# City of Bethlehem Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness

•••

Bethlehem City Council Community Development Committee October 18, 2022

## What to expect tonight:

- The most current data on the Lehigh Valley's unsheltered population
- Extent to which pandemic has heightened need
- How the City has taken a leadership role
- The costs to construct and operate a year-round shelter

lehighvalleylive.com

Advertisement

### Bethlehem steps up

- The Lehigh Valley has no permanent year-round emergency shelter.
- The City of Bethlehem embarked on this study in early 2022, a year in which demand for sheltering jumped.

#### News never stops. Neither do we. Support lehighvalleylive.com

#### **Edged Out**

### Bethlehem needs a permanent homeless shelter. The city's studying how it could happen.

Updated: Mar. 02, 2022, 11:50 a.m. | Published: Mar. 02, 2022, 11:42 a.m.









Advertisemen

#### By Sara K. Satullo | For lehighvalleylive.com

Bethlehem's leaders agree the city needs a permanent homeless shelter. The question is where to locate it and how to make it happen.

Bethlehem City Council Tuesday night voted 6-1 to hire consultant Michael Baker International at a cost of \$84,690 to develop a strategic plan to address homelessness and study the potential for a year-round shelter. The firm will begin stakeholder outreach starting in April, said Mayor J. William Reynolds.

The Lehigh Valley's existing housing shortage and the

# Purpose of the Plan:

- Address critical gaps
- Lehigh Valley's first permanent shelter

# State of Homelessness in the Region

### Homelessness and housing insecurity rose sharply from 2020

Over the first two years of the pandemic there was a:

- 26% increase in households experiencing homelessness
- 36% increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness

Source: 2022 Point-in-Time Count

Specific populations saw sharp rises:

51% families with children

93% increase for veterans

46% of the chronically homeless

46% of households experiencing domestic violence



The Lehigh Valley has a shortage of 14,480 housing units for households making <\$25,000

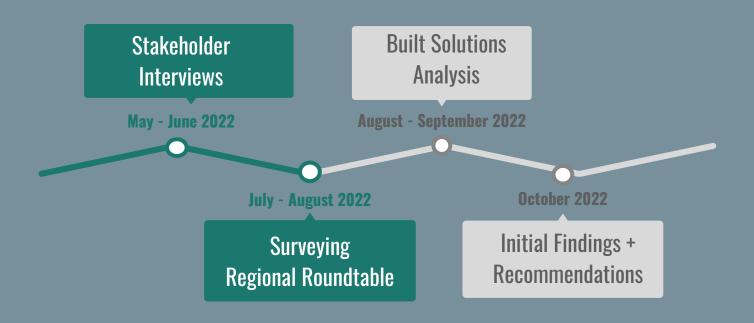


In 2021 eviction rates in Lehigh County were 9.5% and 5.6% in Northampton County.



Source: PA Housing Alliance, 2021

### Approach: Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness



### July 18 Regional Roundtable on Homelessness

### Municipal Partners:

- City of Allentown
- City of Easton

#### County Partners:

- Northampton County
- Lehigh County

Bethlehem Area School District

#### Service Providers:

- New Bethany Ministries
- Bethlehem Emergency Sheltering
- Lehigh Valley Regional Homeless Advisory Board (LV RHAB)

#### Institutions:

- Lehigh University
- Moravian University
- St. Luke's University Health Network
- Lehigh Valley Health Network

#### **Elected Officials:**

- Pa. Rep. Steve Samuelson
- Pa. Senator Lisa Boscola
- Pa. Rep. Jeanne McNeill
- Congresswoman SusanWild

Historic Bethlehem

### Survey

107 individuals were interviewed at service provider sites

- New Bethany Ministries
- Ripple Community Inc.
- Daybreak
- Free Laundry Night (sponsored by St. Luke's Parish Nursing)
- Bethlehem Emergency Sheltering - Weekend Lunch



This past winter, what shelter services did you use?

The most frequently visited shelters were **Bethlehem Emergency Shelter** and **Allentown Emergency Shelter** 

Have you ever chosen to not stay at a shelter?

45% of respondents have chosen to not stay in a shelter, citing reasons such as: Feeling unsafe, feeling unwelcome, no option to stay with partner/spouse/family, no accommodation for pet(s)

76% respondents have never been turned away when seeking shelter.

Have you ever been turned away from a shelter?

The 24% of respondents who have been turned away cited reasons including: shelter was too full, they arrived late, lack of ID, and/or a protocol violation

The last time you were securely housed in a place you considered to be your home, why did you leave that home?

20% were evicted and/or forced to leave due to crowding, condemnation, or landlord issues

14% left due to relationship conflict

11% were kicked out or ran away

What is keeping you from finding housing?

**42% cannot find** a **place** they can **afford** 

10% are on a waiting list

9% have a physical disability and can't find an accessible apartment

**6% lack** an **ID/proper identification** 

Where do you spend time during the day when the shelters are closed?

# 50% spend time at a day program like Daybreak, Ripple Community Inc., etc.

18% spend time outside

11% spend time at a family member or friend's house

8% spend time at the library

**Built Solutions to Address Homelessness** 

### **Built Solutions Pipeline**

### Homelessness Prevention

Rental Assistance

Tenants' Rights

**Legal Aid** 

Utility Assistance

### Drop-In Emergency Sheltering

Facility intended to provide temporary shelter for the homeless, in general or specific populations

Best Practices include: Low-barrier and immediately available to anyone experiencing homelessness. Intake process should not be a part of this step before accessing shelter

# Intake Centers and Services

Register for the Coordinated Entry System (CES)/Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

Or connect directly to other support services (note: not everyone makes it into the Coordinated Entry System)

### Self-directed Return to Housing

Many people who become temporarily homeless do not need outside assistance to return to housing

# Transitional Housing

Some households may move through this intermediate step between emergency crisis shelter and permanent housing

Service intensive

'Longer' stays ( can range from 3 months to 2 years)

### Permanent Supportive Housing

Combines rental or housing assistance with individualized, flexible and voluntary support services for people with high needs related to physical or mental health, developmental disabilities, or substance ahuse

### Rapid Rehousing

Housing identification (available units/willing landlords)

Flexible financial assistance

Case management and services

### Affordable Housing Strategies

Ultimately, most housing services are intended to return households to permanent affordable housing in the community

# Built Solutions Pipeline: Service Providers

### Homelessness Prevention

- -New Bethany
- -Lehigh County
- -Northampton County
- -Lehigh Conference of Churches
- -Range of smaller service providers

### Drop-In Emergency Sheltering

- -Bethlehem Emergency Sheltering (typically open November 15th to March 31st)
- -Allentown Warming Station (typically open November 1st to April 30th)

## Intake Centers and Services

- -Lehigh Conference of Churches: Daybreak (in-person)
- -Ripple Community Inc. (in-person)
- -Bethlehem Emergency Sheltering (in-person)
- -211 Call-in System

Self-directed Return to Housing

# Transitional Housing

- -New Bethany
- -Community Action Community of LV - Sixth Street Shelter
- -Valley Youth House
- -Turning Point
- -Allentown Rescue Mission
- -Safe Harbor
- -Victory House

### Permanent Supportive Housing

- -Moravian House
- -Valley Housing Development Corporation
- -Resources for Human Development
- -Ripple Community Inc.
- -New Bethany
- -Other independent service providers

### Rapid Rehousing

- -Lehigh Conference of Churches
- -Valley Youth House

### Affordable Housing Strategies

- -Section 8
- -Housing Authorities' owned housing
- -Public/Private
- Partnership -PennRose
- -PHFA
- -HDC
- -New Bethany

# Built Solutions Pipeline: Gap Analysis

### Homelessness Prevention

-Need: 746
households
(including 162
families)
-2021 eviction rates:
5.6% in
Northampton County
and 9.5% in Lehigh
County, significant
increases since 2016
- 1.4% and 1.93%

respectively

### Drop-in Emergency Sheltering

- -There is no permanent, year-round emergency shelter in Lehigh Valley -There is no
- emergency sheltering for families
- -Hotels were used at a stop-gap measure to fill emergency housing need using CARES Act dollars that option is mostly no longer there

## Intake Centers and Services

- -Need: 1086 households enrolled (689 in Lehigh County and 397 in Northampton County)
- -69% assessed through 211 system and 31% assessed through walk-in center
- -Gap: need for more walk-in intake centers/options

Self-directed Return to Housing

# Transitional Housing

- -Gaps: There is no existing transitional housing for single women and LGBTQ+ populations
- -There are very limited family units
- -Increases seen in need for domestic violence survivors and women

### Permanent Supportive Housing

Need: 295 households (200 singles/couples and 95 families)

In 2022, only 14% of those enrolled by the Lehigh Valley RHAB went to permanent housing

### Rapid Rehousing

Lehigh Valley RHAB has 84 co-funded units and 1 ESG funded unit → this is 14% capacity to meet the need for Rapid Rehousing

### Affordable Housing Strategies

LVPC estimates there is a deficit of 14,480 housing units for households with incomes under \$25K

The City has access to post-pandemic resources that can be directed towards this work, particularly in regards to identifying a 'built solution'.

# City's Recommended Role:

Permanent, year-round emergency shelter

Affordable Housing Policies and Programs

### **Built Solutions: Evaluation**

How much will it cost to acquire and build?

What will be the maintenance and operations costs?

Where is the funding for long-term sustainability?

# Based on best practices and level of need, the vision for a permanent, year-round emergency shelter includes:

- 50 to 70 non-congregant rooms single beds with a toilet and sink in the room
- Four family-sized units
- 10 congregant emergency beds
- Single-stall showers
- Laundry facilities
- Commercial Kitchen
- Full-sized Lockers
- Day-time drop-in center
- Satellite office space for Service Providers and Coordinated Entry System intake

# Built Solutions Analysis: Costs by structural type for a 24/7 year-round emergency shelter



Figure 4: Built Solution Cost Comparison

### Rehab - Existing Community Building: Cost Estimate

Demolition: \$92,500

Acquisition: \$1,998,000

Site Improvements: \$25,000

Construction/Rehab: \$3,977,500

Permitting & Environment: \$69,375

Inspections: \$11,563

General Requirements: \$173,438

Contractor Overhead: \$57,813

Construction Contingency: \$277,500

Legal & Insurance: \$57,813

Construction Management: \$34,688

Financing: \$115,625

Architecture & Engineering Fees: \$173,438

Fixtures, Furniture, & Equipment: \$296,000

Private Storage Lockers: \$37,500

Utilities: \$20,000

Total: \$7,417,750

# Cost estimate for operations and maintenance, includes:

- Staff salaries/benefits/training
- Maintenance staff Labor and Supplies
- Utilities
- Insurance



\$10,000/bed/year

# Operations & Maintenance Cost Estimates: Permanent, year-round shelter with 50 to 70 non-congregant beds and 4 family-sized apartments

Expense Description	Cost Estimate Range (\$/year)
Staffing (salaries; benefits; training; taxes)	\$305,500 to \$427,700
Administrative Costs	\$106,700 to \$149,380
Utilities	\$41,700 to \$58,380
Maintenance	\$46,200 to \$64,680
Total	\$500,100 to \$700,140



\$10,000/bed/year

### **Long-Term Public Sector Funding**

**HOME Investment Partnership Act Funds** – Federal HUD program to increase homeownership and affordable housing opportunities for low and very low-income Americans.

**Emergency Solutions Grant** – HUD program to assist people to quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis and/or homelessness.

**Community Development Block Grant** – HUD program to provide decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

**Continuum of Care** – HUD program to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness.

# Next steps and closing