

Affordable Housing Policy Agenda

Health Begins with Homes

Housing is essential to ensuring a healthy and thriving community, but even before the COVID-19 crisis affordable housing was hard to come by for many in Cumberland and Perry counties. The pandemic only exposed how insecure housing is for many families in our community. As we rebuild our economy, we need a comprehensive approach to housing policy focused on health and equity so that everyone has stable and affordable housing during the pandemic and beyond.

As individuals and organizations concerned with the health of our community, we are committed to advancing policies that:

Increase the availability of affordable housing

Families in Pennsylvania need at least an additional 230,000 affordable homes and rental apartments to prevent spending more than a third of their budgets on housing. We need to take more innovative approaches to zoning that enable an expanded use of existing housing and construction of new units, while increasing public investment and incentivizing private development. Simultaneously, we need to develop and expand programs focused on maintaining existing affordable housing so that everyone has a healthy place to live.

Expand rental assistance and eviction protection

Several months into the pandemic, nearly a third of US households were unable to pay their full rent or mortgage payments. A limited amount of rental and mortgage assistance is available for families struggling with a loss of employment or income, but many people are not getting the help they need. We must work to protect people affected by the economic downturn from eviction until employment recovers, and expand rental assistance so more people can access it now and in the future.

Put more resources into addressing homelessness and prioritize the most vulnerable

Before the pandemic, an estimated 16,000 Pennsylvanians were homeless, however the State legislature hasn't increased funding for homelessness assistance in eight years. Increased funds are essential for helping shelters stay safe, and for addressing homelessness for the long term. As we look to increase funding, we also need to make sure those funds are used where they are needed most - for especially vulnerable populations like families with children, veterans, seniors, people of color, people with disabilities, the formerly incarcerated, and domestic violence victims.

Address all forms of housing discrimination

Housing discrimination is an ongoing problem and current laws leave many types of discrimination based upon disabilities, race, national origin, family status and sex under-reported and discrimination based upon sexual orientation, gender identity, and history of incarceration unaddressed. We need to ensure we have laws that protect people from all forms of discrimination in housing.

