



# Eviction Prevention Research Project

Your Way Home Montgomery County and HealthSpark Foundation

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OVERVIEW

MAY 9-11, 2017

*This presentation was made possible by HealthSpark Foundation through a contract with Barbara Poppe & Associates. The information does not necessarily reflect the opinion or position of HealthSpark Foundation, its staff or members of its board of directors.*

# Purpose for consultation

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Research evidence-based and promising practices to **prevent eviction** and **support housing stability** for at-risk individuals and families.

- inform local policy and practice including allocation of financial and human resources; and to identify potential sources of funding to support these eviction prevention strategies
- inform the national dialogue on how to prevent homelessness

Barbara Poppe and associates  
The collective for impact

# Project Core Team

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- **Russell Johnson**, President/CEO & Project Sponsor—HealthSpark Foundation
- **Emma Hertz**, Administrator/YWH Operations Team—Montgomery County Office of Housing & Community Development
- **Carolyn Mayinja**, Senior Manager/YWH Operations Team—Montgomery County Office of Housing & Community Development
- **Tim Pirog**, Community Housing Coordinator—Montgomery County Office of Mental Health
- **Elizabeth DiArcangelo**, Administrator—Montgomery County Office of Community Connections
- **Greg Barchuk**, YWH Data Manager/YWH Operations Team—Montgomery County Office of Housing & Community Development
- **Jason Alexander**, YWH Consultant/YWH Operations Team—Capacity for Change, Inc.
- **Kayleigh Silver**, YWH Program Manager/YWH Operations Team—Montgomery County Office of Housing & Community Development
- **Barbara Wilhelmy**, Executive Director—Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities/YWH Housing Resource Center
- **Laurie O'Conner**, Administrator—Montgomery County Office of Children & Youth
- **Ruth Nieboer**, Director of Housing—The Salvation Army, Norristown
- **Sean Halbom**, Administrator—Montgomery County Office of Veterans Affairs

# Scope of Work

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- 1) Contextual information:
  - Data from YWH Call Center, HMIS, PIT, HIC, regional 211 and Montgomery County agencies
  - Inventory of community prevention efforts conducted by YWH
  - Key informant interviews
  - Core team calls – monthly
- 2) Online scan of eviction prevention and homelessness prevention efforts: NAEH, USICH, HUD, NLIHC, NLCHP, VA, CSH, & ABA
- 3) National expert scan and literature review
- 4) Key national informants: completed (Siemer Institute, American Bar Association, Culhane, & Kane)
- 5) Local program models interviews and review of program results

# Today and beyond

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## Onsite Consultation

- ✓ Expose various stakeholders to the research findings
- ✓ Gather feedback on which concepts to further develop
- ✓ Core Team will use feedback to develop next steps action plan

## Following Onsite

- ✓ Deeper dive into selected models – develop concept, partners, costs, funding and outcomes
- ✓ Up to 3 webinars with programs
- ✓ Final report

# Review of National Literature

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KEY TAKE-AWAY'S FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY

# Literature on Prevention Programs

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- ❑ “Eviction is a cause, not just a condition, of poverty” – Matthew Desmond, *Evicted*
- ❑ Accurately targeted and effective community-based prevention programs can be cheaper than shelter stays homelessness if the cost of providing shelter is high.(Culhane, Metraux, & Byrne, 2011).
- ❑ The challenge of prevention is targeting services and resources toward those most vulnerable. In a study of six US cities, the most effective prevention strategies that could be implemented at all levels of prevention are (Burt, 2007) :
  - housing subsidies,
  - supportive services coupled with permanent housing,
  - mediation in housing courts,
  - cash assistance for rent or mortgage,
  - and rapid exit from shelter

# Emergency Cash Assistance: Chicago, IL

(Evans, Sullivan, & Wallskog, 2016)

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- ❑ Emergency cash assistance can be a very successful intervention in preventing homelessness
- ❑ Often not targeted well to those most likely to become homeless
- ❑ In one Chicago call center, \$1,000 in emergency cash assistance was targeted to those on the brink of homelessness
  - Those who received the assistance **were 76% less likely to become homeless after six months** than those who did not receive the assistance.
  - The estimated potential economic benefits are \$20,548 per homeless spell avoided, compared to the \$10,300 per person cost of operating the call center



# Community-Oriented Prevention Services: New York City, NY

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- Homebase Community Prevention (CP) program offers case management as well as direct services and referrals to services, such as:
  - Benefits advocacy
  - Mediation
  - Employment assistance
  - Legal referrals
  - Limited financial assistance
  
- Program evaluation of Homebase CP found their services:
  - Reduced average nights in shelter by 22.6 nights
  - Had a net savings of \$140 per family that had access
  - Reduced shelter entries by 10-20 households for every 100 cases (Rolston, Geyer, & Locke, 2013)

# Individual Determinants of Family Homelessness

(Homebase NYC)

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## ***High Risk of Shelter Entry (Risk Factor):***

Female Head of Household

Pregnancy

Child younger than two

History of public assistance

Eviction threat

High mobility in last year

History of protective services

High conflict in household

Disruptions as a child (e.g. foster care, shelter history as youth)

Shelter history as an adult

Recent shelter application

Seeking to reintegrate into community from an institution

Admin: High number of shelter applications

## ***Reduced Risk of Shelter Entry (Protective Factor):***

Being older

Having a high school diploma/GED

Being employed

Being a leaseholder

# Individual Determinants of Veteran Homelessness

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## Veterans Characteristics (Bachhuber, et al., 2015; Byrne et al., 2016) :

- Older age
- Male gender
- Having a prior history of homelessness
- Engagement with VA healthcare in the past year (proxy indicator for greater medical need)
- Recent change in income or benefits
- Recently living temporarily with family or friends
- Have opioid-use disorder

# Community Determinants of Homelessness

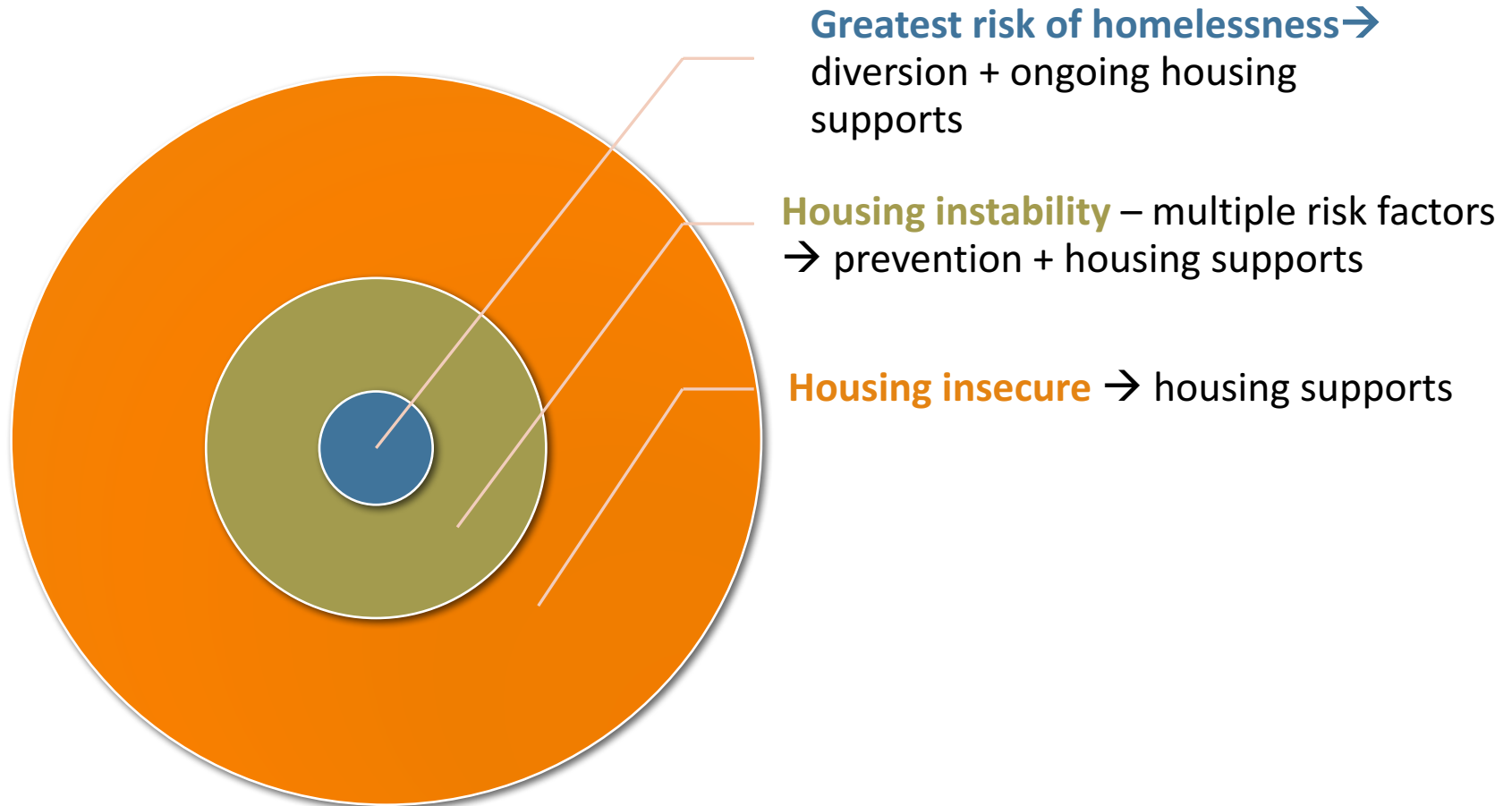
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## General Population (Byrne et al. 2013; Quigley & Raphael, 2001):

- **Greater** percent of single-person occupied households
- **Decreasing** “income to rent” ratio (or **increasing** housing cost-burden)
- **Greater** mobility rate – number of times moved within the last year
- **Greater** percent foreign-born residents
- **Greater** percent Black or Hispanic

# Targeting Resources

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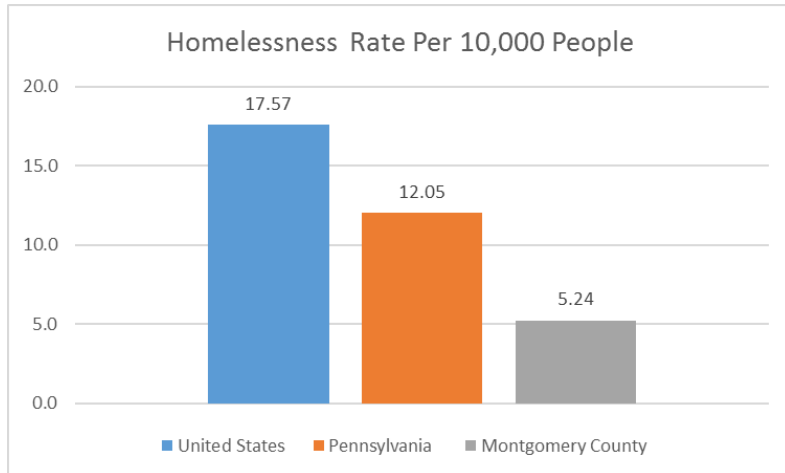


# Local Context

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COMMUNITY DATA & KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

# Key Community Indicators for Montgomery County\*



Annual Income Needed to Afford	Pennsylvania	Montgomery County *
ZERO-BEDROOM	\$25,847	\$33,200
ONE-BEDROOM	\$30,700	\$40,120
TWO-BEDROOM	\$38,000	\$48,400

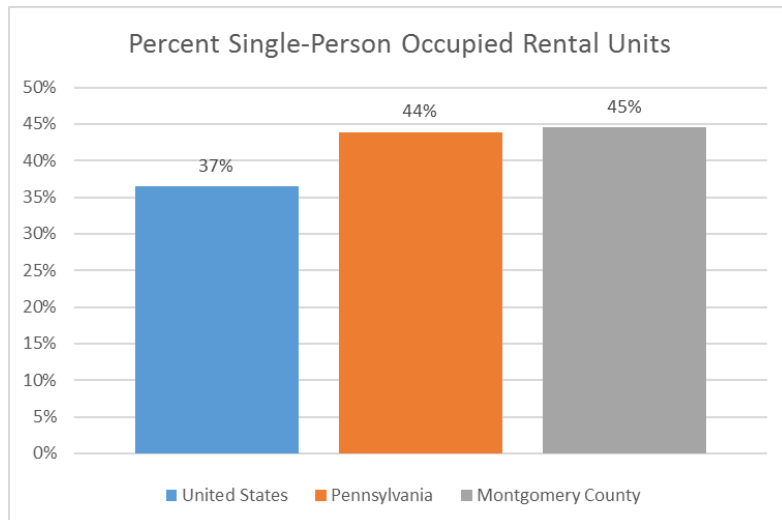
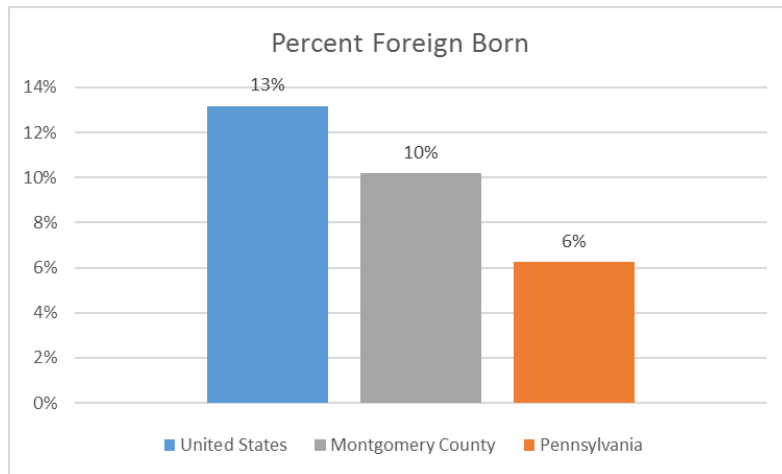
Income Levels	Pennsylvania	Montgomery County *
30% OF AREA MEDIAN INCOME (AMI)	\$21,098	\$24,090
ESTIMATED RENTER MEDIAN INCOME	\$30,773	\$45,274

(Taken from NLIHC, Out of Reach 2016)

- Montgomery County has a **much lower homelessness rate** than Pennsylvania and the United States
- Montgomery County has much more expensive housing compared to the state, but the **average renter median income is \$15,000 more per year**.
- Because of higher wages, housing cost-burden is similar in Montgomery County compared to the US and PA
- Wage lags in the future combined with more expensive housing could drive homelessness and evictions

\*Calculated from 2015 ACS 5-year estimates

# Key Community Indicators for Montgomery County\*

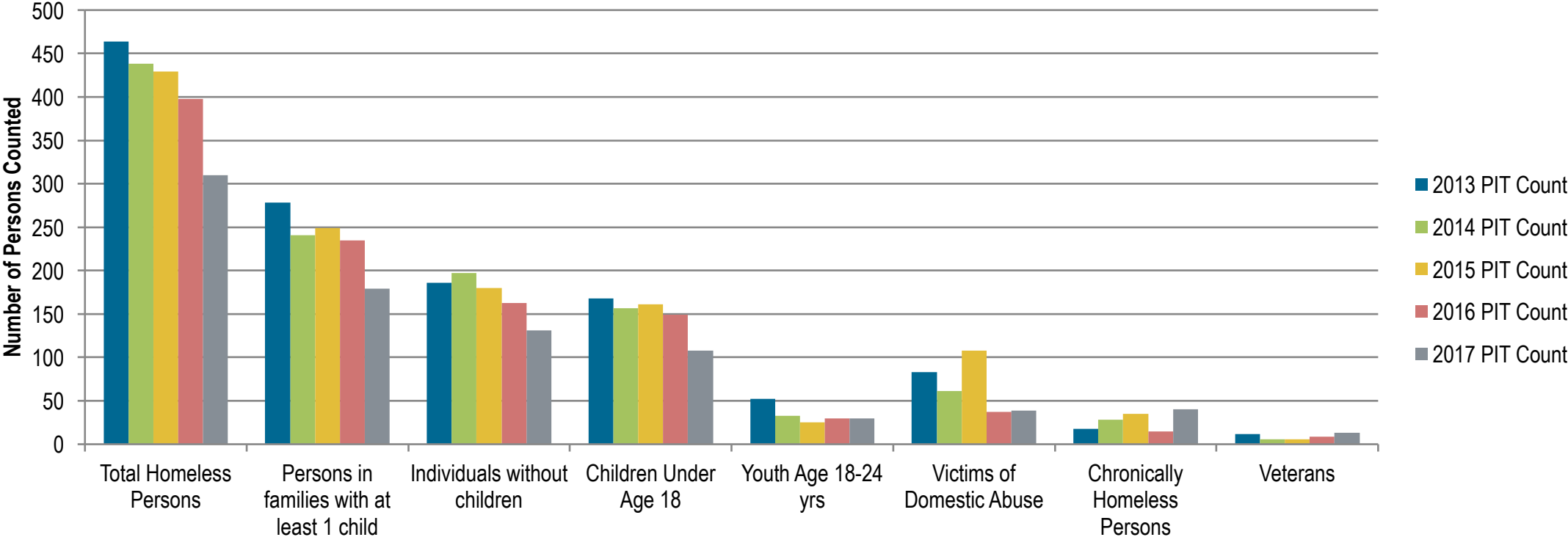


- An estimated **23.8% or 20,150 renters are extremely housing cost-burdened**, and pay > 50% of their income on rent. This is an 1.5% increase in extremely cost-burdened renters in the county since 2011. Increases in housing cost burden are one of the most significant predictors of eviction and homelessness.
- Montgomery County has a **greater percent foreign born population than the state**, but less than the country. Greater percent foreign born population is associated with more evictions.
- Among renter households, **PA and Montgomery County have an 8% higher rate of single-person renters**. This is correlated with higher homelessness rates.



# Homelessness declining since 2013

Comparison of 2013-2017 Montgomery County PIT Counts



# Effectiveness of Your Way Home

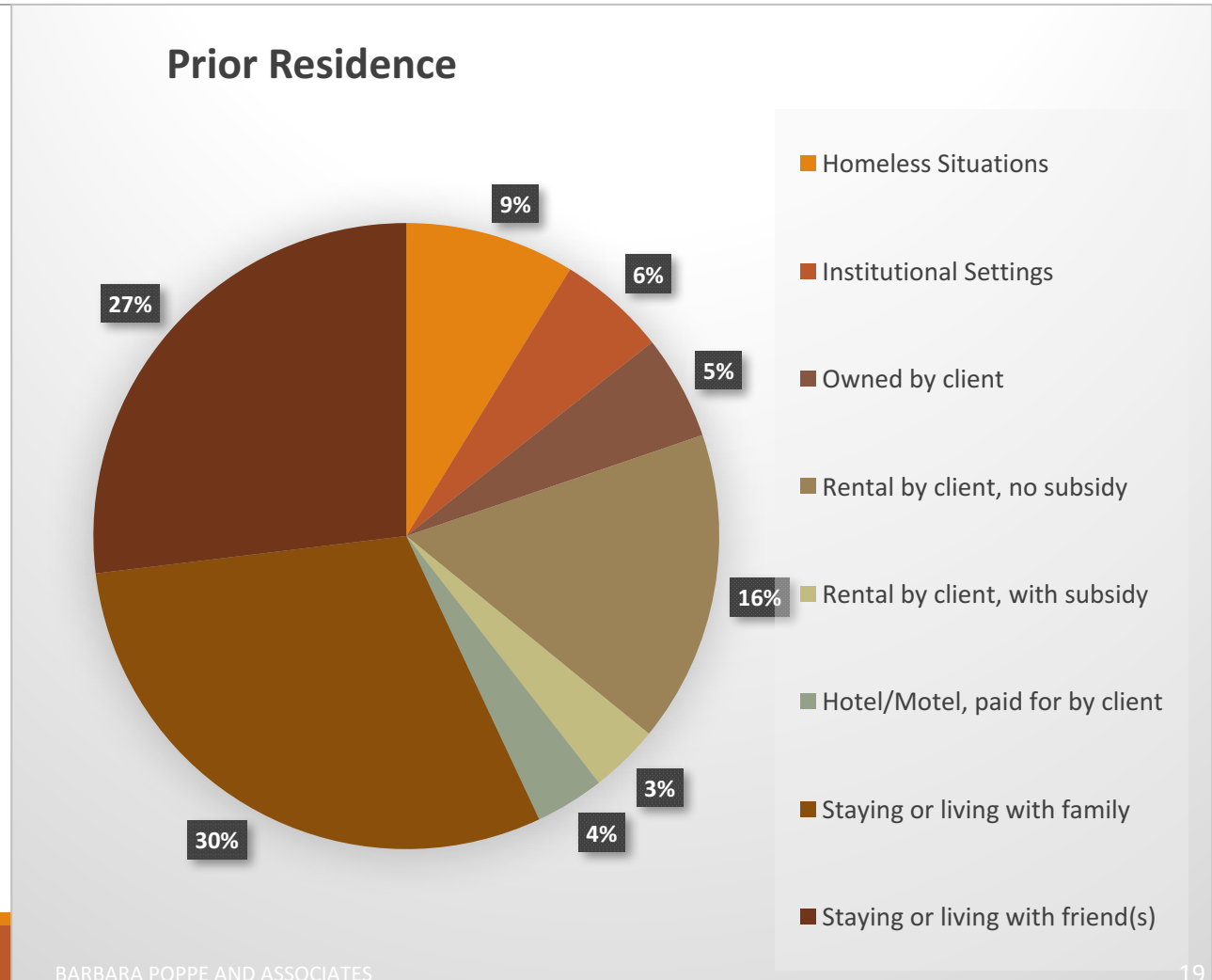
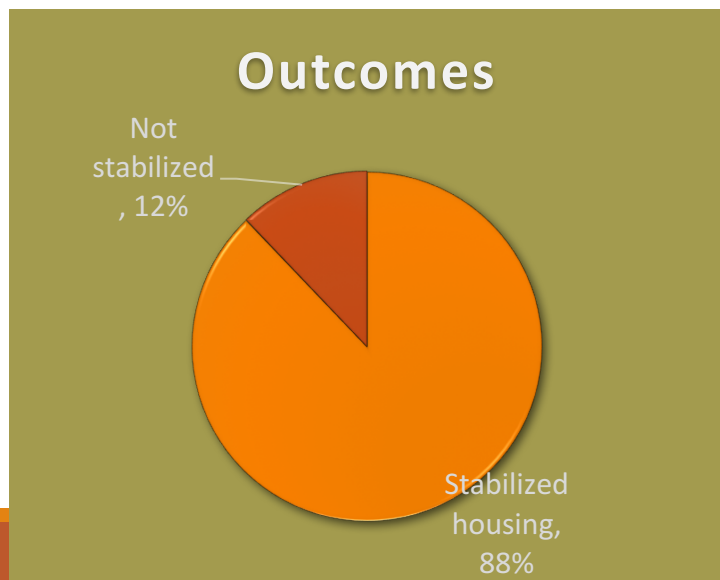
Selected HUD System Performance Measures  
01/01/2015 to 12/31/2016 (two years)

▪ Rate of exit to Permanent Housing for those served in ES, TH and RRH who exited	61%
▪ Extent to which Persons who Exit Homelessness from ES to Permanent Housing Destinations Return to Homelessness within 2 years	13%
▪ Length of Time Persons Remain Homeless in ES (days)	67
▪ Length of Time Persons Remain Homeless in ES and TH (days)	144
▪ % Successful exits/retention in PSH/OPH	91%

# Effectiveness of Your Way Home

## Diversion: Housing Counseling 01/01/16-12/31/06 (one year)

Households Served		492
Race	White	45.6%
	Black	46.8%
Veterans		4.3%
Average Length of Participation (in days)		10.7



# Cost Offsets – YWH System

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\$58.90

- Average cost of Emergency Shelter per day

\$4,898

- Average cost of Emergency Shelter per household

\$2,923

- Average cost of Rapid Rehousing per household

# Local resources for homelessness prevention

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- **28 different programs/resources** were identified that offer prevention type services targeted to persons at-risk of homelessness in Montgomery County:
  - 12 of these programs are non-financial services and attempt to connect at-risk persons to mainstream benefits or other community resources
  - 6 programs are Tenant-Based Rental Assistance type of programs funded through various HHS offices (OMH, OHCD and OCY) that are targeted to special needs populations (youth, persons with disabilities and persons with HIV/AIDS). Funding is about \$180,000 per year.
  - 8 services are intermittent financial services offered through faith-based organizations or churches. These provide limited financial assistance such as utility assistance or rental arrears to families in desperate financial need. Amount is unknown.
  - 2 programs are offered through the Veterans Multi-Service Center in Coatesville targeted towards veterans at risk of homelessness. Financial assistance is time-limited, usually up to 3 months of utility and rental assistance. About \$20,000 per year.

# Key Informant Interviews

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<b>NAME/TITLE</b>	<b>AGENCY/DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>SUSAN STRONG &amp; ERIK HANSEN</b> – Attorneys	Legal Aid of South Eastern PA
<b>JAIME TYSON</b> - Siemer Institute for Family Stability Project Manager	Creative Health Services. Mainly families of students in the Pottstown School District
<b>JOEL JOHNSON</b> - Executive Director	Montgomery County Housing Authority
<b>DOREEN HESSELL</b> - Administrator	Montgomery County Office of Aging & Adult Services
<b>SHANE BURROUGHS</b> - Regional Homeless & Foster Care Site Coordinator	PDE's Region 8 - Homeless Education Program

# Key Informant Interviews

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## Top issues

- 1) Lack of adequate household income with very few ways to help families overcome this challenge.
- 2) Overall shortage of affordable, quality rental housing.
- 3) Insufficient financial assistance to pay for housing related costs to prevent eviction.

Generally programs operated independent of each other. All indicated that they could meet needs of households who met their criteria; however, all reported households that were not being helped. All cited benefits of comprehensive community strategy.

## Areas for improvement

- ✓ Understand extent and needs of impacted households.
- ✓ Coordinate and publicize currently available resources.
- ✓ Strategies to improve household income adequacy and stability.
- ✓ Comprehensive emergency financial assistance.
- ✓ Legal assistance for households with housing quality issues and households facing eviction who are earning >125% poverty.

# 10 key findings from contextual information

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- 1) The population who experiences homelessness is **disproportionately Black or African American** and are usually families with children.
- 2) The cost of housing is greater in Montgomery County than the state; however, the area median income is higher, especially the renter median income.
- 3) **683 children were homeless** under the Education definition and served by Montgomery County schools. Nearly 70% of these children were living doubled up.



# 10 key findings from contextual information

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- 4) During 2016 in Montgomery County courts, 5,545 landlord tenant cases were filed and **2,120 orders of possession** were issued.
- 5) Legal Aid Data: **Two zip codes (19401 - Norristown and 19464 - Pottstown) represent over 60% of evictions** and more than half of total evictions and ejectments.
  - 11 of 66 Zip Codes received 76% of assistance.
  - 684 households received assistance regarding an eviction from a property subject to a lease;
  - 246 households received assistance regarding an ejectment from a property not subject to a lease (foreclosure prevention, tax sales, general ejectment proceedings)

# 10 key findings from contextual information

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- 6) Montgomery County 211 data: most frequent presenting need is overwhelmingly housing/shelter.
- 7) YWH Call Center Data: requests for temporary financial assistance are frequently met but request for housing are rarely met.
- 8) Montgomery County Navigates Data: Assistance with eviction prevention is frequent request (28% of callers). 58% of requests are from 3 zip codes: 19464 - Pottstown, 19446 –Lansdale, 19401 - Norristown).

# 10 Key findings from contextual information

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**9) Same top 3 zip codes:** Montgomery County 211, greatest amount of legal assistance provided for eviction and ejection, and Navicates data.

➤ 19464 – Pottstown

➤ 19446 –Lansdale

➤ 19401 - Norristown

**10) YWH Housing Counseling Outcomes are very strong (88% successful resolution).**

# Models

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CONCEPTS FOR CONSIDERATION

# Community-wide emergency financial assistance

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*All programs provide financial assistance. Some also provide case management, mediation, and other supports.*

## **Local Programs**

- Alameda County – risk assessment\*
- Buffalo, NY – central call line; Legal Aid benefits screen; referral to prevention case management agency
- Charlotte, NC – City contracts with single nonprofit provides rent and utility assistance
- Chicago, IL – call center and risk assessment\*
- Fairfax County, VA – targeted assessment
- Hennepin County, MN – mainstream and targeted prevention\*
- Houston, TX – risk assessment\*
- Los Angeles, CA – pilot for homelessness prevention\*
- San Antonio, TX – financial literacy with financial assistance

- San Francisco, CA – family homelessness prevention
- Seattle, WA – rental assistance
- Spokane, WA – targeted prevention

## **State Programs**

- Oregon – targeted prevention
- Michigan – risk assessment\*
- Connecticut – eviction and foreclosure prevention
- Washington, DC -- Department of Human Services presently using the Westat Tool in its Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP).\*

\*Evaluation is available

# Public housing eviction prevention

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These models have been developed and refined by public housing agencies to prevent eviction through early intervention and focused services.

- Cuyahoga County, OH
- King County, WA
- Louisville, KY
- Malden, MA

# Concepts Selected for Development

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- 1) **Service-connected households** to leverage unified Montgomery County human services
  - a) Broad based screen for risk of homelessness
  - b) Targeted, e.g. youth transition from foster care, frail elderly, etc.
- 2) **Court and legal services models**: eviction court, housing court, legal aid – *geographically targeted*
- 3) **Programs for families that are identified by schools** -- *geographically targeted*

# Universal Screener with Targeted Prevention Services

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RATIONALE AND OPPORTUNITIES



# Service-connected households – universal screen for risk of homelessness

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- **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)** developed a “universal screener” to identify Veterans housing instability among those who accessed VA healthcare. Veterans who were assessed as housing unstable were referred to specialized VA homeless prevention services.
- **Los Angeles County** The Economic Roundtable developed recommendations for screening and assessment, “trip wires”, and timely services that include employment and prevention assistance based on a comprehensive evaluation of data on households receiving public assistance. The review included data on health, mental health, justice system, education, child welfare, and labor market outcomes. The recommendations were not implemented.
- **New York City** – NYU School of Medicine is conducting cross-system collaboration to develop a homelessness prevention screening tool for emergency department patients
  - **Other health screeners:** Children’s HealthWatch developed a HungerVital Signs screener.

# US Department of Veterans Affairs

## Homelessness Screening Clinical Reminder

- 80% of those who screened positive for homelessness, when re-screened at 6 months were found to have resolved their homelessness.
- 87% of those who screened positive for risk of homelessness, when re-screened at 6 months were found to have resolved their risk.

- 1. In the past 2 months, have you been living in stable housing that you own, rent, or stay in as part of a household?**
  - Yes, living in stable housing → *Proceed to question 2*
  - No, not living in stable housing → *Proceed to question 3*
- 2. Are you worried or concerned that in the next 2 months you may NOT have stable housing that you own, rent, or stay in as part of a household?**
  - Yes, worried about housing in the near future → *Proceed to question 3*
  - No, not worried about housing in the near future → *Reminder completed*
- 3. Where have you lived for MOST of the past 2 months?**
  - Apartment/House/Room – no government subsidy
  - Apartment/House/Room – with government subsidy
  - With Friend/Family
  - Motel/Hotel
  - Hospital, Rehabilitation Center, Drug Treatment Center
  - Homeless Shelter
  - Anywhere outside (e.g., street, vehicle, abandoned building)
  - Other \* \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Would you like to be referred to talk more about your housing situation?**
  - Patient agrees to referral
  - Patient declines referral at this time – given information for future reference

**What's the best way to reach you?**

How to reach: \_\_\_\_\_

# Cross-system collaboration to develop a homelessness prevention screening tool for emergency department patients

Kelly Doran<sup>1,2</sup>, Suheila Gragui<sup>1</sup>, Eileen Johns<sup>3</sup>, Maryanne Schretzman<sup>3</sup>, Donna Castelblanco<sup>1</sup>, Hanna Negusie<sup>4</sup>, Donna Shelley<sup>2</sup>

1. Department of Emergency Medicine, NYU School of Medicine, 2. Department of Population Health, NYU School of Medicine, 3. NYC Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence, 4. NYU Silver School of Social Work

## OBJECTIVE

To develop a brief screening tool to identify emergency department (ED) patients who are at risk for future homelessness and to explore potential models for ED homelessness prevention interventions.

## BACKGROUND

- Homelessness has profound negative health effects.
- Homelessness can be prevented.
- New sites for homelessness prevention are needed.
- EDs serve many patients at risk for homelessness.
  - Bellevue ED: 18% of those not currently homeless worried about having stable housing in next 2 months; 11% self-reported eviction in past year.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Prospective cohort study of Bellevue ED patients
  - Patients complete survey containing multiple factors potentially associated with risk for future homelessness.
  - Surveys will be linked to Department of Homeless Services data (CARES) to determine what factors predict future shelter use.
- n=2,770 adult ED patients, randomly selected
  - Subgroups of patients with and without unhealthy alcohol or drug use.
  - Excludes critically ill, lives outside NYC, incarcerated, unable to speak English or Spanish, unable to provide consent.
- After survey patients will be "followed" for at least 6 months in CARES database and screening tool for future homelessness will be developed.

## TIMELINE

### RECRUIT PATIENTS & COMPLETE SURVEY NOVEMBER 2016 – APRIL 2018

- Bellevue Hospital Center adult ED patients Randomly selected, surveyed during ED visit
- Sample size approximately 2,770
- Survey domains include:
  - Demographics
  - Physical and mental health
  - Substance use
  - Housing status and homelessness history
  - Social support
  - Other social determinants of health
  - Violence and criminal justice history
  - Past services use

### LINK DATA APRIL 2018 – OCTOBER 2018

- Patient survey data to be linked to CARES (NYC homeless services / shelter use data)
- Patient identifiers will be collected (with consent) during ED survey to allow accurate linkage
- Linkage in collaboration with NYC CIDI
- 6 month+ "waiting period" to see if surveyed ED patients become homeless

### DEVELOP SCREENER NOVEMBER 2018 – APRIL 2019

- Goal is to find a small number of factors that predict future homelessness
- Balance maximizing "hit rate" while minimizing "false alarm" rate (methods used by Shinn, et al.)
- Product = screening tool for future ED-based use

## INNOVATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

- Unique cross-sector data linkage to inform collaborative efforts to improve patient health.
- Will give new insight to relationship of homelessness and ED use.
- Expanding role of EDs and health care system in addressing homelessness and SDOH, aligned with health system changes.

## FUTURE WORK

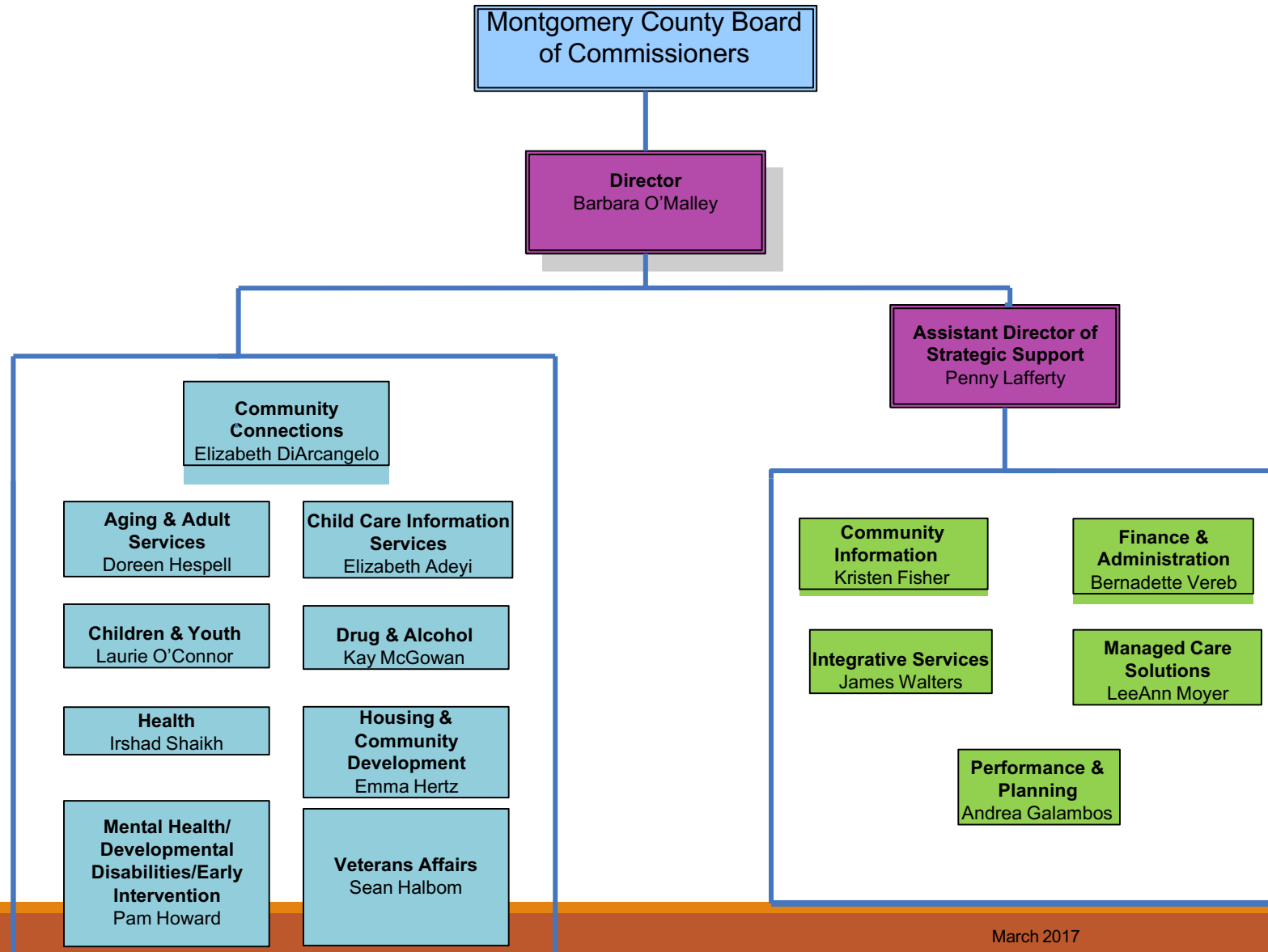
- Testing of homelessness risk screening tool in other ED patient populations.
- Qualitative interviews of patients and other stakeholders to inform intervention development.
- Feasibility trial of ED-based homelessness prevention interventions.

## SDOH REGISTRY

- ED patient surveys will be additionally linked to NY all-payer healthcare data (SPARCS) to create a novel "Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Registry."
- Health care systems increasingly interested in SDOH.
- SDOH Registry will provide new prospective data on relationships among multiple SDOH and health services use (ED visits hospitalizations, hospital readmissions, etc.).

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Contact: Kelly Doran, [kelly.doran@nyumc.org](mailto:kelly.doran@nyumc.org)

# Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services



# Concept: Universal Screener with Targeted Prevention Services

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## Why now?

- 1. Better outcomes:** Households that are housing unstable or at risk of homelessness will be more successful in programs and services provided by Montgomery County if their homes provide a stable foundation. Improved housing stability will improve health outcomes, increase participation in the workforce, reduce criminal justice involvement, and increase educational outcomes for children and adults.
- 2. Overall community cost savings:** High cost services like emergency rooms and institutional care can be reduced.
- 3. Innovation:** Leverage the new consolidation of Montgomery County housing and services agencies under a unified leadership structure and the concurrent development of a shared data system.
- 4. Community expertise:** Build response off the success of Housing Counseling expertise developed by YWH.

# Concept: Universal Screener with Targeted Prevention Services

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## What?

- ❖ Adapt a uniform screening and referral process for households receiving services from Montgomery County.
- ❖ Develop specialized prevention services for sub-populations that are highly vulnerable with high risk of homelessness and expensive to re-house if become homeless.

### Possible sub-populations:

- Youth transitioning from foster care
- Families receiving child welfare services/at-risk of out of home care
- Adults/youth receiving mental health services
- Adults/youth exiting jail or engaged with court system
- Seniors with housing quality problems and/or need accessibility modifications

# Concept: Universal Screener with Targeted Prevention Services

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## Key Questions:

1. Is there openness to developing screener and embedding it in new intake and client monitoring processes? Is there capability to incorporate screener into the new data system?
2. What resources are available for sub-populations to receive targeted prevention services? What is the potential cost-benefit that could inform which sub-population is selected to receive targeted prevention services?
3. What would be the next steps to develop a pilot?

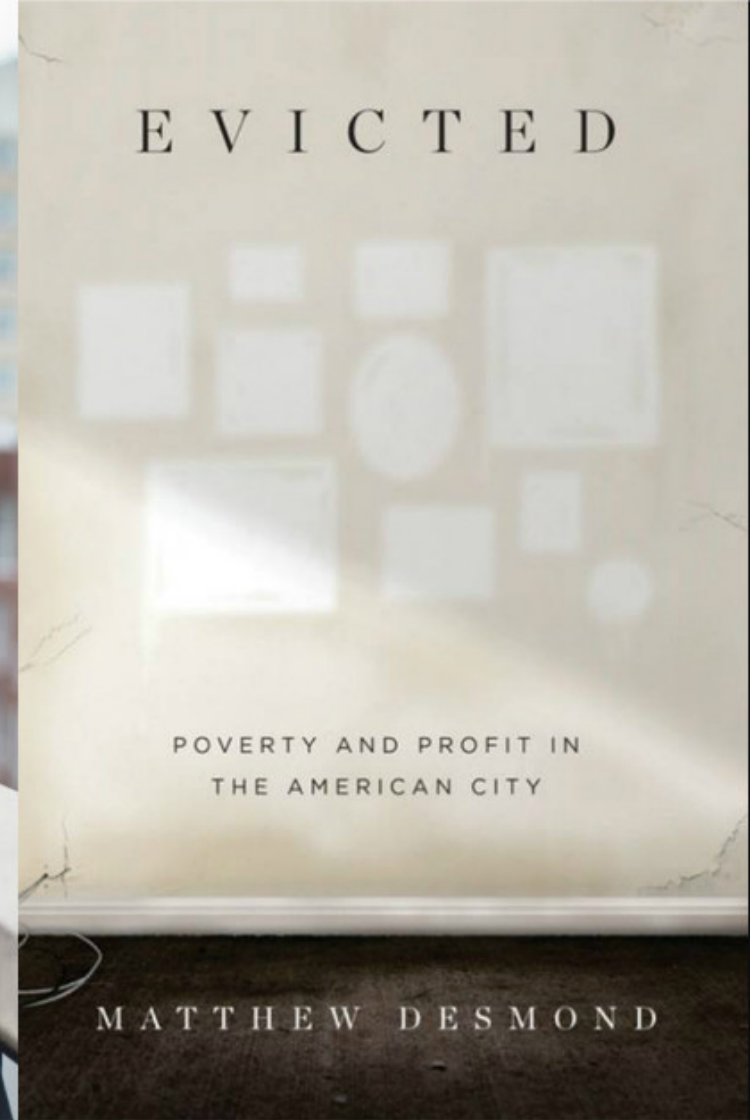
# Eviction Prevention

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RATIONALE AND OPPORTUNITIES



# A Timely Topic



# Matthew Desmond: Race, Gender, and Children

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Almost half of the city's evictions took place in **predominantly black inner-city neighborhoods**, where one renter-occupied household in 14 was evicted annually.

In black neighborhoods, **women were more than twice as likely to be evicted as men.**

**Neighborhoods with a greater proportion of children have more evictions**, even after controlling for their poverty rate, racial composition, percentage of female-headed households, and a number of other factors.

**If a tenant lives with children, her or his odds of receiving an eviction judgment almost triple**, even after taking into account how much is owed to the landlord, household income, and several other key factors.

- Children do not shield families from eviction, but rather they often expose them to it.

# Matthew Desmond: Consequences of Eviction

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With an **eviction on their record**, families often cannot secure decent, affordable housing

Eviction almost always leads to **increased residential instability and homelessness, as well as to a downward move** : a relocation to a disadvantaged neighborhood and/or to substandard housing

Recently evicted tenants also have a **difficult time qualifying for subsidized affordable housing programs**

Families **lose many of their possessions – including beds and furniture** -- after being evicted

# Matthew Desmond: Eviction Prevention

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When Milwaukee tenants facing eviction were given access to **emergency housing aid** from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the city's **eviction rate fell by 15%**.

Second, increased access to **free legal counsel** would decrease evictions.

- One study estimated that more than 70% of U.S. households facing eviction receive no legal representation (Seedco 2009).
- Yet researchers have shown that tenants with counsel are more likely to appear in court and are significantly less likely to be evicted than their unrepresented counterparts, irrespective of the merits of their case (Monsma and Lempert 1992; Seron et al. 2001).

The most powerful and effective eviction-prevention policies, however, are among the most powerful and effective antipoverty policies: tried and true **affordable housing initiatives**.

*The fundamental issue is this: the high cost of housing is consigning the urban poor to financial ruin. We have ushered in a sad and unreasonable moment in the history of the United States if thousands of poor families are dedicating upward of 80% and 90% of their income to rent.*

# Court and legal services models: eviction court, housing court, legal aid

## Communities reviewed:

- Baltimore, MD
- Cleveland, OH
- Columbus, OH
- Bronx, NY
- Portland, ME
- Washington, DC

## Keys to success:

- Court partnership with services based in courthouse
- Immediate intervention
- Prevent future recurrence

**Challenge:** inadequate income and lack of affordable rental housing

## Components:

- Court promotes services and process
- Legal representation
  - Lawyer for the Day
  - Legal Aid
- Tenant information and education
- Mediation
- Emergency financial assistance
- Income and benefits
- Money management
- Addressing housing conditions
  - Coordination with code enforcement
  - Address home repairs
- Process improvements

# Baltimore, MD



## How Renters Are Processed in the Baltimore City Rent Court

December 2015

A report by the Public Justice Center  
in collaboration with the Right to Housing Alliance,  
Dan Pasciuti, Ph.D., of Johns Hopkins University,  
and Michele Cotton, J.D., Ph.D., of the University of Baltimore



- ❖ Research report to document deficiencies and recommend improvements
- ❖ State advocacy to implement recommendations
- ❖ Public Justice Center and Homeless Persons Representation Project
  - More affordable and safe housing
  - Improve fairness of process
  - Legal representation – *pro se* (self representation) doesn't work with low literacy; same day in court
  - Enforce health and safety issues before getting to court
  - Utility arrearages
  - Need non-legal services in court
  - LSC (federal legal services corporation) and CDBG funding

# Cleveland, OH

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- **Cleveland Mediation Services** (*interview*)
  - Partnered with judge in Garfield Heights – onsite in court
  - Requires mediation as first step with first cause hearing on the same date; can submit agreement to judge if agreed.
    - 85% able to get to agreement if both sides show up to court – some to stay and some to delay move-out.
  - Court pays for it. Landlords pay filing fees – part of the cost of fees
  - Other judges: pro se guidance at their website
- **Cleveland Municipal Housing Court** (*news report*)
  - Court makes social service referrals before and during process.
  - Mediation is available
  - Bailiffs also have the ability to temporarily stop the process if when they arrive they determine extreme circumstances exist that indicate the resident should not be put out on the street (i.e. elderly or disabled, or a person with children in the home who might not otherwise be able to find shelter)
  - Impact: reduce recidivism rates and bolster its efficiency. Fewer emergency stops on evictions.

# Columbus, OH

## PREVENT FAMILY HOMELESSNESS COLLABORATIVE – CROSS-SECTOR



## COLUMBUS LEGAL AID SOCIETY

- Need more affordable and safe homes
- Legal representation onsite in eviction court
  - More effective than information on eviction notices
- Working with code enforcement to represent impacted households
- Process changes to make more fair
- LSC, state funding, and city funding



# Portland, ME

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## Pine Tree Legal Services – statewide

- ❖ Online self help materials - *Rights of Tenants in Maine*
- ❖ Legal representation in eviction court and other civil cases – help get repairs done, get security deposit back; public benefits; 3<sup>rd</sup> party debt collection.
- ❖ Lawyer of the Day project – same day representation for those who arrive at court without attorney
  - Legal Aid and/or Pro Bono representation
  - **Best when judge announces availability of representation**
- ❖ On volunteer attorneys: can be useful but must be “right” fit, trained, and supported (housing law is complex)
- ❖ Mostly LSC funding; some funding from speeding tickets in some areas
- ❖ Most frequent outcomes (in order of most to least): delay eviction; dismiss eviction (private and subsidized); tenancy by agreement; prevent loss/jeopardization of housing voucher;.

# Washington, DC

## Legal Aid of the District of Columbia (1 of 2)

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### **Legal representation:**

- eviction cases in the Landlord and Tenant Branch of D.C. Superior Court
- administrative hearings to **preserve housing subsidies** and **challenge unlawful rent increases**
- assist clients living with deplorable **housing conditions** by representing them in affirmative suits to obtain repairs

**Landlord Tenant Court-Based Legal Services Project** provides legal assistance to tenants at the courthouse

**Housing Conditions Calendar** helps tenants living in poor housing conditions bring repair claims to court. Allow tenants to file civil action. Pro se friendly process.

**Housing Right to Counsel Project**, which aims over the long term to offer a guarantee of representation to tenants in subsidized housing who are facing eviction and the associated risk of losing an invaluable housing subsidy and entering into long-term homelessness

**Pro bono Center** is effort with D.C. Bar, legal services organizations - packaged as city wide effort and hope national model developed.

**Funding:** only federal funding is DOJ grant funding for victims; 1/3 from DC govt.; Balance is private donations from law firms and individual attorneys

# Washington, DC

Legal Aid of the District of Columbia (2 of 2)

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## Recommendations

- Multi-faceted approach
- Onsite legal services in court with cooperation of judge
- Process improvements including more judges to hear eviction cases
- Proactive inspections – certain year cycle plus spot inspections
- Pro bono - not yet helping with limited appearances. This is hardest work that they do. Must be comfortable with strategy and have deep knowledge. Higher level skills than representation.

# New York City

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- **NYC:** free legal representation in Housing Court or free legal counsel to help avoid eviction. One-Shot Deal Program offers one-time emergency assistance due to an unexpected situation or event
- **Homebase:** households on the brink of homelessness have access to an extensive network of neighborhood-based services to help them remain in their communities and avoid entering shelter. Homebase is the cornerstone of the City's homelessness prevention efforts, crafting individualized assistance to meet the needs of each household.
- **Brooklyn Community Housing and Services:** **Brooklyn Housing Assistance Center** - assists single adults and families in Brooklyn who can demonstrate that they are at risk of losing their housing within 60 days. BHAC Prevention includes: case Management, training programs, housing library, apartment searches, legal help, mediation, financial assistance

# New York City

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## ➤ Housing Court Answers:

- I&R table at housing court sites to provide legal information (not legal advice); do matching on tenants with arrearages; make legal service referrals; developing online portal.
- New York City Court Navigators – 3-year pilot started by housing court. Navigators, makes use of trained and supervised individuals with no prior formal legal training to provide one-on-one assistance to unrepresented litigants in the City’s Housing and Civil Courts. Navigators provide information, assist litigants in accessing and completing court-required simplified forms, attend settlement negotiations and accompany unrepresented litigants into the courtroom. If judges address direct factual questions to a Navigator, the Navigator is authorized to respond.

➤ **Emergency Rent Coalition:** Informal network of organizations that share resources and resources for rent arrears. Working on filling gaps created by restricted funding. Coalition works through an email list serve to connect on sharing resources. Meet every other month with speakers. HCA moderates.

# New York City

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## **BronxWorks:**

- **Family Eviction Prevention Supplement (FEPS) Application Assistance:** This program assists families on public assistance with children under the age of 18 (or 18 and in high school) that have rent above their shelter allowance apply for the FEPS supplement.
- **HomeBase:** BronxWorks' shelter prevention program for residents of Bronx Community Districts 1 and 4.
- **Homelessness Prevention and Relocation Support Services Program:** An eviction prevention program to assist residents who have Section 8 vouchers from the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), located at 100 Gold Street.
- **Emergency Needs for the Homeless Program:** An eviction prevention program for help families with children under the age of 18 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and in need of emergency services.
- **Seniors Homelessness Prevention Project:** helps low-income Bronx residents aged 60 years or older avoid eviction.

# BronxWorks: Seniors Homelessness Prevention Project

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- Helps seniors avoid eviction in both the short-term and long-term. In cases where seniors are unsafe, in an untenable housing situation, or the rent is too high to insure long-term sustainability, SHPP will find suitable alternative housing arrangements.
- **Based in the courthouse** – strong partnership with the courts; approached by supervising housing court judges
- **Comprehensive** – immediate and long-term sustainability
  - Interface with other BronxWorks programs, e.g. SNAP counselor, financial management
    - Added entitlement specialists to make sure that they got all the benefits they are eligible for (senior rent freeze, SNAP, etc.)
    - Sometimes just very simple things like getting direct deposit and automatic payments to landlords.
    - Minor repair program – provides urgent repairs that landlord doesn't provide (e.g. fixing blind).
  - Works with other resources: Emergency Rent Coalition; senior citizen rent exemption program (landlords receive property tax abatement credit applied to their property tax bill in the same amount as the increase that the tenant is exempted from paying); Legal Aid for legal issues

# Concept: Eviction Prevention Service

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## Why now?

- 1. Stop downward spiral:** Households lose jobs, possessions, and have harder time finding next place to live. Neighborhoods with high "churn" become more unstable and blighted over time.
- 2. Reduce negative outcomes for vulnerable people:** children have lifelong negative consequences related to health and economic well-being; elderly who become homeless have increased health risks
- 3. Innovation:** Replicate emerging practices and test effectiveness in suburban community.
- 4. Community expertise:** LASP has strong experience with legal strategies. Housing Counseling expertise developed by YWH can be used to develop social services component.
- 5. High impact:** 2,120 orders of possession were issued. 400 families would be saved if just 20% of evictions were stopped and housing was stabilized.



# Concept: Eviction Prevention Service

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## What?

Develop a pilot project in one court in Norristown or Pottstown that includes one or more strategies:

- Onsite legal, mediation and/or supportive services in court with cooperation of judge
- Lawyer for the Day
  - Legal Aid
  - Pro bono
- Comprehensive services – address immediate and long-term needs
- Review Court processes and determine how to reduce evictions
- Increase self-help tenant information and train non-legal “navigators”
- Address housing conditions
  - Coordination with code enforcement
  - Address home repairs

# Concept: Eviction Prevention Service

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## Key Questions:

1. Who would be interested in providing leadership to build the case for a court-based eviction prevention pilot?
2. Is there openness from a judge/magistrate to develop a pilot?
3. What partnerships and resources could be identified to develop and support the pilot?
4. Are there any fees that could be used to support a pilot?
5. What would be the next steps to develop a pilot?

# Recap: Court based models

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## Keys to success:

- Court partnership with services based in courthouse
- Immediate intervention
- Prevent future recurrence

**Challenge:** inadequate income and lack of affordable rental housing

## Components:

- Court promotes services and process
- Legal representation
  - Lawyer for the Day
  - Legal Aid
- Tenant information and education
- Mediation
- Emergency financial assistance
- Income and benefits
- Money management
- Addressing housing conditions
  - Coordination with code enforcement
  - Address home repairs
- Process improvements

# Programs for families that are identified by schools

## Selection Criteria:

- Focus on McKinney-Vento eligible students (homeless per ED definition)
- Low barrier eligibility (i.e. income not required)
- Strong housing stability outcomes

## Communities selected:

- Greater Cincinnati, OH/KY
- Greater Phoenix, AZ

## Keys:

- Partnership with schools to help children succeed academically
- Comprehensive approach
- Two-Generation services (2-Gen)

**Challenge:** inadequate income and lack of affordable rental housing

## Components:

- Case management
- School services
- Housing relocation
- Emergency financial assistance
- Employment, income and benefits
- Money management
- Referrals for legal representation



## Siemer Family Stability – Creative Health Services

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### Objectives:

- 1) children stay in school and achieve academically;
- 2) families maintain stable housing

**Eligibility:** must be housing instable; have some source of income; have child enrolled in Pottstown School District (33% transient/homeless population); and must agree to meet face-to-face with case manager every 2-3 weeks.

**Referrals:** apply directly to CHS

**Capacity:** 32 families enrolled at point in time; 50 annually.

**Staffing:** 1 case manager

**Annual Budget:** \$200,000 (staffing and financial assistance)

**Funding Sources:** Siemer Institute and the United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey.

### Program:

**Case management:** tailored to family; usually 9-12 months; intensive (weekly) then tapering over time.

**Housing:** landlord mediation to stabilize and prevent eviction.

**Cash assistance:** average \$3,300

**Community referrals:** basic needs, benefits, employment, etc.

**Outcomes:** 72% exit to stable housing; 77% increase income; 95% remain stable in school

# Stable Families – Brighton Center

## Objectives:

- 1) children stay in school and achieve academically;
- 2) families maintain stable housing, increase income, and obtain work

**Eligibility:** resident 2 counties in northern Kentucky, school aged children in grades K-3, homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness, and ability to earn income.

**Referrals:** 100% from schools.

**Capacity:** 75 families enrolled at point in time; 135 annually.

**Staffing:** 1.25 FTE case managers

**Annual Budget:** \$83,500 (staff and cash assistance)

**Funding Sources:** Siemer Institute and United Way of Greater Cincinnati

## 2-Gen Program:

**Case management:** up to 18 months to create a plan with the family to stabilize and thrive; intensive (weekly for 3 months) then tapering over time.

**Service bundling:** Brighton Center has in-house resources for financial management, benefits, employment, basic needs, etc. Organized as [Financial Opportunity Center](#) (evidence based practice) – financial coaching, employment, and work supports.

**Partnership with schools:** ensures children doing well in school and access to all school-based services

**Housing:** stabilize or relocate if doubled up; prevent eviction. Work with housing authority and other landlords.

**Cash assistance:** average \$100

**Outcomes:** 72% exit to stable housing; 65% increase income; 99% remain stable in school

## Family Stability— A New Leaf and Helping Families in Need

### Objectives:

- 1) children stay in school and achieve academically;
- 2) families maintain stable housing, increase income, and obtain work

**Eligibility:** families with children in Head Start-Grade 8 in Avondale School District and homeless (ED definition)

**Referrals:** 100% from schools.

**Capacity:** 50-70 families enrolled at point in time; 100 annually.

**Staffing:** 2 case managers (one per agency)

**Annual Budget:** \$200,000 (staffing and financial assistance)

**Funding Sources:** Siemer Institute, the Valley of the Sun United Way and the cities of Avondale and Goodyear.

### 2-Gen Program:

**Family case management:** tailored to family housing stability needs, including budgeting, job acquisition, successful tenancy and more; usually 6-12 months; intensive (weekly) then tapering over time. Meet with families at school, resource center, or in-home.

**Children's case management:** support school stability and establish goals reduce disciplinary infractions, extracurricular activities, grades, summer programs, etc.

**Partnership with schools:** co-located at school; ensures children doing well in school and access to all school-based services

**Resource Center:** Care1st Avondale Resource and Housing Center has in-house resources for health, financial coaching, benefits, employment, basic needs, ESL, EITC, etc.

**Housing:** stabilize or relocate if doubled up; prevent eviction.

**Cash assistance:** average \$2,000

**Outcomes:** 53% exit to stable housing; 23% increase income; 93% remain stable in school

# Concept: School Based Homelessness Prevention

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## Why now?

- 1. Reduce impacts of high mobility on all children served by schools with high rates of homelessness:** 683 children were homeless under the Education definition and served by Montgomery County schools. Nearly 70% of these children were living doubled up.
- 2. Reduce negative outcomes for children:** children have lifelong negative consequences related to health and economic well-being.
- 3. Innovation:** Replicate Siemer Institute emerging practices for 2-Gen strategies and test effectiveness in suburban community.
- 4. Community expertise:** Creative Health Services has experience with schools. Housing Counseling expertise developed by YWH can be used to develop social services component.



# Concept: School Based Homelessness Prevention

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## What?

- ❖ Develop a pilot project in one school district (Norristown or Pottstown)
- ❖ Co-locate services in school
- ❖ Serve homeless families identified by the schools as “homeless” and target services to those most at risk becoming “literally homeless”
- ❖ Model after comprehensive approach used by Brighton Center and A New Leaf/Helping Families in Need – identify multi-service agency or resource center to partner

# Concept: School Based Homelessness Prevention

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## Key Questions:

1. Who would be interested in providing leadership to build the case for a school-based prevention pilot?
2. Is there a willingness by a school district to develop and sponsor a pilot?
3. What partnerships and resources could be identified to develop and support the pilot?
4. What would be the next steps to develop a pilot?

# Wrap Up

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NEXT STEPS

# Today and beyond

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- ✓ Core Team will use feedback to develop **next steps action plan**
  - ❖ Deeper dive into selected models – develop concept, partners, costs, funding and outcomes
  - ❖ Up to 3 webinars with programs
  - ❖ Final report

**Your Way Home Annual Summit – June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017**