²

436

people were experiencing homelessness in Chester County on January 25, 2023.

Race



Ethnicity



33%

(or 144) individuals identify as female

37%

(or 163) individuals in families with children

25%

(or 109) children under age 18

35%

(or 141) individuals in interim housing identify as veterans³

10%

(or 42) individuals were identified as chronically homeless

¹ This is a national effort sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and data from the count is included in the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR), which is presented to Congress.

² In 2021, Chester County did not conduct a comprehensive Point-in-Time Count due to COVID-19.

³ Veteran status of unsheltered individuals is unknown.

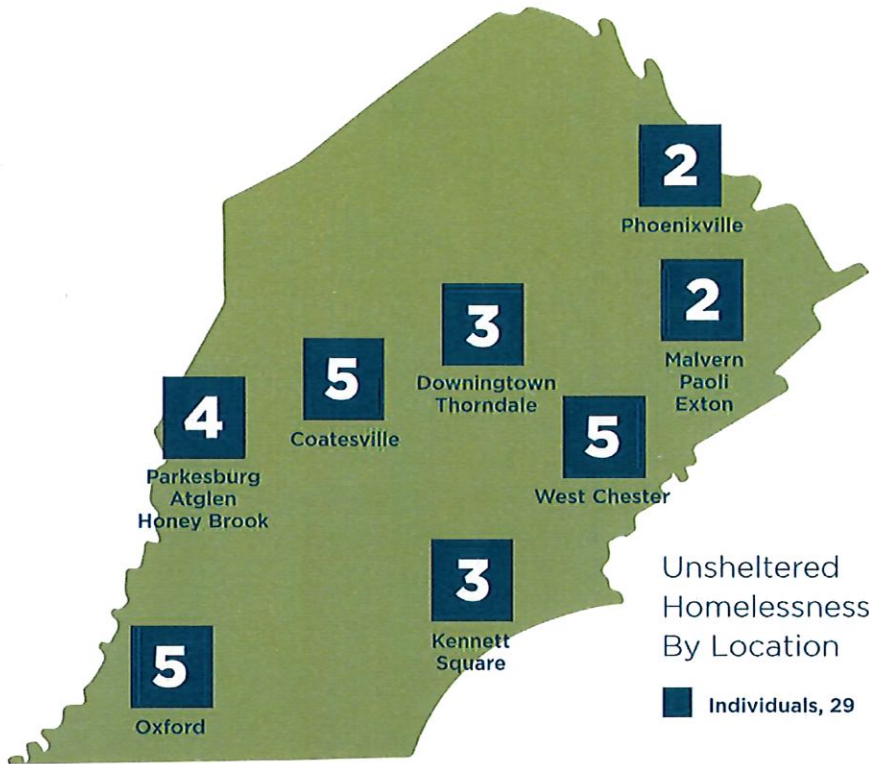


POINT-IN-TIME COUNT

January 25, 2023

29

people were sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, or camping ground.

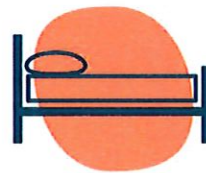


Unsheltered Homelessness By Location

■ Individuals, 29

407

people were living in a public or private temporary shelter, including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels.



Sheltered Homelessness by Type and Household

	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing
Total	247	160
Individuals in Households with Children	106	57
Individuals in Households without Children	141	103



One county. One commitment.
One vision to see our community housed.



Learn more about ending homelessness in Chester County at endhomelessnesschesco.org



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Chester County COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM EFFICACY

May, 2023

What is Coordinated Entry?

Coordinated entry supports fair, equitable, and rapid access to housing assistance and stability services. All services in the coordinated entry system are tracked through the Chester County Homeless Management Information System to help generate data that informs system improvement. Each year, we evaluate this data looking for markers of success and areas for improvement.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, an effective coordinated entry system ensures that assistance is allocated as effectively as possible and is accessible no matter where or how people present.

How do we measure success?

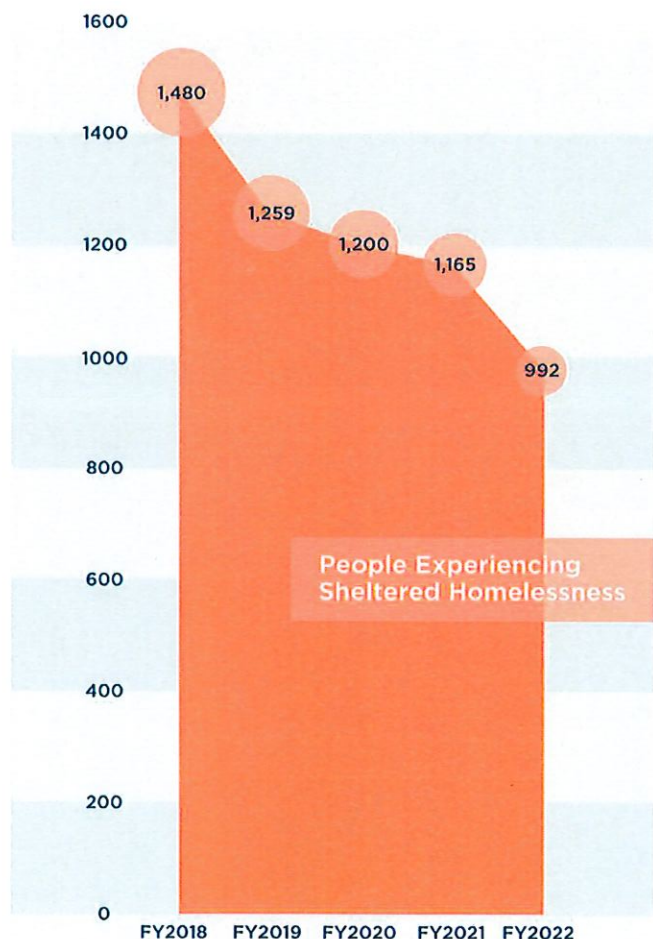
To measure the efficacy of our system, the Chester County Partnership to End Homelessness looks for:

- an overall decrease in the number of people experiencing homelessness,
- a decrease in the number of people experiencing homelessness for the first time,
- a decrease in the length of stay in emergency shelters and transitional housing (interim housing),
- a decrease in the rate of returns to homelessness,
- successful employment and income growth, and
- successful placement into/retention of permanent housing.

What does the data tell us?

People Entering Shelters and First-Time Homelessness

Thanks to the work of our network of partners, there has been a steady **decrease in the number of people entering participating emergency shelters in our community over the past five years, from 1,480 in 2018 to 992 in 2022 (a 33% decrease).**



Chester County PA-505 HUD System Performance Measure, Metric 1.1 a, FY21-FY22

In addition, there has been a **decrease in the number of people experiencing homelessness for the first time in the last year, from 1,141 in 2021 to 694 in 2022 (a 39% decrease).**



Chester County PA-505 HUD System Performance Measure, Metric 5.2, FY21-FY22

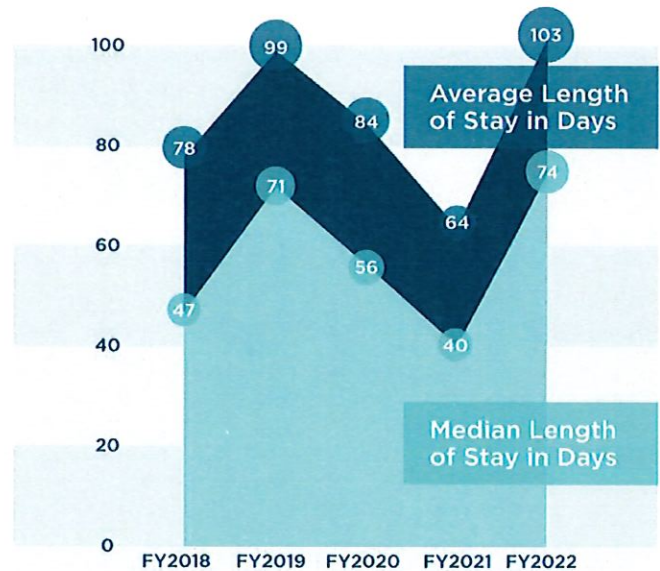
The data shows how effective the coordinated entry system and Housing First, an approach that prioritizes permanent housing, can be in connecting people experiencing housing instability and homelessness to housing and long-term stability. The decrease in the overall number of people entering shelters and those experiencing homelessness for the first time can be attributed to increased prevention efforts implemented across the county.

Prevention provides housing relocation and stabilization services to prevent an individual or family from entering the emergency shelter system. Prevention efforts across the county include the Friends Association Eviction Prevention Case Resolution program, which provides free legal and social services support needed to prevent evictions and future housing instability, and the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) grant funding through the Chester County Department of Community Development, which can be used to pay rent and utilities or rehousing costs.

Length of Stay in Emergency Shelters

The average length of stay in emergency shelters has increased by 61% from 64 days in 2021 to 103 days in 2022.

This increase in the average length of stay could be attributed to inflation, a tightening of the housing market, high healthcare costs, reduced capacity and resources to support rapid resolution, the inability to rapidly rehouse and provide supportive housing, as well as other demographic and health factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, mental health issues, or substance use disorder.



Chester County PA-505 HUD System Performance Measure, Metric 11 a., FY21-FY22

Rapid resolution combines diversion and rapid exit strategies to help avoid literal homelessness or minimize the length of stay in emergency shelters. Diversion works to preserve current housing or assist individuals in finding temporary housing within their network of family, friends, or community, while rapid exit aims to ensure homelessness is as brief as possible, helping individuals return to housing on their own or with limited support and financial assistance.

Rapid rehousing and supportive housing provide case management, support services, and financial assistance to place individuals in permanent housing and provide the support they need to retain housing long-term.

Housing Assistance and Stability Services

Coordinated entry supports fair, equitable, and rapid access to housing assistance and stability services. The Housing First approach supports stable housing and individual choice as a foundation for meeting basic needs, accessing support services, and achieving long-term goals.

Data shows that the Housing First approach helps individuals and families remain in permanent housing. **85% of people who exited from interim or supportive housing to permanent housing remained housed two years later.**



Chester County PA-505 HUD System Performance Measure, Metric 2., FY21-FY22

Of those individuals who were enrolled in permanent housing programs, **96% remained in permanent supportive housing or exited to other permanent housing.**



Chester County PA-505 HUD System Performance Measure, Metric 7b.2., FY21-FY22

Nearly half (45%) of individuals staying in CoC funded programs in 2022 increased their total income thanks to case management support to find employment or job training opportunities as well as support enrolling in government assistance and benefits programs (e.g. SSI, SSDI, etc).



Chester County PA-505 HUD System Performance Measure, Metric 4.3, FY21-FY22

Similarly, **nearly half of individuals (44%) leaving CoC funded programs in 2022 also increased their total income** setting them up for long-term stability and well-being.



Chester County PA-505 HUD System Performance Measure, Metric 4.6, FY21-FY22



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Chester County Coordinated Entry System Efficacy

September, 2022

Coordinated entry supports fair, equitable, and rapid access to housing assistance and stability services. All services in the coordinated entry system are tracked through the Chester County Homeless Management Information System to help generate data that informs system improvement. Each year, we evaluate this data looking for markers of success and areas for improvement.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, an effective coordinated entry system ensures that assistance is allocated as effectively as possible and is accessible no matter where or how people present.

How do we measure success?

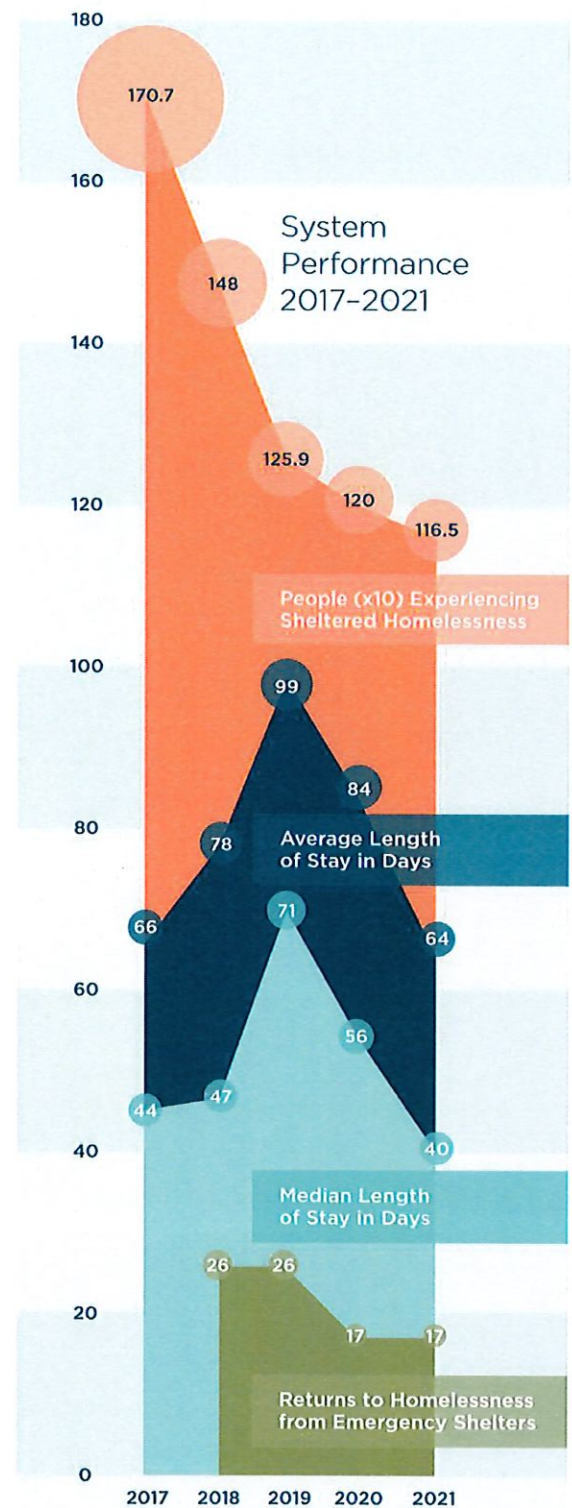
To measure the efficacy of our system, we look for:

- an overall decrease in the number of people experiencing homelessness,
- a decrease in the length of stay in emergency shelters and safe havens,
- an increase in retention of permanent housing, and
- a decrease in the rate of returns to homelessness

What does the data tell us about system performance?

Thanks to the work of our network of partners, we have seen a steady decrease in the number of people entering participating emergency shelters in our community over the past five years, from 1,707 in 2017 to 1,165 in 2021 (a 32% decrease). We know that more resources are needed to meet the need in our community, but we are hopeful for the future.

The data shows us how effective the coordinated entry system and Housing First, an approach that prioritizes permanent housing, can be in connecting people experiencing housing instability and homelessness to housing and long-term stability.





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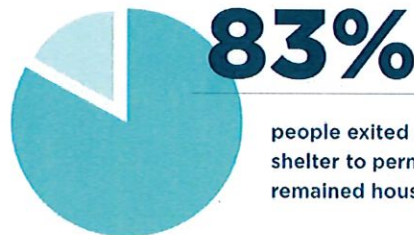


32% 35%

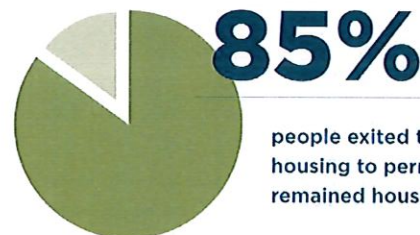
decrease in the number of people entering participating emergency shelters over the past five years.

decrease in average length of stay in emergency shelters from 2019 to 2021.

The average length of stay in emergency shelters has decreased by 35% from 99 days in 2019 to 64 days in 2021. This decrease in the average length of stay could be attributed to successful prevention efforts, such as the eviction moratorium, emergency rental assistance program, eviction prevention court, and a continued decrease in evictions, keeping people in housing and out of emergency shelters. It could also be a sign that people referred through the coordinated entry system are finding housing options faster, being successfully placed in permanent housing, and staying housed longer.



83% people exited an emergency shelter to permanent housing remained housed two years later



85% people exited transitional housing to permanent housing remained housed two years later

In fact, we have seen high rates of permanent housing retention for individuals exiting from emergency shelters and transitional housing. The Housing First approach supports stable housing and individual choice as a foundation for meeting basic needs, accessing support services, and achieving long-term goals, which has been attributed to greater rates of housing retention and overall improved quality of life.