

In 2021, United Way of Massachusetts Bay, Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA), and the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA) launched a Supportive Housing Pipeline Coalition. The goal of our Coalition is to convene key leaders and stakeholders across all relevant systems and sectors to develop and advance a unified agenda for creating the permanent supportive housing (PSH) needed to address chronic and high-need homelessness in MA. While progress has been made, homelessness remains an alarming humanitarian and public health crisis.

Far too many individuals and families with children are still experiencing chronic and high-need homelessness. Many with disabling conditions and chronic health conditions are unable to access the housing they need until they become chronically homeless – all at a tremendous, and avoidable, cost to their health, the future of the children, and the state. According to data from the statewide Rehousing Data Collaborative (RDC), in the first quarter of 2022, there were 3,464 people in households experiencing chronic homelessness in MA: 3,029 were individuals, and 132 were children in families.

Members of the Supportive Housing Pipeline Coalition, made up of more than 80 providers, developers, healthcare entities, funders, and advocates, created [the Policy Agenda](#) that includes the following recommendations:

Launch a statewide effort to house all individuals and families experiencing chronic and high-need homelessness in MA:

- Stably house **4,000 households** experiencing chronic and high-need homelessness with PSH across the state by January 2027 as a major step toward ending chronic and high-need homelessness.
- Focus and coordinate efforts across the state, local, and federal levels to dramatically reduce homelessness among the most complex and vulnerable people in the homeless system.
- Commit to fully implementing a Housing First model, which treats individuals and families with the respect and dignity they deserve by getting them into housing quickly, while simultaneously offering support services for other issues such as behavioral health needs and unemployment.

Coordinate state funding streams to increase supportive housing development:

- Establish a supportive housing initiative to finance PSH units for chronic and high-need populations experiencing homelessness that integrates supportive services, operating, and capital funding into one coordinated funding process through a collaboration between all relevant state funding agencies.
- Create a public/private flexible fund to braid existing resources and address funding gaps. This fund will be responsive to specific project needs, not limited by the local, state, and federal requirements.

Target more state-funded affordable housing as supportive housing units for chronic and high-need households in the homeless system:

- Include priorities and/or set-asides to incentivize the production of PSH units needed to meet the 4,000 household target for nearly all state rental housing production programs including Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the quasi-public housing agency programs. The resources can also be paired with existing affordable housing units to create PSH units by adding needed services or subsidies.
- Prioritize referrals for state-funded PSH from the homeless system.

We believe that there is national best practice to achieve these bold goals, and, through the working groups of the coalition, have sought feedback and ideas to create policies, budget asks, and administrative recommendations that will allow for the goals stated above to be achieved within the next 5 years. Specifically, contracting and funding innovations like the Flexible Supportive Housing Subsidy Pool, new tools to locate units such as [Housing Navigator](#), new program models including the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS) Low-Threshold Permanent Housing and Support Services program, [New Lease for Families](#), and budget line items that allow for gap filling such as [Home and Healthy For Good](#), [Sponsor-based PSH](#), the [Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program \(MRVP\)](#), and the [Homeless Individuals Assistance line item](#).

Building off what we know works, and the innovations that were put into place during the pandemic, **we are seeking to bring our policy agenda to the Healey-Driscoll administration as a solutions-based, data-driven approach to ending and preventing homelessness.** This is an agenda that we have built together and addresses one of the most pressing issues facing the Commonwealth.

We ask for a meeting with you, so that we can bring forward this shared vision. We hope that this will be the first step in creating a powerful movement that the administration will stand behind:

Launch a statewide effort to house all individuals and families experiencing chronic and high-need homelessness in Massachusetts by stably housing 4,000 households experiencing chronic and high-need homelessness with PSH across the state by January 2027 as a major step toward ending chronic and high-need homelessness.