

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA  
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD  
DEVELOPMENT AND THE HOMELESS

Room 400, City Hall  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Monday, March 13, 2017  
10:15 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB, CHAIR  
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS  
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL  
COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM  
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON  
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA  
COUNCILMAN AL TAUBENBERGER

RESOLUTION 170027 - Resolution authorizing the joint City Council Committee on Housing, Neighborhood Development and the Homeless to hold public hearings to examine the benefits of having a more robust homeless prevention program in Philadelphia.

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COUNCILMAN DOMB: Good morning.  
This hearing is called to order. This is  
a public hearing of the joint City  
Council Housing, Neighborhood Development  
and Homeless and Education. The purpose  
of this public hearing is to hear  
testimony on Resolution No. 170027.

I recognize the -- do we have a  
quorum? Members of the Committee who are  
in attendance, Councilwoman Blackwell and  
Councilman Taubenberger. I know we had  
Councilwoman Gym earlier and Councilman  
Henon and Councilwoman Parker. And  
Councilwoman Blackwell is the sponsor of  
this resolution.

Would you like to make opening  
remarks?

The Clerk will now read the  
title of the resolution, then  
Councilwoman Blackwell will make her  
opening remarks.

THE CLERK: Resolution 170027,  
authorizing the joint City Council  
Committee on Housing, Neighborhood

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2           Development and the Homeless and  
3           Education to hold public hearings to  
4           examine the benefits of having a more  
5           robust homeless prevention program in  
6           Philadelphia.

7                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: I'd like to  
8           ask Councilwoman Blackwell now to speak  
9           and have some opening remarks about this  
10          resolution.

11                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
12          you, Chairman Domb, and thank you all for  
13          coming. I would like to say that I've  
14          done all this work to get these groups  
15          here and to get the information for this  
16          hearing organized, but certainly they  
17          have done it, because these are the  
18          groups that work traditionally, and have,  
19          to try to make a difference and try to  
20          deal with the homeless issue that we see  
21          here in our city and that we shouldn't  
22          have. But we believe that this hearing  
23          can make a difference, and we are sure  
24          that the Administration is listening and  
25          other colleagues who are not in this

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Committee, because we can make a difference. It is all about priorities. It is all about prevention, and we can save millions of dollars, as I said in my remarks.

So I just want to again thank everyone who has come, who has worked on this Committee, who has given us this vital information. And I'll turn the chair back over to the Chairman of the Committee to call on those who are here.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you, Councilwoman Blackwell.

I want to remind everyone that we have your written testimony and because we have so many people testifying today and I know we have another hearing coming up after ours, we want to ask that you keep your testimony to two to three minutes, but give us the two most important points of your testimony.

The Clerk will please call the first witness to testify on this resolution.

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2           THE CLERK: So Panel No. 1 is  
3           Andrea Jordan, Nancy House, Anyae Smith,  
4           and Tatianna Jarrells. I apologize if I  
5           mispronounce anyone's names in advance.

6           (Witnesses approached witness  
7           table.)

8           MS. JORDAN: My name is Andrea  
9           Jordan and I have one son, and I  
10          experienced myself with homelessness. I  
11          grew up in foster care, so I actually  
12          aged out of the system. I didn't --

13          COUNCILMAN DOMB: Can you talk  
14          into the microphone so they can hear.  
15          Thank you very much.

16          MS. JORDAN: I grew up in  
17          foster care my whole entire life. I was  
18          never adopted, so I just aged out of the  
19          system.

20          I enrolled in college and tried  
21          to enroll in college, but I couldn't  
22          because I had no help. Later on down the  
23          line, I became pregnant, and I've worked  
24          my whole entire life since I was 17.  
25          I've done everything that I possibly can

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2           do before being a mother and after being  
3           a mother.

4                     Right after I had my son, I ran  
5           into a landlord that was untrue, like,  
6           well, not telling the truth about  
7           everything. They sold the building.  
8           They did everything that they weren't  
9           supposed to do. I basically moved into  
10          my car with my five-year-old son.

11                    I went downtown to places to  
12          ask them for help, to ask them like, you  
13          know, I need help. I don't know what  
14          kind of help that they were saying. Like  
15          I didn't need like shelter-shelter, but I  
16          needed help from someone, even if that  
17          meant going into a shelter. I got turned  
18          away left and right because I had a job,  
19          because I had a car, because I looked  
20          like this, and I kept telling them  
21          homelessness does not have a look,  
22          because someone can make more money than  
23          I do and their house can burn down  
24          tomorrow and they could be homeless. So  
25          it's not about how you look or what you

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2           have. It's what you need right now.

3                   I got turned away left and  
4           right from all different centers,  
5           shelters, everything, and this is in the  
6           wintertime. Me and my son were staying  
7           in a car. And then I was faced with a  
8           conflict where I was able to go into a  
9           shelter, but they told me that I had to  
10          work certain hours. Everybody doesn't  
11          work a 9:00 to 5:00. Everybody doesn't  
12          work Monday through Friday. I work  
13          overnight for healthcare. There's no  
14          such thing as a day off. There's no such  
15          thing as a holiday. People need my help  
16          24 hours a day. So in order for me to go  
17          into this shelter, I needed to quit my  
18          job, but when I got in the shelter, I was  
19          going to need to look for another job.  
20          So I didn't do any of that.

21                   I searched around and I found  
22          Interfaith Hospitality Network. Although  
23          they didn't have room for me, they opened  
24          their door and they changed what their  
25          rules and their stuff was to fit me,

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because I'm different. My situation is different from hers. Even though both experienced homelessness, my story is different from hers.

The whole Master Lease Program, I really love that also because when I did receive my Earned Income Tax back, I told them if my rent is going to be this, I'm going to pay a certain amount for the year, so that way, my rent was reduced dramatically. So that way, if I did miss a day of work or I was sick, like I was, I wasn't put in jeopardy to losing my home.

Also, I've been there for about a year. I've had no problems. I've been able to pay all my bills, like I've been being able to do, but without the struggle. I can pay my car note, everything, without having to do eenie, meenie, miney, moe, which one is more important. And even though I'm in my own home right now, I know that I can go to them and ask them if I have any trouble.

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2                   So needing funds for this stuff  
3       does count, because even myself, I go to  
4       school, I work, I take care of my son. I  
5       don't complain about anything, but me, I  
6       needed help and I couldn't get it.

7                   So thank you.

8                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

9       Thank you very much.

10                  MS. HOUSE: I too am in the  
11       Master Lease Program. I've been in it  
12       for three years. The first year  
13       Interfaith helped me. They knew I had a  
14       problem. They solved it for me.

15                  COURT STENOGRAPHER: Can you  
16       state your name, please.

17                  MS. HOUSE: Oh, I'm sorry. I'm  
18       Nancy House.

19                  It was rough. We went through  
20       a lot. My daughter went through a lot.  
21       It was hard for her to leave her home,  
22       but I explained to her they were going to  
23       help me, and they did. We have a brand  
24       new house. We're happy. Well,  
25       apartment. We're happy. Her grades have

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2           went from D's and C's to A's and B's, all  
3           because of Interfaith.

4                     The Master Lease does work, and  
5           with my income tax check, instead of  
6           blowing on stupid things, I put it  
7           towards my rent. That helps subsidize my  
8           rent so I don't have to pay that much,  
9           which if they cut my hours in 24, I'm  
10          still able to pay my rent and all my  
11          bills and my car insurance. So I keep  
12          everything.

13                    I thank Interfaith a lot. And  
14          I'm still with them with different  
15          programs for my daughter, the gardening  
16          program, the counseling. They have child  
17          counseling, and it's helped her cope  
18          through everything we went through, and  
19          they also have an art therapy. She loves  
20          it. She doesn't mind going there after  
21          school, and I know she's safe.

22                    So thank you again, Interfaith.

23                    I hope they can do more for  
24          other people.

25                    COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

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2                   Aubrey, do you want to say  
3 anything?

4                   MISS HOUSE: Like my mom said,  
5 it really helped me with my grades. I  
6 went from D's to C's in third, fourth,  
7 and fifth to A's and B's in sixth. It's  
8 really helped me express myself through  
9 the therapy art program and gardening,  
10 and I just -- I'm just really happy that  
11 I have a place to call my home. I'm  
12 happy that my mom feels better. She's  
13 not stressed. She's not feeling bad.  
14 And I'm just really thankful that I can  
15 have a program like this that feels safe  
16 and people to call my friends. I've met  
17 a lot of people there through this  
18 shelter, the art program, and I'm really  
19 thankful for that.

20                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.  
21 Thank you very much. Thank you for  
22 coming today.

23                   Are there any questions for the  
24 panel?

25                   (No response.)

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2                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: I just want  
3       to make a comment. Because you could not  
4       have been better panelists today in  
5       talking about the Earned Income Tax  
6       Credit. Last year we left -- I'm saying  
7       this because this is serious stuff. Last  
8       year we left \$100 million in Washington,  
9       DC that could have gone to 40,000  
10      Philadelphians who qualify. You both got  
11      the checks, and those checks it sounds  
12      like were \$4,000 to \$5,000, which is  
13      phenomenal that you got them. Thank God  
14      you got them, because that helped you.

15                   What we're trying to do as  
16      Councilpeople and the Mayor and the  
17      Administration is to get the word out to  
18      so many Philadelphians who don't know  
19      about Earned Income Tax Credit, and the  
20      deadline is April 18th. And just so you  
21      know, you can file back three additional  
22      years on top of the year you filed for.  
23      So you want to check to see if you  
24      qualify for the current year, plus three  
25      more years.

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2                   But anyway, thank you for being  
3 here today. Thank you very much.

4                   (Thank you.)

5                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Can we call  
6 the next panel.

7                   THE CLERK: The second panel we  
8 have Rachel Falkove, Jeneen Whaley,  
9 Jeannine Lisitski, Marsha Cohen, and  
10 Allison Moore.

11                   Just make sure that everyone,  
12 when you get to the witness table, to  
13 speak into the microphone and say your  
14 name and where you're from first so that  
15 the stenographer can get that information  
16 on the record.

17                   Thank you.

18                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: I also want  
19 to mention Councilwoman Gym has joined  
20 us. Welcome. And Councilwoman Gym and  
21 Councilwoman Blackwell, huge advocates.  
22 Thank you very much. Thank you.

23                   (Witnesses approached witness  
24 table.)

25                   MS. LISITSKI: Good morning.

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2           My name is Jeannine Lisitski, Executive  
3           Director at Women Against Abuse, and I  
4           want to thank you for this opportunity.

5                     Domestic violence is a leading  
6           cause of homelessness. Approximately 90  
7           percent of homeless women have  
8           experienced severe abuse in their lives,  
9           and high post-traumatic stress symptoms  
10          have been identified as predictors of  
11          residential instability. In addition to  
12          the potential life and death needs for  
13          immediate safe shelter, almost all  
14          abusive relationships entail financial  
15          abuse, leaving victims without resources  
16          to establish safety as they're fleeing  
17          violence.

18                    Last year, the Philadelphia  
19          Domestic Violence Hotline answered more  
20          than 15,000 calls and, at the same time,  
21          had to deny over 14,000 requests for  
22          shelter due to a lack of space. For  
23          those turned away, our hotline counselors  
24          safety plan and offer other resources,  
25          but the reality is we don't know what

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happens to the majority of victims that cannot be placed, and it's likely that many are forced to return to an abusive home often with their children.

Identifying more resources on the front end of the system would mean increased options for victims seeking help. We do work with OHS to staff a domestic violence specialist within the City's Central Family Intake. The specialist provides advocacy for clients in the homeless system who are also experiencing domestic violence, and this includes safety planning with clients who are in the general City shelter when there's no room in our confidential safe havens. Unfortunately, without adequate training and support for the staff and robust security, the general emergency shelter system may not be the safest option. In fact, our specialist has worked with multiple clients whose abusers have found them in non-confidential locations.

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Shared Safety, Philadelphia's response to relational violence, is looking at alternative models to shelter, and additionally there's legal alternatives that allow the victim tenant to remain in their home while requiring the abuser to move out, and overwhelmingly we do hear from survivors that they want to stay in their homes if they can be safe there.

Thoughtful prevention programming could work for victims whose immediate safety threat has been ameliorated. Without identifying this underlying relational violence, even well-meaning diversion interventions could place a victim back in harm's way.

However, a more robust prevention system will support tailored interventions for survivors, alleviating the pressure on an overwhelmed system. We look forward to a more substantial program for our city and working to develop this prevention for victims of

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2           domestic violence.

3                   Thank you for your support to  
4           help make this a reality.

5                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you  
6           very much. Thank you.

7                   The next panelist.

8                   MS. MEDLEY: Good morning. My  
9           name is Nathea Medley and I am currently  
10          in a shelter. I've been in a shelter for  
11          14 months. It will be 15 months on the  
12          18th and -- I'm sorry.

13                   Being in a shelter and being  
14          homeless, I didn't ask for it. I've  
15          been -- since I was 13, I've been  
16          working. My aunt got sick. I'm the only  
17          one that had to take care of her, and I  
18          had to do what I had to do as far as, you  
19          know, a family hardship, and that caused  
20          my job, where I was working, you know, 80  
21          hours every two weeks. And it's just  
22          like, you know, do I work or do I take  
23          care of my family? And it's hard,  
24          because sometimes you have to choose  
25          between two things. It's like do you

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work or do you take care of your family?  
That's hard. And taking care of my aunt  
and working at the same time and then I  
also have an eight-year-old daughter,  
it's hard. It's hard. And then looking  
for programs and funding, it's hard.  
It's really, really hard.

So long story short, so I'm  
going to try to be very brief. Taking  
care of my aunt and I was also working, I  
wind up getting laid off, because I was  
spending too much time taking care of my  
aunt, which she passed away. After that,  
I'm living with family members, and then  
after a while, it's like, you know, I  
have no other choice. I have to go into  
the shelter system with an eight-year-old  
child, who never even experienced nothing  
like this, and I haven't even myself. So  
mentally, physically, it takes a toll on  
you.

In the shelter system it's  
like -- I've been there 15 months, almost  
15 months. I'm still here. And then

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they say, you know, sometimes the expectancy is six months to a year, but I'm still here. There's a lack of funding. There's a lack of people standing up and speaking for us. There's a lack of things that -- something needs to be done. Something really needs to be done. And it's not just me. I'm here speaking, but it's more people that's in this same situation that been in the shelter system for 15, 18, two years because of lack of funding, with children. So it's not even with the parents but the children.

My child is eight years old. She's been valedictorian since she's been in school. Her grades went extremely low, extremely low, and that hurts her self-confidence, her performance in school, her friends, her social life as an eight-year-old child. So now I have to work overtime as a mother and working and still living in the shelter and still trying to provide. It's very, very hard

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2           and it's very, very rough.

3                   But I do think that if there  
4           was more funding, more programs, more  
5           things that can be done for not just  
6           women and children but homelessness,  
7           period, because it's not just women and  
8           children. It's everyone. It could be  
9           you. It could be you. It could be  
10          anyone. You never know. It could be  
11          anybody. Nobody wakes up and say, I'm  
12          going to be homeless today. It don't  
13          happen like that. Most times something  
14          happen in your life where now you have a  
15          hardship and you have to rely on someone  
16          else. And it's okay if you're getting  
17          the proper help.

18                   And that's just me. I need  
19          help. I'm a single mother with a child  
20          that needs help.

21                   Thank you for your time.

22                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

23                   MS. MOORE: Hi. Good morning.

24          Allison Moore, the Vice President of the  
25          Southeast region for Valley Youth House.

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I'm also the mother of two little girls,  
and every day I'm reminded of the  
importance of children and youth having a  
safe, stable home where they can curl up  
in their own bed with no worries of scary  
things that happen at night in the dark  
and on the streets. I have benefited  
from programs that helped my family of  
teen parents to overcome some of the  
challenges that are going to be  
referenced throughout here today. And I  
want to speak on behalf of the thousands  
of young people ages 14 to 24 that I  
carry their stories here in Philadelphia.

In recent years, it was  
estimated that 1.7 million children and  
adolescents under the age of 18  
experience homelessness on an annual  
basis. This is in addition to the  
approximately 150,000 18 to 24-year-olds  
who are without a home. All of these  
young people are real and full of  
possibility. We have to see them and  
help them to match with homes of their

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2           own.

3                   I also want to thank everyone  
4           here today for listening and learning  
5           about the young people in Philadelphia  
6           who are striving to overcome poverty,  
7           housing instability, abuse, neglect, and  
8           discrimination. Each year, Valley Youth  
9           House serves approximately 1,700 young  
10          people ages 14 to 24 through emergency  
11          street outreach, independent living  
12          skills coaching and instructions,  
13          scattered site housing, and linkages to  
14          permanent connections. This is done  
15          through four housing programs, permanency  
16          services, and the Achieving Independence  
17          Center, a collaborative project sponsored  
18          by the Department of Human Services and  
19          managed by Valley Youth House. The AIC  
20          provides support and real-life tools for  
21          young adults transitioning from the  
22          foster care system to independent  
23          adulthood. There are not places like  
24          this for youth who are not in the foster  
25          care system currently in our city.

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2                   Additionally, The Synergy  
3       Project is tasked with reaching over  
4       3,000 youth through street outreach  
5       activities in Philadelphia this year.  
6       Our outreach workers, life skills  
7       counselors, and coaches teach youth how  
8       to access education and employment  
9       resources, budget and manage their money,  
10      learn tenants' rights, and ways to access  
11      public mainstream benefits to create an  
12      actionable plan out of poverty and  
13      challenging life circumstances. We need  
14      more places like this.

15                  Our ultimate goal is to have  
16      every vulnerable youth and young adult  
17      connected to a nurturing community and  
18      prevent them from entering or continuing  
19      the cycle of system involvement.

20                  I was recently in my office  
21      with one of our life skills counselors  
22      and there was a knock on the door, which  
23      is pretty typical. However, in this  
24      regular interruption, in popped a face I  
25      knew, but it was different now. The

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first time I saw Samantha's face 11 years ago showed anger, frustration, and mistrust. Now that face beamed with motivation and vibrancy. A confident woman stood before me. She's a proud mother of a teenage daughter whom she was headed to pick up from middle school. Samantha is now an entrepreneur with her own licensed janitorial company here in the City of Philadelphia. The trajectory of her life changed when she entered our program 11 years ago. Samantha identified a scattered site apartment, negotiated lease terms with her life skills counselor's help, and moved into a home with her child. She continued to receive rental and utility assistance while finishing her high school diploma.

There were many ups and downs throughout her participation in the program and in the years to come after our financial assistance ended. She still called the office, stopped in periodically for guidance, and struggled

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through young adulthood. She's now a 30-year-old woman who stands out in a crowd. She made it work. She and her daughter are among the many that have benefited from the connection to safe housing, financial resources, and caring adults who helped her to overcome what happened in her childhood.

When individuals like Samantha connect with people and places that care, the results are drastically different. Instead of being one in four who did not complete high school by the age of 24, they earn diplomas and go on to higher education and certification programs.

Across the United States, there's a 21 percent increase in the number of unaccompanied homeless youth attending public schools in the last few years. In Pennsylvania, it's reported that 26,000-plus children and youth have experienced homelessness in the past few years. This is unacceptable.

Most homeless students are

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couch surfing, moving from place to place without a permanent home and not staying in shelters or sleeping outdoors.

They're experiencing homelessness due to poverty, family alienation or disruption, and lack of other resources. In Pennsylvania, 64 percent of our homeless students live this way.

Here in Philadelphia, the number of unaccompanied homeless youth is the highest it's ever been. It's close to 6,000 young people and students that are experiencing this homelessness. In January of 2017 at our annual Youth Point in Time Count, we surveyed 196 individuals ages 24 and under. Nearly half of them had an episode of homelessness in the last three years. In 2016 in the first year of operation, The Synergy Project engaged 741 young people in need of housing resources. In the first two months of this year, the team already has encountered 234 young people through outreach services.

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2                   By engaging with youth and  
3   young adults before they're on the  
4   streets or quickly thereafter, there's a  
5   much greater likelihood of preventing  
6   them from being trafficked or falling  
7   into other destructive behaviors that  
8   result from their traumatic experiences.

9                   To truly make a change and end  
10   youth and family homelessness by 2020,  
11   prevention and intervention services for  
12   youth and young adults ages 14 to 24  
13   years old are crucial. We're working to  
14   combine the efforts of street outreach  
15   and permanency services teams so that  
16   young people can address the trauma and  
17   loss they've experienced while connecting  
18   them to caring, supportive adults in  
19   their existing networks to safe housing  
20   options. This risk reduction approach  
21   has been successful in diverting youth  
22   from system involvement, preventing youth  
23   from losing housing, and decreasing the  
24   episodes of homelessness.

25                  We hope that you'll take the

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time to consider this as an option. And it's our responsibility to make sure that we create a city that loves and cares for children, youth, and young adults. They need healthy families, safe housing, outstanding schools, and supportive communities to thrive in our city. On behalf of all the youth-serving providers, we are eager to continue to work with City Council and the Kenney Administration on these efforts, and I want to thank all of you City Councilmembers for your time today and interest in preventing homelessness.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.  
Thank you for your testimony.

I have a question. I first want to thank, by the way, Valley Youth House and Women Against Abuse for all the efforts you guys do. You do a great job.

But I have a question for you. Is it Jeannine Lisitski? In your testimony you said that you served 1,233 women, but 14,644 are turned away.

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2                   MS. LISITSKI: Yeah. I said  
3       that we -- on the hotline we serve over  
4       15,000 hotline calls. Not all of them  
5       need safe shelter. They need a variety  
6       of things, but the 14,000 number is a  
7       duplicated number. So the Philadelphia  
8       Domestic Violence Hotline Women Against  
9       Abuse operates about 67 percent of the  
10      time, but there's three other DV  
11      organizations that take part. So the  
12      turn-aways are cumulative among all and  
13      they're duplicated. So it's 14,000  
14      requests for safe shelter that couldn't  
15      be met. That includes adults and  
16      children.

17                  COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank  
18      you.

19                  And I have a question. Is it  
20      Nathea?

21                  MS. MEDLEY: Yes.

22                  COUNCILMAN DOMB: You're  
23      currently living in a shelter?

24                  MS. MEDLEY: Yes.

25                  COUNCILMAN DOMB: And do the

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2           people in the shelter have jobs or they  
3           don't have jobs?

4                   MS. MEDLEY: As far as living  
5           in the shelter? Yes, I have a job. I  
6           work full time.

7                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: What kind of  
8           work do you do?

9                   MS. MEDLEY: I work with  
10          children with special needs.

11                  COUNCILMAN DOMB: And are you  
12          familiar -- do you have children?

13                  MS. MEDLEY: Yes.

14                  COUNCILMAN DOMB: Are you  
15          familiar with the Earned Income Tax  
16          Credit?

17                  MS. MEDLEY: No, I'm not.

18                  COUNCILMAN DOMB: We have to  
19          make you familiar with that, because that  
20          is found money. How many children do you  
21          have?

22                  MS. MEDLEY: I just have one.

23                  COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. That's  
24          still great. You can get checks for  
25          \$4,000 to \$5,000, and you can file back

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2           three more years. So you may have just  
3           found some money coming to City Hall  
4           today. This is coming from the federal  
5           government. So we have to make sure that  
6           you're aware of that. So thank you  
7           and --

8                     MS. MEDLEY: Thank you. I  
9           appreciate that.

10                    COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you all  
11           for being here.

12                    MS. COHEN: I'm sorry. I'm  
13           still on the panel. There weren't enough  
14           seats.

15                    COUNCILMAN DOMB: Oh, okay.  
16           I'm sorry. Are you Marsha?

17                    MS. COHEN: I'm Marsha.

18                    Marsha Cohen from the Homeless  
19           Advocacy Project. For 20 years I've been  
20           there. We provide free civil legal  
21           services to homeless individuals and  
22           families, veterans, and youth aging out  
23           of foster care who are accessing shelter  
24           in 25 different locations and as well as  
25           overnight cafes and transitional housing

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facilities. We handle 50 civil different legal concerns, but we're actually known for three things. One, we get birth certificates for everybody who is in shelter who is attempting to exit or to get photo ID. We have a celebrated SOAR project in which we get rapid SSI benefits for anybody who is disabled or as an adult or a youth aging out of foster care. And we've been known for calling the Inquirer and threatening to sue the City of Philadelphia for not providing adequate shelter, which we are no longer doing.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

MS. COHEN: I just wanted to provide a little bit of historical perspective since I've been at the table for so long.

In 1999, when the City introduced the sidewalk behavior ordinance bill, there was a real reluctance amongst all of us advocates to come to the table and actually work with

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City Council as well as the Office of Supportive Services, or OESS at the time, Office of Homeless Services now. And Sister Mary Scullion and Gloria Guard really led us to the table to recognize that we as a society, all of us working together, could come up with solutions to help so many of our populations. And I think we've worked really nicely all together. We created domestic violence shelter in addition and we have identified needs together.

But we do need to acknowledge that right now the family shelter system is at an absolute crisis. Families cannot exit out the back door anymore. There's no affordable housing. There's no PHA housing that's available. And what this means is that the front door is closed. So right now we have more families than we have ever had who cannot access shelter.

I know, Councilwoman Blackwell,  
I know you know this well because the

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families come from your office and then they come to my office. And when you have a mom with three children who haven't eaten breakfast and don't know where they're going to have lunch and have no idea where they're going to spend the night, it starts to make everybody really crazy. And there are so many of these families who need services, either prevention or just a place to go.

We absolutely buy into the notion that creating additional shelter beds is not a way to solve the problem. If you build the shelter beds, they will come. Liz has convinced us of that very well. And I do think with this particular team under the Kenney Administration under Liz's leadership, under Eva's leadership, we have a great opportunity to really change the system and make a difference, but I urge you all, we need to do something, because we can't go on this way.

Thank you.

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2           COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

3           I want to take a moment and  
4       acknowledge two of my colleagues who have  
5       joined us, our Majority Leader,  
6       Councilman Bobby Henon to my right, and  
7       Councilman Mark Squilla. Thank you.

8           Our next panelist.

9           MS. WARNER: Good morning. My  
10      name is Shirley Warner. I'm here  
11      representing Episcopal Community Services  
12      and thousands of families that we have  
13      served in our Saint Barnabas Mission  
14      homeless shelter over the last 16 years.  
15      And I want to thank all of City Council  
16      and especially Ms. Jannie Blackwell for  
17      pulling this together for us and for all  
18      of you being here today.

19           Episcopal Community Services  
20      provides emergency and permanent  
21      supportive housing to families with  
22      children experiencing homelessness.  
23      Through its Saint Barnabas Mission,  
24      Episcopal Community Services provides  
25      intensive emergency housing. Families

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who enter the doors of Saint Barnabas and most other emergency family shelter services do so seeking shelter due to the City's limited prevention resources.

Throughout the City of Philadelphia, the reasons for needing homelessness prevention resources are as varied as the women and men who seek shelter services for their families. At least one, yet most often multiple, accounts of the following barriers impact a family's journey into a homelessness episode: substandard or unsafe housing; legal and illegal evictions; criminal histories, which makes it extremely difficult to obtain employment; poor credit histories; lack of jobs paying living wages; lack of quality educational and job training opportunities; landlord-tenant judgments. This prevents obtaining a lease even once a person has gained employment and may be able to afford to pay their rent. Because of outstanding landlord-tenant judgments,

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2       you're hard-pressed to find a quality  
3       landlord who is going to provide you with  
4       a lease.

5                   Exposure to acute and chronic  
6       trauma; intimate partner or domestic  
7       violence; losing their place to live as  
8       the result of the death or illness of a  
9       parent and/or another caregiver;  
10      experiencing a significant life change,  
11      like an accident or illness which renders  
12      them unable to maintain or obtain  
13      employment, and we've heard a lot of  
14      these barriers witnessed by our actual  
15      participants who we're either serving now  
16      in the system or who were formerly served  
17      in the system.

18                  People living with undiagnosed  
19      or untreated mental health and/or  
20      substance abuse challenges is another one  
21      of those barriers.

22                  On the prevention and diversion  
23      side, what can be done? Our participants  
24      most recently told us that the following  
25      would have prevented them from entering

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emergency housing or shelter: being gainfully employed; having assistance with utility arrearages and landlord-tenant judgments; having additional income sources other than SSI or TANF. Families who receive limited amount of child support, if they were able to even keep that limited amount of payments in addition to their TANF cash supports, would be a big assistance as well.

We may not all know it, but currently even when families receive even \$50 in child support payments, they do not actually get that. It really turns over to the Department of Welfare and they get their regular cash amount.

A mother or father with one child receiving TANF-only income will receive \$358 cash per month. We all know we cannot pay fair value market rent with that.

The ability to obtain a legal lease with a legal and legitimate

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landlord; working with reliable and  
trustworthy landlords; having quality  
affordable housing; housing supports that  
last longer than one or two years; and  
having support of family and friends.

The services and support  
needed: creation of a public-private  
partnership in the City of Philadelphia.  
We know that the private sector cannot do  
this alone, the public sector cannot do  
this alone, City Council cannot do it  
alone, the Office of Homeless Services  
cannot do it alone. We need a  
public-private partnership.

Access to high-quality, 24-hour  
childcare. We've heard parents today  
saying they work all different types of  
hours. The shelter system, homelessness  
prevention services is not a one-size  
fits all.

Brief time-limited financial  
support. And you have families who apply  
for SSI. They're going to be awarded  
SSI, but what do they need in the

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2           meantime? They often need brief  
3           financial support.

4                   Counseling services in-house,  
5           they need access to professional attire,  
6           and assistance with utilities and  
7           arrearages.

8                   Thank you.

9                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

10                   MS. FALKOVE: My name is Rachel  
11          Falkove. I'm Executive Director of  
12          Philadelphia Interfaith Hospitality  
13          Network, and I thank Councilwoman  
14          Blackwell for hosting this hearing and  
15          all of the Councilpeople who are here  
16          today.

17                   According to the Federal  
18          Reserve, there are only 33 affordable  
19          units in Philadelphia for every 100 very  
20          low-income families who need them. The  
21          wait for vouchers and PHA opportunities  
22          can now span 15 years, essentially a  
23          person's entire childhood. So what do  
24          families do in the meantime to manage  
25          market-rate rent? Well, they piece

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together extra jobs. They put a few bills at the bottom of the pile. They scrimp and they worry, and they scrimp on extracurricular activities for their children, and then something happens, one thing happens. It could be food stamp cuts, CCIS daycare cuts, a sick child, divorce, domestic violence, job loss. All of these will lead to this fragile house of cards to collapse, and it usually does. And at this point, when a family gets on the wrong side of the paycheck away -- and we're talking about people who are working full time making \$22,000, \$25,000 a year. At this point they need rapid coordinated services, but the coordinated services unfortunately are not there. They usually only take place once a family gets into the emergency housing system. And so this is a big piece of what prevention is about.

When a family gets their basic needs met, then they can manage the crises. They can think straight again.

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When they're not wandering around and driving in the car, as Andrea -- sleeping in the car, as Andrea described, or worrying about whether the heat is on or the lights are on in their house, as Nancy experienced, then their children can focus on school and they can make better decisions for themselves and their families.

I've been in this field a long time, and long enough to remember when there were shelters for every person accompanied by a child who showed up at the system for emergency care. In 2002, the average length of stay, at least in our program, was somewhere around two months. Now we feel very, very lucky if we can get a family out in ten months, and that's jumping through hoops and doing really creative things. We got Nancy out in six months, but that's because we created the Master Lease Program, and that's been very helpful to getting people out.

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2                   Shelter is not the solution.

3       We're not asking for more shelters. The  
4       average shelter stay, even if we're only  
5       looking not at -- I forget your name.  
6       I'm sorry. Nathea's stay, which is now  
7       14 or 15 months, but even if we just look  
8       at a six-month stay, I believe that the  
9       Office of Homeless Services estimates  
10      that that stay would cost approximately  
11      \$22,500 for a family of three.

12               Transitional housing, which is  
13      difficult to get into as well, is a  
14      little less, 16,000 for about the same  
15      period of time, six months. Usually  
16      transitional housing programs need to be  
17      longer because the people who need to be  
18      in them need longer amounts of time.

19               So we need some other solution  
20      to this problem. The solution that we  
21      came up with in terms of shallow rent,  
22      which is something that we did with both  
23      Nancy and Andrea where our congregations  
24      donated money to subsidize their rent, we  
25      really only subsidized them around 200 to

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2           300 a month. That is not -- that doesn't  
3           add up to a huge cost per year. Now  
4           they're paying market-rate rent in their  
5           house. At least Nancy is able to do it.  
6           Andrea is getting there.

7                        So we're looking at the  
8           difference between \$2,750 a month or,  
9           even if we're doing \$300 a month, at  
10          \$3,600 for the cost for a full 12 months  
11          of help as opposed to what would be  
12          42,000 or maybe even more in shelter.  
13          Yeah, 44,000 in shelter for the same  
14          length of time for a full year. It  
15          doesn't take a mathematician to do the  
16          homework.

17                       We need to be able to come up  
18          with solutions, especially for working  
19          people who are good parents, who don't  
20          need the shelter stay. It would be much  
21          more effective use of our dollars to put  
22          those dollars into very coordinated  
23          services and case management for these  
24          same families to help them get stronger  
25          and stronger.

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2                   So we're fortunate today to  
3       have -- you'll hear a little bit more  
4       later on from the Homebase program, and  
5       that's a program in New York that has  
6       basically been putting about \$2,000 per  
7       year into each of their families.

8                   Prevention does work. You  
9       said -- Councilman Domb, I believe it was  
10      you, or maybe it was Councilman Henon  
11      when he was here -- that an ounce of  
12      prevention is worth a pound of cure. Ben  
13      Franklin was a very wise man. I think we  
14      need to start paying attention to him.

15                  I do want to read one quick  
16      anecdote from the Saint Vincent de Paul  
17      Society working with our program. They  
18      put a very modest amount of money into  
19      one of the families. And I think that --  
20      this was a family that was referred to  
21      Senator Art Haywood, State Senator Art  
22      Haywood's office, and I'm sure that you  
23      have lots of families coming to your  
24      doors as Councilpeople who need  
25      constituent services to be able to help

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2           them remain stable in their homes. And  
3           it's really hard to find those services  
4           out there, those coordinated services and  
5           the little bit of money that it takes to  
6           get -- targeted funds to get a family  
7           over the hump.

8                        So this is something that  
9           happened with a faith-based partnership.  
10          A woman in her mid 30's with two young  
11          children was being faced with eviction as  
12          she was two months behind in her rent.  
13          Despite being disabled with carpal tunnel  
14          syndrome and having numerous health  
15          problems, she was still working two jobs  
16          to try to catch up, but she was just not  
17          getting there.

18                       We worked with our agency, with  
19          PIHN, and I suggested that we contact  
20          someone in Senator Art Haywood's office  
21          to help figure out some Social Security  
22          issues that the woman was having. So  
23          actually the woman came through the  
24          church, I'm sorry, to ask for help, and  
25          then we got them help through Senator Art

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2           Haywood's office. Gail from his office  
3           was able to do that and was a huge help.  
4           So she got some of her Social Security  
5           issues worked out.

6                     We continued to work with the  
7           woman, talked with her landlord, and we  
8           were able to pay her back rent and keep  
9           her in her apartment. She was very, very  
10          appreciative as we, with the help of PIHN  
11          and Senator Haywood's office, were able  
12          to keep her and her family in their  
13          house.

14                    So the point that Shirley made  
15          just earlier about a public-private  
16          partnership, it's a very serious thing.  
17          Faith-based organizations, we can do this  
18          work, all of us together, but we do have  
19          to work smarter and use our dollars in a  
20          more appropriate way.

21                    Thank you very much for your  
22          help.

23                    COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

24          Thank you very much.

25                    I'd like to recognize

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2           Councilman Squilla.

3                   COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.

4                   I have a quick question, and I  
5           think you're right on on this. Seeing  
6           with our Shared Spaces what the City is  
7           doing with looking to get help from  
8           public partners and private partners  
9           together, I think that's the only way to  
10          really make a dent in this. We have  
11          great opportunities now.

12                   I think it's so much more  
13          visible now, the issue of homelessness  
14          and the people that are out there, and  
15          even with our opioid epidemic and what  
16          that also has created. But I think this  
17          is the perfect opportunity to bring these  
18          new ideas to the forefront, and I think  
19          we will have people willing to help us as  
20          a city out and also the agencies to be  
21          able to get resources necessary to do  
22          programs just like that where it's not  
23          just going to a shelter or to maybe  
24          transitional housing, but be able to keep  
25          people into affordable rentals. And I

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2           think it's a great idea what you guys  
3           have set forth, and looking forward to  
4           continuing that.

5                     MS. FALKOVE: Councilman  
6           Squilla, I'm glad that you brought this  
7           up, especially about how we're going to  
8           fund these issues. Actually, the Family  
9           Service Provider Network is asking for \$3  
10          million from the General Fund just to  
11          strengthen the current system that we  
12          have for the families who unfortunately  
13          are stuck in it and need to be there  
14          until they have a place to go. But there  
15          are dollars that are flexible dollars.  
16          The money that the Office of Homeless  
17          Services manages is largely money that's  
18          coming from HUD. That's not  
19          discretionary money. They have to spend  
20          it the way that it's allocated to them.

21                     So we're asking for Council to  
22          consider asking for \$3 million from the  
23          Housing Trust Fund to be put towards  
24          prevention. And then later on today,  
25          you'll hear from our friends from PACDC

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about the need to double the Housing Trust Fund and come up with ways to do that. That's where the flexible money is, and that's really where we have to be looking if we want to get creative with solutions.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And I would say that I also agree with that, and I think even though there was a controversial development that happened earlier in the year or last year, it was a great opportunity to put some money into the Housing Trust Fund because of the affordable housing bonus. So the bonus was either used by adding a percentage of housing for affordable or there's a monetary value associated with that that could then go into the Housing Trust Fund. And I think with our new developers that we're speaking to, it's a great opportunity to get additional dollars that way too. We just have to make them aware of it. Also see -- in the developers' mindset, if they could

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2           see that they could actually make a  
3           little more money. But not everybody is  
4           like that, because some think, All right,  
5           I'm doing a good thing also, I could  
6           provide affordable housing for the people  
7           in need and also a great development for  
8           the City of Philadelphia. So I think  
9           it's us as Council and members of the  
10          City to also push that agenda forward to  
11          then grow that pot.

12                   We just recently got \$3 million  
13          put into that money, which doesn't sound  
14          like a lot, but it's a start. So if  
15          we --

16                   MS. FALKOVE: Three million  
17          dollars is a lot of money.

18                   COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: But it's a  
19          start, and instead of having 20 units in  
20          a new development, which would be great,  
21          really I think we could do a lot more  
22          with the dollars.

23                   MS. FALKOVE: Three million  
24          dollars would get us at least 750  
25          families out of the shelter system, not

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2           coming into the shelter system. Three  
3           million dollars would get 750 families  
4           housed at a very high price of \$4,000 per  
5           family. It might be able to be done even  
6           for less.

7                   COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Well, I  
8           think we're heading in that direction,  
9           and I know we'll be hearing from Liz and  
10          some of the Administration afterwards  
11          too. I believe they're doing a great job  
12          and really looking at all aspects of  
13          homelessness, because, I mean, there's so  
14          many different issues that are out there  
15          and I think they're trying to grapple at  
16          all of these and coming up with a  
17          citywide policy with something that I  
18          think we needed for a long time, and I  
19          believe by the end of this year, we'll  
20          have one. So looking forward to that  
21          information too.

22                   MS. FALKOVE: Well, thank you  
23          very much.

24                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,  
25          Councilman Squilla. Great points.

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2                   I'd like to recognize  
3       Councilwoman Gym.

4                   COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you  
5       very much, Mr. Chair. I really  
6       appreciate it, and I really appreciate  
7       all the advocates who are here. Thank  
8       you very much for all the work that  
9       you've been doing and how hard you're  
10      pushing on this issue.

11                  So I think I had a couple of  
12      questions. One, I'm really glad that we  
13      were able to work with Office of Homeless  
14      Services to try and direct more money  
15      into youth homelessness services to try  
16      and think through some things. We are  
17      going to -- it's not an end. It's just a  
18      beginning to how we evolve our  
19      distribution and thinking about resources  
20      that are going to this issue.

21                  I also think that it's an  
22      important process to think through things  
23      beyond PHA, beyond our emergency  
24      shelters. We do have a significant  
25      issue, however, with vulnerable families

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2           being turned out onto a private market as  
3           well, and in particular, I'm sure folks  
4           are familiar with TURN and some of the  
5           work that they've been doing to ensure  
6           that -- we do have a lot of substandard  
7           housing. I mean, part of the issue is is  
8           that affordable housing and affordable  
9           rent are often because the housing  
10          themselves are substandard, and we need a  
11          lot of help with thinking through how  
12          we're going to improve those things  
13          within a private market when the  
14          resources overwhelmingly seem to be, in  
15          the legal aspect, seem to be  
16          overwhelmingly on the side of a landlord  
17          as opposed to a tenant.

18                 So I'm wondering if any of you  
19           can talk a little bit about how eviction  
20           and substandard housing contribute to the  
21           homelessness crisis directly or  
22           indirectly. I know it may not be a  
23           straight shot from eviction to  
24           homelessness, but I'd be interested in  
25           hearing your experiences around eviction

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2           and substandard housing in particular.

3           And concurrently if you can talk a little  
4           bit about what role you think that legal  
5           services that help prevent eviction might  
6           play a role in terms of prevention.

7                     MS. COHEN: I'll start. Okay?

8                     MS. FALKOVE: Go ahead.

9                     MS. COHEN: So just because we  
10          do legal services, and I commend you for  
11          scheduling the hearing for next week when  
12          we will explore this further.

13                    We know all the time because  
14          there's no representation for poor people  
15          in Landlord-Tenant Court, we have so many  
16          families that are being put out that  
17          should not be put out, who could maintain  
18          and could stay in their housing but for  
19          not having the representation available  
20          to them.

21                    COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Do you have  
22          any numbers?

23                    MS. COHEN: We actually do. So  
24          we have compiled all the numbers and  
25          we --

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2                   COUNCILWOMAN GYM: I'm sure  
3       you'll be speaking to that at our  
4       hearing.

5                   MS. COHEN: Yes. So we have  
6       put together a very thorough statement of  
7       the number of evictions that occurred  
8       last year and the numbers that were  
9       represented, and that is coming to you  
10      very shortly in advance of the hearing  
11      next week.

12                  COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Great.  
13      Thank you.

14                  MS. FALKOVE: Yeah. I think we  
15      should have a hearing about this next  
16      week.

17                  There's going to be an eviction  
18      hearing -- a hearing right here a week  
19      from today --

20                  COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes.

21                  MS. FALKOVE: -- on eviction.

22                  We definitely have families who  
23      are impacted very, very strongly, not  
24      just by eviction but about the threat of  
25      eviction. So Andrea who spoke today was

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not really officially evicted. The landlord filed for eviction and then she caught up on her rent. Then he asked her to leave, and the eviction is still on her record even though she was caught up in her rent. And then she goes to find an apartment and the only thing that's available to her is something that's very substandard, and it's substandard -- it was so substandard that she ended up in her car.

It's like we're tying people's hands behind their back when they could be holding onto a pole that's preventing them from falling off the cliff, you know. And so they just get pushed off the cliff. It's really impacting our families.

I'm actually master leasing an apartment -- our organization is master leasing an apartment this week for somebody who really doesn't need it. She had a similar story where several years ago during a period where her husband

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walked out the door and she lost her job,  
that she fell two months behind in her  
rent. She got another job. This is  
somebody who went to college, became an  
LPN, had lived in our program a long time  
ago, but really got herself together and  
is now making a \$42,000 a year income,  
and she went to rent an apartment and the  
filing for the eviction was on her record  
and, therefore, she could not get an  
apartment. And actually Saint Vincent de  
Paul group is helping her get -- because  
the landlord required a four-month  
deposit, not first, last, and security,  
but first, second, last, and security,  
\$3,600 to get a \$900-a-month apartment.  
And so I said, forget it, you know, we'll  
just master lease it and you'll pay us.  
But they still want four months deposit.

So a family that really has no  
reason to be in this kind of stress and  
to have limited housing options otherwise  
has limited housing options because there  
was a filing, not even an actual closing

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2           out the family from their house.

3                   COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And that's  
4           actually on the record, on the formal  
5           record?

6                   MS. FALKOVE: It doesn't go  
7           away.

8                   COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Why is that?

9                   MS. COHEN: So once there's an  
10          eviction, it goes on to somebody's credit  
11          record. So we'll spend thousands of  
12          hours clearing up old rent arrears so  
13          that a landlord would then remove it from  
14          somebody's credit history.

15                  MS. WARNER: And I want to add  
16          to what we're saying here, and I do  
17          concur with what has been said. It also  
18          impacts families in terms of PHA. We  
19          work with families that also have  
20          landlord-tenant evictions, and you can't  
21          go into PHA with that. That amount has  
22          to be cleared up. So we worked with a  
23          family a couple of years ago who was in  
24          shelter. We did not know she had the  
25          landlord-tenant eviction unfortunately

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until her application came up to PHA. So in order for her to even do the appeals process, fortunately she had saved some money in shelter and our shelter had some funding through one of those alternative sources. It wasn't tied into HUD, it was donor given. So we were able to have her take \$500 of her own savings. We put 1,500 towards it. Then she entered into an agreement with the landlord through his attorney. That allowed her to get her appeal with PHA, and from that point on, she had to prove that she was paying \$25 a month towards that previous cost that she had incurred.

But this happens over and over. It happens thousands of times. We see many families who are coming into shelter who were evicted and they come straight to shelter.

I worked with a mom last year. She was working for United Parcel Service. In one of those snow/ice storms, she fell, hurt her wrist,

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2           couldn't go back to work. She was  
3           evicted. It really is -- we are tying  
4           people's hands behind their back.

5                   COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Well, I know  
6           we're going to have a hearing on that. I  
7           just kind of wanted to think through that  
8           a little bit.

9                   I had a couple of other  
10          questions, to the extent that you can  
11          answer these. Do you feel like  
12          immigrants and limited English families  
13          are -- how are they represented in  
14          families that experience homelessness,  
15          and do you have any suggestions on how we  
16          can address and mitigate this? Because  
17          obviously in this room, we're incredibly  
18          privileged merely by the fact that we  
19          speak English, but for those families who  
20          do not -- have your services had any kind  
21          of assessment about non-English speaking  
22          families in the City?

23                   MS. COHEN: So we don't see it  
24          very often, other than Spanish speaking,  
25          but I know HIAS and NSC are working very

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2           closely with those families, and they are  
3           scheduled to testify next week.

4                   MS. FALKOVE: Actually, I  
5           attended a program with the immigrant  
6           services yesterday, and one of the ideas  
7           that we were talking about was the idea  
8           of the master lease as being a solution  
9           to their problem, because they may not  
10          necessarily be able to -- they don't have  
11          any credit when they first come here, you  
12          know, and so it's hard to get an  
13          apartment if you don't have credit. So  
14          we would probably need to develop a very  
15          modest risk pool so that whatever agency  
16          sponsored them wouldn't be left on the  
17          hook if the family was unable to pay  
18          their rent after a certain period of  
19          time. But the answers are not going to  
20          come from the public -- it's not going to  
21          come from the public housing market. It  
22          takes too long to get that help. So the  
23          answers have to come through  
24          private-public partnerships.

25                   COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And I know

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2           that this is an area that we're still  
3           trying to better understand. I think  
4           that that's really clear, but thank you.

5                     And I think all of you have  
6           done an excellent job in terms of talking  
7           about how we need more resources devoted  
8           to this issue, but could you offer any  
9           advice or direction in terms of whether  
10          there's a need to coordinate better among  
11          the existing departments or better usage  
12          of -- obviously we know about the Housing  
13          Trust Fund. Are there better ways that  
14          we can help individuals navigate the  
15          resources and the programs that are  
16          currently available to them?

17                    MS. WARNER: Absolutely. There  
18          was a time when Philadelphia -- we were  
19          sort of headed in a little better  
20          direction with resources. There had  
21          previously been a public-private  
22          partnership way back in the Goode  
23          Administration. And more recently, the  
24          City of Philadelphia was, through the  
25          Division of Social Services, trying to do

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better coordinated efforts. I know the Office of Homeless Services is working on coordinated intake and entry and trying to be more coordinated about diversion and where people go. However, at this point, we do not have the School District of Philadelphia, the Department of Public Welfare. I'm not quite sure where PHA is at this time in supporting homelessness prevention in the City of Philadelphia, but if we could get some -- and the criminal justice system. So we have people who have assault charges, even simple assault charges, who are having trouble getting a job. We have mentioned the landlord-tenant evictions. We have to have more resources besides the Homeless Advocacy Project working on behalf of these families and individuals.

We do know that there's people illegally evicted. They have no idea -- they don't even know how to exist. They don't know where to go. So there really needs to just be better coordination

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2           among services in Philadelphia.

3                       We have families in shelter who  
4           want to go to school. Why is it that  
5           some of the welfare offices will approve  
6           for people to go to school for education;  
7           others have to go and do the  
8           20-hour-a-week volunteer service that  
9           does not lead them to a job? So the  
10          services that we do have and the  
11          coordination that we do have is not fair,  
12          it's not equitable, and it's not  
13          coordinated.

14                      MS. COHEN: I would just say I  
15          think it's been a great first step that  
16          OSH and DHS and the other agencies are  
17          serving together, with Eva as the head,  
18          because there needs to be coordination  
19          between at least those two departments.

20                      MS. FALKOVE: There's also  
21          coordination on the community level, and  
22          I just want to draw attention to an  
23          effort that's taking place in Councilman  
24          Henon's district and in the Greater  
25          Northeast, which is that the social

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service agencies, all of us who actually  
traditionally compete with one another  
for the same dollars, they are now  
getting together in a coalition called  
NEST, Northeast something or other.  
Whoops. What is it? Services Team.  
Northeast Services Team. And this is an  
organization that on the local level  
brings together some of the programs  
funded by all of the departments that  
Shirley just mentioned and some of the  
faith-based programs and some of the  
private social service agencies. I think  
that we need to work more economically,  
but we need to also work more  
efficiently. And, you know, I'm glad to  
say that the Family Services Provider  
Network, we play very nicely with each  
other. We are in competition for the  
same funds, but we're all here today and  
we're all working together, and we often  
share resources, and that's really  
important. It has to come not just from  
the outside world, but it also has to

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2           come from the agencies.

3                   COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you  
4           very much for all of your work.

5                   (Thank you.)

6                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,  
7           Councilwoman Gym. Excellent questions.  
8           Thank you.

9                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:  
10          Mr. Chairman?

11                  COUNCILMAN DOMB: Councilwoman  
12          Blackwell. Yes.

13                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Let me  
14          note -- and Councilwoman Gym has been to  
15          the meetings, as all of you know, for  
16          immigrants. We have the Mayor's  
17          Commission on African and Caribbean  
18          Immigrant Affairs for almost 12 years and  
19          Echoes of Africa since 2000. So we meet  
20          monthly, and just last Wednesday -- so  
21          every meeting we spend part of the  
22          meeting on the immigration issue. So  
23          Africom and ACANA on Chester Avenue are  
24          groups and, as you said, these groups  
25          work well together.

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2                   So we do have some resources  
3       there for people. And as you said, we  
4       certainly need more, and people are  
5       really worried. And we just heard this  
6       past week about a family, the father  
7       dropped the children off and then he was  
8       taken away. It's horrible what's  
9       happening with immigration right now, and  
10      so we're happy to work any way we can too  
11      with you all on that specific issue as  
12      well.

13                   Thank you, Councilwoman.

14                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,  
15      Councilwoman Blackwell.

16                   And thank you to the panel for  
17      your testimony today. Thanks for being  
18      here.

19                   MS. COHEN: Thank you.

20                   MS. WARNER: Thank you.

21                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Can we call  
22      the next panel.

23                   THE CLERK: The next panel, we  
24      have Liz Hersh, Anne Fadullon, Daniel  
25      Farrell, Steve Culbertson, and Rachel

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2           Steinig.

3                   (Witnesses approached witness  
4           table.)

5                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Good morning.

6                   MS. HERSH: Good morning.

7                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Liz, you want  
8           to start?

9                   MS. HERSH: Sure.

10                  Good morning, everybody.

11           Councilwoman Blackwell, thank you very  
12           much for sponsoring this important  
13           resolution and prompting this hearing.

14                  Councilman Domb, thank you so  
15           much as Chair of the Committee. And to  
16           the other Councilmembers here and  
17           listening in their offices attentively,  
18           I'm quite sure, thank you very much for  
19           paying attention to this important issue.

20                  I would like to acknowledge the  
21           leadership of Joe Willard from People's  
22           Emergency Center and Rachel Falkove from  
23           the Interfaith Hospitality Network, who  
24           have organized and lead the Family  
25           Service Providers Network, who have

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provided a consistent and growing voice  
for the needs and interests of  
particularly homeless families.

With street homelessness  
getting so much attention, it's easy to  
forget that they are just the tip of the  
iceberg and that most of the people who  
experience homelessness in our city are  
in fact children and they are either  
living doubled up with other families in  
cars or with other people or they're in  
our emergency housing or transitional  
housing system. So I appreciate this  
opportunity to bring to light their  
struggles.

I also want to thank those who  
bravely shared their experiences of  
having experienced homelessness or still  
experiencing homelessness in one of our  
many programs or a shelter or who have  
struggled to find services, because  
that's really what it's all about.

I think that you have heard  
some of the most important testimony

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already, so let me just tell you briefly what we are doing and what the system is currently set up to do, which, as I think you have heard, is inadequate. Certainly some people are being helped, thankfully.

In FY16, there was a little over \$400,000 in Community Services Block Grant dollars. These are federal dollars. And about 700 people were served.

I'm going to make sure I'm getting these numbers right. I have Bruce Johnson here who oversees this program.

We also got about \$595,000 from the City's Housing Trust Fund, and that money is more flexible than the CSBG funding and served about 300 people. And then we were able to identify about \$100,000 in City General Funds and served an additional 70 people last year, and those funds are used for eviction prevention, short-term rental assistance, debt. A lot of times people come into

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the shelters who have debt from -- which is very common when you're very low income. You end up with debt because you can't pay all of your bills, so utility debt, past agreements with landlords to pay off their rents, that sort of thing. So we were able to help about 70 people with some kinds of debt.

So that's our current state of the homelessness prevention. In total in the last two years, we helped about 1,500 families through CSBG and about 600 families, all in, through the Housing Trust Fund.

We know that about 6,000 people sign in to our Emergency Assistance Unit, which is up behind Einstein near Broad and Olney, and we know that of all of those who sign in, that we're able to help about 800. And that doesn't count all the people who come to the front door of the shelter system.

In addition to those funds, while we are certainly resource strapped

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2           and the system is not the way I think  
3           everybody would like it to be, we have  
4           hired focused strategies to look at the  
5           entire family service system and see if  
6           there are ways that we could reconfigure  
7           our funding, the funds that we do have,  
8           to have greater impact, to provide more  
9           flexible financial assistance, as you've  
10          heard today that the providers and the  
11          families need, but at this point, we  
12          don't want to take beds offline. So we  
13          feel a little bit like we're between a  
14          rock and a hard place. So we've brought  
15          in, with the consultation of the  
16          providers, the input, a national expert  
17          to help us look at our service match.

18                 We're also developing a pilot  
19          shallow rent program through the Health  
20          and Human Services Cabinet to see if  
21          there are other models like the Master  
22          Lease Program that Interfaith Hospitality  
23          Network is doing.

24                 We're implementing coordinated  
25          entry, which is a really significant

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system's transformation effort.

Currently, the way the system resources are allocated is that it's first come, first served, and whoever is in the system the longest gets first access to housing, and we think that's not the best way to do it. We think that allocation of services should be based on need and risk.

So we're in the process of assessing everyone who comes -- over time assessing everyone who comes into the system and doing a better job, we hope, to match what people need with the services that they get.

And we are expanding our rapid rehousing program. We've all heard about Housing First. This is all Housing First that you're hearing about.

When we developed this system of shelters 30 years ago when modern homelessness began, I don't think any of us thought that it would last this long, and we thought, oh, we'll build shelters

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2           because people can't be outside exposed  
3           to the elements, and I don't think any of  
4           us intended that that was going to be the  
5           model of helping homeless families.

6                     Our shelters are wonderful.  
7           You've heard from some of the providers  
8           today. They're really nurturing places,  
9           but the fact that people have to become  
10          homeless to get those services is very  
11          destructive to children. Sometimes  
12          there's no choice -- and to families.  
13          Sometimes there's no choice, but I think  
14          the challenge for us is how can we  
15          transform the system over time by working  
16          together to have a lighter touch to give  
17          people what they need when they need it,  
18          without having to come into the shelter  
19          system to get the help they need.

20                    And so to me, this opportunity  
21          is significant, because it's the  
22          beginning of a very important  
23          conversation about a person-centered  
24          system that meets people where they are  
25          and can perhaps prevent the disruption

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2           that happens to families when the only  
3           option for them is to actually become  
4           homeless.

5                        So we're really looking forward  
6           to working with you, with the providers  
7           to come up with some innovative solutions  
8           to try some new things, to replicate  
9           Homebase on a pilot basis, to perhaps  
10          expand on the model of master leasing,  
11          which has, I think, really awesome  
12          implications and could be something that  
13          could be expanded, and we welcome the  
14          opportunity to work with everybody within  
15          the system to prevent homelessness and to  
16          shorten shelter stays and help families  
17          especially get back on their feet again  
18          in their own home and to achieve the  
19          progress that we've heard from some of  
20          the children and parents where life is  
21          better for them once they have a stable  
22          place to live.

23                       Thank you.

24                       COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

25                       Thank you very much.

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2           Our next panelist.

3           MR. FARRELL: Again, like I  
4       said earlier, I want to thank  
5       Councilwoman Blackwell, Councilwoman Gym,  
6       Councilman Domb for hosting this hearing  
7       today. My name is Daniel Farrell, Senior  
8       Vice President of Homeless Prevention and  
9       Rehousing Services for HELP USA. We're a  
10      national non-profit of homeless and  
11      housing and prevention rehousing  
12      services. We serve tens of thousands of  
13      clients annually, nationally providing  
14      transitional housing, permanent  
15      supportive housing, and homeless  
16      prevention in five states and multiple  
17      cities. Currently, Philadelphia and New  
18      York are our biggest markets.

19           As I mentioned earlier, in a  
20      civil society, we strive to prevent  
21      outcomes that are detrimental to both  
22      individuals and the group alike -  
23      smoking, car crashes, diabetes, house  
24      fires, heart disease, drug addiction, et  
25      cetera, but not homelessness. And once

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the incidence of homelessness occurs, as with any of these other negative social outcomes, it's much harder for the family and the system to respond adequately.

Homelessness affects millions of Americans annually. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, an estimated 550,000 people experienced literal homelessness nationally on any given night in 2016. They also estimate that approximately 1.5 million Americans used a homeless shelter. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, the number of people who experience at least one episode of homelessness in a given year may be as high as 3.5 million. However, homelessness nationwide has actually decreased over 13 percent from 2010 to 2016, thanks in part to President Obama's progressive American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the ARRA Act of 2009, which allocated funds for homeless prevention activities for a three-year period. However, despite recent national

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success, in Pennsylvania homelessness has increased over 5 percent since 2010.

So how do we tackle what amounts to a perfect storm for at-risk Philadelphians given Philadelphia's high rate of poverty and rapidly changing housing environment? Of course, that's prevention.

While prevention efforts are the norm when it comes to smoking, teenage pregnancy, obesity, et cetera, it is not yet the norm when it comes to tackling homeless here in the United States. Prevention programs have proven inexpensive and effective in certain American localities as well as in counties like Germany and England. In 2009, the federal government invested in homeless prevention in the ARRA Act. Due to these efforts, the estimated number of homeless people leveled off nationally early on and then actually declined, as I mentioned, at a time when homelessness should have risen given the economic

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crisis that the country was facing at that time. However, after the initial success with the 2009 legislation, the federal government has not reinvested in homeless prevention since 2012, leaving cities and localities to fund these efforts on their own.

So how do we prevent homelessness? In addition to the work my organization does in veterans housing and shelter services nationwide, we also operate prevention and rehousing services in New York City through a program called Homebase. Homebase was launched in 2004 as an alternative to shelter. The program was designed under the assumption that targeted community-based housing stabilization services can be an effective tool for preventing and rapidly ending episodes of homelessness. This alternative paradigm involves identifying and engaging people who are experiencing housing instability and then working with them to change their trajectory before

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2           their housing situation reaches a crisis  
3           point.

4                     Homebase interventions are  
5           different for every family, but often  
6           include things like landlord mediation,  
7           benefits advocacy, counseling, employment  
8           and training, legal assistance and in  
9           some ways, most importantly, short-term  
10          financial assistance.

11                    HELP USA's Homebase programs  
12          have made a real difference for  
13          low-income families in New York City. We  
14          have operated Homebase in New York for 13  
15          years starting in 2004. For example, in  
16          FY15, we served 4,365 unduplicated family  
17          units in the Bronx. The existing  
18          research on homeless prevention  
19          approximates that 10 to 20 percent of  
20          these families served by Homebase would  
21          have become homeless and potentially  
22          entered the shelter system if not for the  
23          prevention intervention. So if we take a  
24          conservative estimate, that mean HELP's  
25          Homebase program kept close to 600

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2           families from becoming homeless. That's  
3           600 families who would have otherwise  
4           become homeless.

5                     In addition to this efficacy,  
6           Homebase saves money. The cost to house  
7           a family in a New York shelter where the  
8           average length of stay is 13 months is  
9           approximately \$41,000. Estimating that  
10          587 families would have become homeless  
11          without the intervention and subtracting  
12          our annual budget of about \$8 million,  
13          Homebase saved New York City taxpayers  
14          roughly \$13 million.

15                    The positive outcomes of our 13  
16          years as a Homebase provider in New York  
17          City clearly illustrates the impact and  
18          success of homeless prevention services  
19          and amounts to significant savings to the  
20          city and for people who otherwise would  
21          have become homeless.

22                    Lastly, as a point of contrast,  
23          New York City is five times larger than  
24          Philadelphia, but invests over 60 times  
25          the amount of resources that Philadelphia

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has for homeless prevention activities.

These efforts have helped to increase housing stability for thousands of New Yorkers for a fraction of the cost of shelter. It is time for Philadelphia to make the same investment in homeless prevention.

And, lastly, as Nathea, Andrea, and Nancy have said, they've had to make the difficult kind of Sophie's choice as it relates to housing, making detrimental financial choices that negatively affect their housing. With a light touch, small intervention at the crest of the housing crisis, small intervention can make a big difference.

Thank you.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

I have a question, quick question for you. Homebase is in New York right now, right?

MR. FARRELL: Correct.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: What do you think it costs roughly per person? I see

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2           this total savings, the aggregate, but  
3           I'm curious about the individual cost  
4           savings.

5                     MR. FARRELL: When you add the  
6           math, our families -- for each family  
7           costs about \$1,850 per family.

8                     COUNCILMAN DOMB: Per year?

9                     MR. FARRELL: Per year.

10                    COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

11                    I'd like to recognize  
12           Councilman Henon.

13                    COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,  
14           Mr. Chair.

15                    COUNCILMAN DOMB: I'm sorry  
16           about that.

17                    COUNCILMAN HENON: I'll defer  
18           until the panels finish with their  
19           testimony.

20                    COUNCILMAN DOMB: We have our  
21           last testimony on the panel.

22                    MS. PILOT: Thank you so much.  
23           My name is Nadira Pilot. I am a  
24           Philadelphia Commissioner. I'm here  
25           today representing Commissioner Rachel

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Steinig, who is also a Philadelphia Commissioner and also Vice Chair of the Commission.

The LGBTQ community is a community that experiences problems socially, academically, mentally, and physically. These four factors can lead to the suffering of those without a home due to their sexual orientation.

Homelessness is a serious problem for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. The creation of a homelessness prevention program that includes assessment of the factors that lead LGBTQ youth to experience homelessness at a disproportionate rate could potentially reduce the number of LGBTQ youth who do experience homelessness.

According to the True Colors Fund, a non-profit working to end homelessness among LGBTQ youth in America, up to 1.6 million youth experience homelessness each year. The

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statistics for lesbian, gay, bisexual,  
and transgender homeless youth are even  
more shocking, as the group represents up  
to 40 percent, 40 percent all young  
people experiencing homelessness.  
Considering that the LGBTQ youth  
represent an estimated 7 percent of the  
total youth population, these numbers are  
disproportionately high. While even a  
single young person without a home is one  
too many, the disparity of LGBTQ youth  
experiencing homelessness is  
unfathomable.

Once they are out of their  
homes, LGBTQ youth are even more  
vulnerable. They are at a greater risk  
for victimization, unsafe sexual  
practices, and mental health issues that  
non-LGBTQ young people experience every  
day in homelessness.

The U.S. Department of Housing  
and Urban Development has created an  
LGBTQ youth homelessness initiative.  
Explain: To help address the

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overrepresentation of LGBTQ youth among youth experiencing homelessness, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD, is leading the first-of-its-kind Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative to identify successful strategies to ensure that no young person is left without a home because of their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

The initiative began with two pilot communities that develop local community-wide prevention plans, which they started implementing in fall 2014. These plans include strategies to prevent LGBTQ youth from becoming homeless and intervene as early as possible if they do become homeless. The initiative goals are to, one, facilitate better local collaboration between stakeholders working with youth and family, including local child welfare, education, and law enforcement agencies; runaway and

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2       homelessness youth providers; LGBTQ  
3       organizations; and other local  
4       stakeholders; and, two, help federal  
5       agencies and local communities learn more  
6       about implementing community-wide  
7       strategies for preventing homelessness  
8       for LGBTQ youth at risk of becoming  
9       homeless and intervening early when it  
10      occurs.

11                 The two pilot community plans  
12      include objectives and activities  
13      intended to accomplish the following:

14                 One, facilitate greater  
15      community awareness of issues  
16      contributing to LGBTQ homelessness and  
17      local efforts to address these issues.

18                 Two, facilitate greater local  
19      collaboration and systems change among  
20      stakeholders to bridge gaps through  
21      expanded communication and sharing of  
22      better practices.

23                 Three, improve the quality and  
24      use of data on sexual orientation and  
25      gender identity.

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Four, improve understanding about risk and protective factors for homelessness, and related tools for screening and assessing youth.

Five, improve the quality of interventions to prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness.

Six, develop and disseminate new resources and implement programs - mentoring, family conflict resolution - to address particular youth needs.

Seven, foster more affirming experiences for the LGBTQ youth in the systems and among the providers that serve them through ongoing policy changes, professional development, and resource sharing.

Increase the numbers of LGBTQ youth with identify-affirming placements made through the child welfare systems.

Nine, obtain funding and in-kind resources to support initiative activities.

And, finally, ten, document the

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initiative's progress, outcomes, and lessons learned to support quality improvement and enhance impact locally and inform replication efforts in other communities.

If the joint City Council Committee on Housing, Neighborhood Development and the Homeless is going to consider the implementation of a homeless prevention program, we as the Commission urge them to, within the broader plan, consider adopting a plan that specifically focuses on the LGBTQ youth.

The LGBTQ youth faces unique challenges that some may not face that lead them to become homeless and, once homeless, face additional unique challenges within the system. These challenges need to be addressed and addressed fast through a specific prevention program.

Thank you for your time, Council, and it's greatly appreciated.  
Sincerely, Rachel Steinig on behalf of

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2           Nadira Pilot.

3                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

4           That's very good testimony, by the way.

5           Thank you. You did a good job.

6                   I want to also recognize

7           Councilwoman Bass. Thank you.

8                   And we have, I think, two more

9           panelists on this panel.

10                  If you could state your name.

11                  MS. FADULLON: I'm Anne

12           Fadullon. I'm Director of Planning and

13           Development for the City of Philadelphia.

14                  Good morning, Chairman Domb and

15           members of the Housing, Neighborhood

16           Development and the Homeless Committee

17           and members of City Council. Thanks for

18           the opportunity to appear before you to

19           testify on Resolution No. 170027.

20                  As we've heard from so many

21           folks here today, the best strategy to

22           address homelessness is to prevent it.

23           That's why the Office of Planning and

24           Development, through the Division of

25           Housing and Community Development,

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supports a comprehensive set of programs  
designed to prevent homelessness by  
keeping people in their homes.

In the current fiscal year,  
DHCD's Consolidated Plan allocates nearly  
\$24 million to programs that help prevent  
and address homelessness. Those funds  
support programs that DHCD manages, which  
I will outline in a moment, and programs  
managed by the Office of Homeless  
Services. In addition, this year's  
Consolidated Plan allocates \$1.5 million  
in development financing for homeless and  
special needs housing.

The most well known of DHCD's  
programs is our nationally recognized  
foreclosure prevention program. Through  
a combination of a phone hotline staffed  
by legal professionals,  
neighborhood-based outreach, housing  
counseling, and legal assistance, we have  
prevented the foreclosure of more than  
10,000 homes since 2008.

Losing your home to foreclosure

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is the very definition of housing instability. While the mortgage foreclosure crisis is not what it was in 2008, we are still seeing mortgage foreclosures, and we are now seeing a rise in homeowners facing tax foreclosure. And so every Thursday, DHCD-funded housing counselors and lawyers are in Courtroom 676 to help homeowners avoid homelessness by remaining in their homes.

The City of Philadelphia's home improvement programs are important elements in our strategy to prevent homelessness. With an aging housing stock and a significant number of homeowners with insufficient income to maintain their homes, Philadelphia risks the deterioration of homes until they are no longer habitable. Our home improvement programs help homeowners remain in a livable home.

The Basic System Repair Program, BSRP, provides repairs to the

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2       electrical, plumbing, and heating systems  
3       of owner-occupied homes. BSRP may also  
4       replace a roof. Each year, BSRP helps  
5       approximately 1,100 homeowners avoid  
6       homelessness through critical home  
7       repairs.

8                   For years, the demand for BSRP  
9       services has outpaced the funding  
10      available to provide them, and the result  
11      is a waiting list several years long.  
12      Thanks to a bond issuance approved by  
13      City Council, however, over the next  
14      three years, we will eliminate that  
15      backlog.

16                   The Philadelphia Housing  
17      Development Corporation has already begun  
18      to prepare its contractors and staffers  
19      for a stepped-up program. The first home  
20      inspections will begin this spring and  
21      the first home repairs will begin in the  
22      summer.

23                   Complementing BSRP is the  
24      Heater Hotline Program. A home is not  
25      habitable and its residents are housing

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insecure if it has no heat in the winter.  
Each winter the DHCD-funded Heater  
Hotline Program managed by the Energy  
Coordinating Agency helps families in  
their homes by completing more than 4,000  
heater repairs.

Studies in both Philadelphia  
and Minnesota have found that utility  
costs are a significant cause of  
homelessness. DHCD supports three  
programs to help Philadelphians with  
utility issues. Each year, the Utility  
Emergency Services Fund uses our dollars  
to help more than 2,000 households with  
short-term financial assistance to  
address utility bills. DHCD funds ECA's  
Neighborhood Energy Centers, which last  
year helped more than 8,000 families  
reduce their utility bills through energy  
efficiency and education.

PHDC's Weatherization  
Assistance Program helps reduce utility  
bills by providing free weatherization  
and energy efficiency improvements to

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owner and tenant-occupied homes. Last year, more than 500 homes received this service.

For many years, Philadelphia has invested in housing counseling to help homeowners and tenants build the financial capacity and skills to support housing security. Counseling services include mortgage counseling, default and delinquency counseling, tenant support, credit repair, and consumer education to avoid high cost or predatory loan products. Each year, DHCD-funded counselors support more than 10,000 families facing housing issues.

Finally, a key means of increasing a family's housing security is to increase the resources they have to put towards housing. DHCD provides support to organizations working to ensure that families eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit receive it. Last year, nearly 2,000 households were served by DHCD-funded agencies promoting

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2           the EITC.

3                   In all, the comprehensive  
4           homelessness prevention programs managed  
5           by DHCD served more than 28,000  
6           households last year.

7                   In addition to the DHCD  
8           programs, the Consolidated Plan allocates  
9           more than \$2.7 million in Community  
10          Development Block Grant, HOME, and  
11          Philadelphia Housing Trust Fund resources  
12          to the Office of Homeless Services for  
13          rental assistance in the housing  
14          retention program. It also includes more  
15          than 3.5 million in Emergency Solution  
16          Grant funds to assist those who are in  
17          fact homeless.

18                  Preventing and addressing  
19          homelessness is a critical issue for  
20          Philadelphia and its residents. We  
21          remain committed to strategically using  
22          our funds to fight homelessness by  
23          keeping Philadelphians in a home they  
24          already have.

25                  That concludes my written

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testimony, but I just have to editorialize here a little bit. You know, the Low-Income National Housing Coalition put out a study last week that showed that nationwide we have a shortage of 7.4 million affordable rental units or units of housing. And in response to that, what we heard out of the federal government last week, frankly, was simply devastating. And I've spent my weekend talking with our federal lobbyists to try to do something about this, because what the budget for HUD out of the federal government last week stated - elimination of the Community Development Block Grant program, elimination of the HOME program, elimination of the Choice Neighborhoods Program, a cut of \$600 million to the Public Housing Operating Fund, a \$1.3 billion cut to the Public Housing Capital Fund, \$42 million cut to housing for the elderly, \$29 million cut to Housing for Persons with Disabilities, and a \$300 million cut to Section 8 tenant-based

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rental assistance. Essentially it feels like the federal government is telling our citizens it does not care whether or not they have a place to live. And we've heard today how important public-private partnerships are. Frankly, we need every partnership we can get. We need every level of government, we need every organization, and we need every dollar we can get from the private sector, because this is a war on housing and it is Armageddon, and it's not okay that this country does not believe that providing a safe, quality place for people to live is not a moral right.

Thank you for your interest in this important issue, and thank you for letting me testify today.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

Thank you very much.

I'd like to recognize

Councilwoman Bass.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good

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afternoon. Hello. How are you? Thank you so much for your testimony. And I just really wanted to thank you for your work and for being on top of this issue. When we saw what were sort of the proposed or early draft version of cuts that were to come out of the federal government, I think it was very frightening for all of us, eye-opening, and just really shocking. And so I just wanted to say that we as members of Council really look to you and look forward to working with you to develop a plan if these catastrophic cuts actually become a reality in any way, shape or form, because they will be catastrophic. So we look forward to working with you on that on the front end.

So thank you.

MS. FADULLON: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,  
Councilwoman Bass.

Let's have the last panelist  
and then we can have that whole panel --

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2           we can question all of you.

3                   MR. CULBERTSON: My name is  
4           Steve Culbertson. I'm the Director of  
5           Veterans Programs at Impact Services  
6           Corporation. I want to thank  
7           Councilwoman Blackwell and City Council  
8           for the opportunity to present --

9                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Hello,  
10          neighbor.

11                  MR. CULBERTSON: Yeah, my  
12          neighbor.

13                  I don't know how I follow what  
14          Anne just said. It is exceedingly scary  
15          what is coming out of Washington at the  
16          moment.

17                  So I'm here really to talk  
18          about a very specific program that was  
19          funded by the VA under the Obama  
20          Administration called Supportive Services  
21          for Veteran Families. Impact, the  
22          organization that I work at, received a  
23          three-year grant. It's called a  
24          Priority 1 grant. We looked at it as a  
25          surge from the Obama Administration to

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end veteran homelessness. And when we talk about -- and we actually received certification from the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness that we ended veteran homelessness in Philadelphia in December 2015. To be clear, it's not a full ending of veteran homelessness. What we accomplished and what we maintain is a system that tracks all homeless veterans in a by-name list in their progress towards permanent housing and has the capacity to provide permanent housing opportunities for every veteran that is homeless at any given time. Homelessness for veterans in Philadelphia is now rare, brief, and non-recurring to the extent that the veteran is willing to be housed.

Impact is part of a coalition of SSVF-funded -- these are funded by the VA -- agencies in Philadelphia that work collaboratively that includes Project HOME, Utility Emergency Services Fund, the Veterans Multi-Services Center, and

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the Homeless Advocacy Project. In total, these agencies receive \$4 million a year from the VA for rapid rehousing and for prevention.

Part of this collaborative effort included the development of a central intake center that assesses the needs of each homeless veteran and sends them to the appropriate organization and level of service required to address their homelessness. This coordinated intake center is located at the Veterans Multi-Services Center at 4th and Florist Streets.

Many of the veterans that come in for intake are not currently homeless. They are facing a crisis, usually of an economic nature, that will land them in homelessness within 90 days. SSVF assesses their needs, documents their economic status, and provides support to prevent them from falling into homelessness. This is a program that is operating right now.

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This support takes two possible overlapping routes. One, we provide short-term case management to address the needs of the individual or family. Two, if needed and documented, we provide temporary financial assistance to the family or individual. TFA can be provided for rent, arrearages, utilities, moving expenses, daycare, transportation, a variety of other expenses that will help the veteran stay in their own home and prevent them from falling into homelessness.

In 2016, SSVF served 989 veterans and exited 583 families and individuals into permanent housing. Of these, 295 were prevented from falling into homelessness and 290 were rapidly rehoused. The average amount of temporary financial assistance for a prevention client in this program was \$1,000. That's it, \$1,000. Rather than the person or family going into shelter or going into transitional housing or

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2           being permanently housed, they were  
3           diverted. It was prevented for them from  
4           falling into homelessness.

5                     It seems like a no-brainer that  
6           we should be funding as much prevention  
7           as possible in Philadelphia. I encourage  
8           City Council to allocate funds for a  
9           pilot homelessness prevention program as  
10          has been described today.

11                    Thank you.

12                    COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you  
13          very much.

14                    I'll now open it up to  
15          questions. Councilman Henon.

16                    COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,  
17          Mr. Chair, and thank you all for your  
18          testimony. This is a deep conversation.  
19          I think that it is most appropriate to be  
20          having publicly like this with all the  
21          providers and the City involved.

22                    Rachel had mentioned earlier  
23          about an organization that we created in  
24          the Northeast called NEST, and it's to  
25          house some of the service providers for

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2           the public good and deal with some of  
3           these issues. And everybody that I have  
4           come across and every organization that  
5           my staff deals with on a regular basis  
6           are doing a tremendous job with limited  
7           resources and a whole lot of frustration.  
8           And I think the willingness now in 2017,  
9           thankfully so, is to kind of leverage  
10          each other's information in sort of a  
11          matrix kind of non-competitive, even  
12          though competitive for some of the grants  
13          and resources, but doing it because I  
14          think we can accomplish more, we can get  
15          more done. And with people who are in  
16          deep poverty, people who are living  
17          paycheck to paycheck that are one roof or  
18          one tragic situation are going to end up  
19          looking for some of these resources, and  
20          I think it's up to us, it's our  
21          obligation to try to make that happen.

22                    So I'm happy that we're talking  
23                    about this the way we are talking.

24                    I do have a question for Daniel  
25                    Farrell, if you could please approach.

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2                       So how do you help the families  
3       that do not fall under the poverty level  
4       but may be, again as I had just stated,  
5       one paycheck away from falling into  
6       homelessness?

7                       MR. FARRELL: One of our  
8       eligibility criteria is 200 percent under  
9       the local AMI, area median income. So  
10      it's not just a poverty level. It's  
11      double the poverty of that particular  
12      area.

13                      COUNCILMAN HENON: Okay.

14                      MR. FARRELL: So our  
15      catchment -- our net is a little wider.

16                      COUNCILMAN HENON: Could you  
17      describe what the HELP USA specifically  
18      does for the families and the individuals  
19      that are at risk of slipping into  
20      homelessness?

21                      MR. FARRELL: Sure. It starts  
22      with housing retention. So folks who  
23      come to us typically have something that  
24      they want to prevent from losing, and  
25      that's a housing option, and usually it's

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a viable option, but they have a tenuous grasp on it, mostly because of rental arrears, arrears in utilities as we've heard, maybe some dispute with the landlord.

We have a deep footprint in Housing Court in the Bronx where we have specific staff dedicated, really live in Housing Court, and they know all the mechanisms and workings. We know the Housing Court judges well. So if we say -- and we're not attorneys, but if we say to a Housing Court judge we will make payment or a payment will be made in concert with the few providers by Thursday, they know that by Thursday they will have a check. And oftentimes with the relationships we build up both with the Housing Court judges and the landlords themselves, we can make those deals kind of occur even before it gets up to the judge level.

It's about having those deep relationships with all of the parties

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2           together.

3                   COUNCILMAN HENON: What is the  
4           average timeline of engagement for an  
5           individual that participates in the  
6           preventive services versus those that  
7           experience homelessness?

8                   MR. FARRELL: Great question.  
9           We're contractually obligated to resolve  
10          the case in 120 days or less. We have  
11          the option of renewing a case for one  
12          time. So that's eight months really at  
13          most. Most cases are resolved within 120  
14          days, but a sizable number of cases  
15          require a longer period of time, meaning  
16          the second 120 days.

17                  COUNCILMAN HENON: All right.  
18          And, last, you noted that in FY16  
19          Homebase served over 5,000 families.  
20          What are the staffing requirements  
21          necessary to impact that volume of cases?

22                  MR. FARRELL: You know, it's  
23          about replication. It's about scale,  
24          economies of scale. It's really a basic  
25          model. We kind of keep it simple, see

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2           the ball, hit the ball. It's someone has  
3           an option, do anything you can to prevent  
4           them from losing that option.

5                     So it's case management. It's  
6           some financial literacy workshops that we  
7           run. Like I said, it's the deep  
8           footprint that we have in Housing Court  
9           and the depth relationships we have with  
10          landlords.

11                    So actually the next three-year  
12          cycle of proposals for Homebase is due  
13          tomorrow. We've been working on this  
14          feverishly for the last two or three  
15          months, and we've gotten letters of  
16          support from many landlords throughout  
17          the Bronx because we have such  
18          longstanding relationships with them.  
19          It's about establishing your word. If  
20          your word is good, then they'll follow  
21          you with that.

22                    It's also, at the same time,  
23          there are some landlords who aren't --  
24          have some ethical lapses, and if we say  
25          to them, We're going to countersue on

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2       behalf of the tenant because these  
3       repairs were not made, they typically  
4       will listen to us. So we will hold the  
5       check literally in my office until they  
6       make a repair, and usually it works out.  
7       Sometimes it doesn't and we have to get  
8       legal services involved, but by and  
9       large, we're able to resolve a case.

10           COUNCILMAN HENON: You enter  
11       into a contract with the landlords who  
12       understand the eligibility and the  
13       requirements --

14           MR. FARRELL: Right.

15           COUNCILMAN HENON: -- and the  
16       terms of helping out?

17           MR. FARRELL: Right. We don't  
18       have master leasing, unlike Rachel's  
19       program. It really is between a tenant  
20       and a landlord, so we do have some  
21       flexibility and some power, in part  
22       because we control and have the funds for  
23       financial assistance. So we have a  
24       little over \$8 million, and almost 3  
25       million of those dollars goes straight

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2           for financial assistance.

3                   COUNCILMAN HENON: Now, how  
4           much resistance or hesitation is there or  
5           was there in the beginning when you're  
6           reaching out to the landlords, you're  
7           explaining what you're trying to  
8           accomplish and being a part of the  
9           community, helping out homelessness on a  
10          prevention method like that?

11                   MR. FARRELL: We've been in  
12          these zip codes for 13 years now. I  
13          honestly don't remember. It's been such  
14          a long time. We thought when we opened  
15          up Homebase -- and I was there in 2004 --  
16          that we would get inundated, and the  
17          opposite happened. People didn't come  
18          through the door. We had to establish  
19          really vigorous outreach both to  
20          prospective clients at risk for  
21          homelessness and also landlords who were  
22          suing people for evictions, usually for  
23          non-payment or for some other, what they  
24          call, holdover reasons.

25                   COUNCILMAN HENON: I have no

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2           further questions. Thanks.

3                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,  
4           Councilman Henon. Great questions.

5                   Councilwoman Gym.

6                   COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes. Thank  
7           you very much.

8                   It's great to have you here.  
9           Thank you for being here in our city.

10                  MR. FARRELL: Thank you.

11                  COUNCILWOMAN GYM: What role --  
12           I mean, besides the increased resources  
13           for affordable housing and the shallow  
14           rent assistance, the supports at the  
15           financial level, do you also -- I think  
16           my colleague was asking, how much of your  
17           staffing involves like counselors,  
18           lawyers, coordinators and other types of  
19           employees?

20                  MR. FARRELL: Zero lawyers. If  
21           we need legal assistance, we partner with  
22           local Legal Aid Society, Legal Services,  
23           and LSNY, but we've decided not to use  
24           those funds for attorneys because we have  
25           found that we can resolve the crisis

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2       without an attorney in many of the cases.  
3       Not all of the cases for sure, but that's  
4       what we found, and that model has worked  
5       for us. It's akin for us to going to the  
6       doctor for a routine physical. Often  
7       you're seen by an NP or an RN and that's  
8       good enough. Sometimes some cases are  
9       more complicated and do require an  
10      attorney, which we do of course partner  
11      with.

12               COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And do you  
13      attribute it to the fact that New York  
14      has better tenants' rights laws than  
15      maybe you've seen in other cities? Do  
16      you feel like that's a robust place for  
17      tenants' rights laws that allow a  
18      non-attorney to be able to negotiate  
19      settlements outside of the legal system?

20               MR. FARRELL: I think that's a  
21      part of it, yes, but I do think it's like  
22      anything else, it's about having that  
23      depth relationship with all of the  
24      parties present. And if the landlord can  
25      get what they want and the tenant gets

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2           what they want, it's about mediations.

3           It's all about landlord-tenant mediation.

4           Both sides have to be happy. It's a

5           little bit like you get 80 percent of

6           what you want, you don't get 20 percent.

7           You get 70 percent of what you want, but

8           maybe not the 30 percent. But people can

9           generally live with that, is what we

10          find.

11                   COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So most of

12          your staffing you feel like would -- if

13          there was an interest in starting up

14          something similar to Homebase, most of

15          your staffing would go into what type of

16          staff?

17                   MR. FARRELL: Generic case

18          managers, Housing Court folks who are

19          experts in Housing Court. I think for

20          Philadelphia, if that were to happen, I

21          probably would recommend -- and I don't

22          know if it would be us or someone else --

23          to liaison with a legal services entity,

24          perhaps have a subcontract with that

25          entity. I think that would be helpful to

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2           start.

3                   COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And,  
4           Commissioner Hersh, I'm kind of curious  
5           about how you see the overlaps that  
6           currently exist within Philadelphia's  
7           system similar to what Homebase provides  
8           out of New York. Like what do we  
9           currently do right now in terms of  
10          covering the prevention? Is your  
11          analysis that we need particular areas to  
12          be more robustly supported by the  
13          prevention models or is it a coordination  
14          of services?

15                   MS. HERSH: What we currently  
16          do is provide particularly assistance to  
17          people who have an eviction notice and we  
18          provide the back rent, security deposits  
19          for the first and last month's rent, and  
20          retiring utility debt so that people can  
21          get a clear record and a clear pathway  
22          forward.

23                   I think that what I really like  
24          about the Homebase model, in addition to  
25          all the things that Daniel has talked

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about, is that they've done research to identify people who are most at risk of entering homelessness. I think Anne really detailed sort of the big picture of housing instability and helping people be secure, and I think our slice is of all of those people, who are likely to come into shelter and what can we do to prevent that. And so what they've done based on their research has identified that particularly young parents with young children who have a history of homelessness or a history of being in the child welfare system, which we heard from some of the people with lived experience who spoke earlier, that those folks and also those who have experienced some domestic violence, as we heard from Jeannine, that those folks are the closest to what our family shelter population looks like, and that if we had to prioritize, that those risk factors would be where we would want to really target our intervention with limited

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resources. So to me, the power of that data-tested model is something that I would really like to replicate.

I think the other thing that we really have not -- that we are not currently able to do that I would like to explore is more flexible financial assistance. Because you can understand if you're using taxpayer dollars, just giving money to families -- like most of our families have need, so how do you provide flexible financial assistance in a context of preventing homelessness or stabilizing housing.

So I think that Homebase is really promising in that way. I think that Rachel's model of master leasing, rapid rehousing, all of those are really, I think, promising models that we would like to explore perhaps on a pilot basis, perhaps in the context of the NEST or working together with HELP and the other providers, is to use what we know about some of the most promising approaches and

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2           to really expand those.

3                   The other thing that we're  
4           proposing to do in the coming year, most  
5           of the money we've gotten from the  
6           Housing Trust Fund has gone to mortgage  
7           foreclosure prevention for people, and  
8           mortgage foreclosure is not a reason why  
9           people enter the homeless system. It's  
10          certainly valuable. I don't dispute  
11          that. So we certainly won't stop doing  
12          it, but we do propose to prioritize based  
13          on need and risk, and I think that given  
14          that and given what we know from the  
15          Homebase model, that we'll see more  
16          investment in people who are closer to  
17          the homeless population and trying to  
18          prevent them from coming into our shelter  
19          system.

20                   COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. Thank  
21          you. And I hope that some of the work  
22          that we did together, particularly  
23          targeting our -- for the first time the  
24          City devoting a line item to youth  
25          homelessness is in part responding to

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some of the more strategic approaches  
looking at youth, trying to pay attention  
to young families, especially young  
people who are currently experiencing  
homelessness and about to exit from DHS,  
I think is part of our target approach,  
and all the more reason why we're  
interested in seeing what data outcomes  
come out of that.

MS. HERSH: Yeah. Thank you  
for raising that, and I apologize for not  
raising it sooner. We are seeing early  
results. All of the Covenant House beds  
are online. Rapid rehousing has been  
provided to more than two dozen young  
people. Through the Attic, a number of  
the LGBTQ youth are getting services and  
homelessness prevention and getting into  
rapid rehousing. The employment  
component is getting up and running. We  
should have a full report for you on the  
first about nine months of work at our  
budget hearing, but it's already making a  
difference and it's already helping us

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2       inform a different kind of youth-friendly  
3       system that we need to evolve.

4                   COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And just  
5       very quickly, I mean, one of the things  
6       that I think matters for both of you who  
7       are here is that I would like the  
8       reframing of a lot of the services that  
9       we do rather than have it be how much is  
10      it going to cost the City to do this but  
11      how much are we actually saving. This is  
12      a very key component in terms of helping  
13      the public understand why we invest in  
14      particular areas over others, because the  
15      cost burdens of things like not following  
16      through on evictions or things like this  
17      end up enormous either years in our  
18      shelter systems or an overburdening on  
19      DHS or all these other things.

20                   So to the extent that we're  
21      able to couch and calculate a lot of this  
22      work in terms of what we actually are  
23      able to save on the City end in terms of  
24      these services is, I think, a very -- I  
25      mean, what HELP USA has done has been

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very clear about some numbers on that,  
and I think some of our other advocates  
are starting to do that in a much more --  
in a much more clear way that's  
accountable, numerically oriented, and  
shows what our choices are.

By neglecting and ignoring a  
problem, we place the burden on our City  
services anyway, and they don't go away.  
They actually do cost us and the City an  
enormous sum of money. That includes our  
veterans, that includes our youth, that  
includes our families, and similarly it  
goes back onto the School District as  
well, and we should be thinking through  
those things.

But I really appreciate the  
work that everybody has been doing and  
look forward to what we can do ahead.

MS. HERSH: Thank you. Thank  
you for your leadership.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.  
Thank you, Councilwoman Gym. Great  
questions. Very nice.

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2                   I'd like to recognize

3   Councilman Squilla.

4                   COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,  
5   Mr. Chairman.

6                   Liz, I want to thank you also  
7   for all the work and effort that you have  
8   put into putting this all together,  
9   because it's really not going unnoticed.  
10   People are seeing a lot of good things  
11   happening. It didn't get this way  
12   overnight and it won't get changed  
13   overnight, so we have to be a little  
14   patient with it.

15                  But my question is, I guess --  
16   I don't know if Anne left, but seeing the  
17   opportunities now with development and  
18   seeing our Housing Trust Fund as a means  
19   to help with our resources, do we see  
20   that bonus as something that we could  
21   push forward in new development to have  
22   people take advantage of the affordable  
23   housing bonus?

24                  MS. HERSH: It has been done in  
25   other cities. I think everything should

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be on the table, every possible option,  
and the more we can make the developers  
who are really leading the transformation  
of the residential market in the solution  
to those people who have been left  
behind, I think all the better.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Because I  
think as mentioned earlier in some of the  
other comments is that -- and you even  
said you have money that's coming in  
through the City and resources necessary  
to make these steps and make an  
impression, but we are a city and we  
should be partnering with our business  
development and business community and  
having opportunity for them to want to  
help, because they are -- they see the  
blight out there also and they see the  
need, and if they feel -- people want to  
feel good about themselves, right? So  
let's give them that opportunity to feel  
good about themselves and help us with  
our -- which is a major issue in the  
City, the City being one of the most --

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2           as the biggest city in the country with  
3           the highest poverty.

4                       So we need a lot of help, and  
5           we can't just do it in one way. So we  
6           need to look at five and six different  
7           ways to bring resources into our city.

8                       And I want to thank you again  
9           for everything you've been doing, working  
10          across all of the avenues of homelessness  
11          and poverty, and I think hopefully in the  
12          next year or so, we'll start to really  
13          see a difference and a change.

14                      Thank you.

15                      MS. HERSH: Thank you,  
16          Councilman. I think you can see from the  
17          provider network who is represented here  
18          today what the homeless system really is,  
19          the dedicated, hard-working professionals  
20          who do this day in/day out. That's  
21          really what it's all about.

22                      COUNCILMAN DOMB: I'd like to  
23          thank you.

24                      I'd like to recognize  
25          Councilman Taubenberger.

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2                   COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Thank  
3           you very much.

4                   Quick question, Ms. Hersh. And  
5           once again, thank you for your work.  
6           It's not an easy situation, no question  
7           about it.

8                   MS. HERSH: Thank you.

9                   COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: But  
10          you had said the program you were  
11          describing is done in some other cities.

12                   MS. HERSH: Yes.

13                   COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Do  
14          you know what cities? And is someone  
15          doing it really well in these other  
16          cities?

17                   MS. HERSH: Well, we're really  
18          fortunate that we have Daniel Farrell  
19          here from HELP USA. They're the provider  
20          of Homebase in New York City, and that  
21          really is the national model for  
22          prevention. That doesn't include some of  
23          the homegrown approaches you've heard  
24          today, like from the Interfaith  
25          Hospitality Network, Women Against Abuse,

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2           the Homeless Advocacy Project, but I  
3           think Daniel is really one of the leading  
4           national experts on this.

5                   COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:   Okay.  
6           Thank you.

7                   Well, if you wanted to say a  
8           word, that's fine.

9                   MR. FARRELL:   Is there a  
10          specific question?

11                  COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:   No.  
12          I mean, I just get the concept, and at  
13          some point maybe we'll talk privately, if  
14          we could --

15                  MR. FARRELL:   Sure.

16                  COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:   --  
17          more about the program in New York.  I  
18          always like to look at other models.  The  
19          great thing about this country, there's a  
20          lot of other cities to look at, and some  
21          are doing things better than we are and  
22          some are doing not so well, but the fact  
23          is, when you're doing better, there's no  
24          copyright in this business.

25                  MR. FARRELL:   No, not at all.

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2                   COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Thank  
3           you.

4                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.  
5           Thank you very much, Councilman.

6                   I have a few comments I wanted  
7           to make, then we'll go on to the next  
8           panel. I want to reiterate two things.  
9           First of all, I think the Homebase is a  
10          great program. I think the Master Lease  
11          is a great program.

12                   I come from a real estate  
13          background, and what you look for is two  
14          things in any tenant - the ability to pay  
15          and the willingness to pay. Those are  
16          the two factors. And so the Master Lease  
17          handles those issues, which should be  
18          able to lower the requirements of funding  
19          for a new lease, I would think. So we  
20          should really -- it's a great program.

21                   The other comment I want to  
22          make is, we have three -- what's on our  
23          panel, three homeless voices today. We  
24          heard from three people. Two of them  
25          were aware of EITC and one of them was

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2           not, and that concerns me at a hearing  
3           that that person did not know about it.  
4           So I just want to reiterate very  
5           important statistics.

6                     One, we have 1,560,000 people  
7           in the City. Two, 400,000 are in  
8           poverty. Three, I think it's 181,000 are  
9           in deep poverty, which is the definition  
10          of \$1,000 a month or less. Four, a  
11          family of two children, single parent or  
12          a couple, \$50,000 of income, couple, or a  
13          single parent making 44 or less with two  
14          children can get checks up to \$6,000 and  
15          they can file back three years. We're  
16          talking about \$24,000.

17                    So when I look at these  
18          numbers, I say to myself, wait a second,  
19          all of my colleagues, Administration, the  
20          Mayor, our goal is to get money from the  
21          federal government first, the State of  
22          Pennsylvania second, and the City of  
23          Philadelphia is the last resort.

24                    So we have to figure out a way  
25          to take advantage of this hundred million

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2           dollars that's left in Washington, DC.

3           By the way, it's not really 100 million.

4           It's 400 million, because you can file

5           back three additional years. This is

6           huge money that should be going into

7           people's hands that they're not aware of.

8                        So somehow all these programs

9           and providers, we have to make people

10          aware of this program. It's very, very

11          important. Federal money that's taken

12          out of all of our paychecks that should

13          be coming to our people, 40,000 people,

14          and they're not getting the money and

15          it's not going into our economy either.

16                        So anyway, thank you.

17                        MS. HERSH: We will follow up

18          with you. We'll make sure that word gets

19          out to all of our providers if it hasn't

20          already. Absolutely. Thank you.

21                        COUNCILMAN DOMB: Every person

22          should be aware of it. It's free money.

23          The deadline is April 18th.

24                        Anyway, thank you very much.

25          Thank you.

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2           MS. HERSH: Thank you.

3           COUNCILMAN DOMB: Can we call  
4 the next panel, please. Thank you.

5           COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: May I  
6 ask a question?

7           COUNCILMAN DOMB: Sure. I'm  
8 sorry. Councilwoman Blackwell.

9           COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Y'all  
10 might have to meet with him after this.  
11 He's been talking about it so long, I'm  
12 going to take it seriously.

13          MS. HERSH: I'm thinking a  
14 visit to some of the provider agencies to  
15 share the gospel.

16          COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: My  
17 goodness, but I forgot how much money you  
18 can earn.

19                   Is there a limit?

20          COUNCILMAN DOMB: It's about  
21 6,000 per year is the max for a family of  
22 two.

23          COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Six  
24 thousand per year for a family of two. I  
25 can make that.

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2                   Let me ask you -- and thank you  
3   all for being here and thank you, Steve.  
4   Sorry I had to step out. Thank you all.

5                   Ms. Hersh, I know you were  
6   saying 1,059,000 for prevention, 595 from  
7   the Housing Trust Fund, and 464, in  
8   general, in round numbers, from Community  
9   Service Block Grant. If we can get -- I  
10   mean, we'll all ask and cry to the Mayor  
11   about our needing this \$3 million. How  
12   do you think we should best do it or  
13   spread it out, or how would you prefer to  
14   use it?

15                  MS. HERSH: I think we should  
16   replicate Homebase on a pilot basis and I  
17   think we should put out an innovation  
18   challenge to the non-profits to try and  
19   seed some of the models and approaches  
20   that you've heard today and try them, and  
21   measure their impact for a time and see  
22   what's some of our best local thinking.  
23   So I would say take some of the best  
24   national thinking and then cultivate some  
25   of the best homegrown thinking around

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2           preventing homelessness and shortening  
3           shelter stays.

4                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay.

5           Thank you.

6                   Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

7                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,  
8           Councilwoman Blackwell.

9                   Question for you, Daniel.

10          Could you tie a Homebase to the EITC  
11          monies and directly fund it to the EITC?

12                   MR. FARRELL: I appreciate the  
13          comment. This time of year we see need  
14          for rental assistance decrease because  
15          people who are aware of EITC, and we  
16          mandate that -- so if someone comes in  
17          and they have \$6,000 in arrears, we will  
18          negotiate with the client and say we'll  
19          get this entity to pay 500, you have to  
20          pay 1,500 and then we'll cover the other  
21          3,000 or 4,000. But we mandate that  
22          folks pay a reasonable portion. We know  
23          that families are low income. We don't  
24          want them paying 90 percent toward it,  
25          because they want to buy bookbags, they

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want to buy clothes, they have a graduation party coming up, they may have had a death in the family to pay funeral expenses or all these things that come up, but we do require folks to pay some small proportion of EITC, along with obviously ongoing income that they may have, to their rental arrears or some other housing need.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank you.

Thank you very much to this panel. Thank you for being here today. Thank you.

MS. HERSH: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Can we call the next panel, please.

THE CLERK: The next panel, we have Erin Blair, Jennifer Pokemper, and Latoya Maddox.

(Witnesses approached witness table.)

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Good morning.

MS. BLAIR: Good morning. My

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2       name is Erin Blair. I'm a nurse  
3       home-visitor with the Philadelphia  
4       Nurse-Family Partnership. We are a  
5       primary prevention program for first-time  
6       families. I work with low-income moms  
7       from the time they find out they're  
8       pregnant until their baby's second  
9       birthday.

10               Unfortunately, nurse  
11       home-visitor has become a little bit of a  
12       misnomer. I'm a nurse library-visitor, I  
13       am a nurse shelter-visitor, I am a nurse  
14       park-visitor, and I'm a nurse come-visit-  
15       me-at-my-office-because-you-don't-have-a-  
16       safe-space-for-us-to-meet-in nurse, and  
17       that's increased over the last nine years  
18       that I've been doing this job.

19               Unfortunately, homelessness --  
20       as a nurse home-visitor, you see that  
21       health consequences of homelessness,  
22       which I haven't heard as much a part of  
23       this conversation -- the testimony I  
24       brought today I'm going to change a  
25       little bit, because I think it's

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important that I address that unique  
perspective as a nurse.

Children experiencing  
homelessness often experience  
developmental delays directly related to  
not having a safe space to get down and  
play on the floor. They experience  
higher rates of lead poisoning. We have  
laws in place to help families with  
unsafe lead situations that aren't  
enforced, unfortunately. And we have  
families that become homeless as a direct  
result of DHS mandating they leave their  
home because of their child's lead  
exposure.

We have children that are  
visiting hospitals at astronomical rates  
for asthma-related issues due to mold,  
due to cockroach feces, bedbugs, and a  
number of other serious vermin-related  
issues. These are families who don't  
have another place to go, and as a nurse,  
I go and I see them in their homes. I  
see those homes every day.

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2                   I carry a caseload of 25  
3 families, and at any given time, a number  
4 of my families are experiencing  
5 overcrowding, couch surfing, insecure  
6 housing or the revolving door of trying  
7 to get into shelter. Most of them don't  
8 make it. They end up choosing to stay in  
9 very unsafe places and put their children  
10 and their own lives at risk as a direct  
11 result of there being no available  
12 services.

13                   I came today -- wanted to share  
14 a story of one family that I think at  
15 many points along the story you can hear  
16 where simple services at that time would  
17 have prevented -- would have led to a  
18 different outcome.

19                   A young woman I worked with  
20 experienced domestic violence and was  
21 brave enough to testify, and as a result,  
22 the perpetrator was incarcerated, and she  
23 eventually lost her housing. She  
24 became -- at the time she became  
25 homeless, she was employed. She was

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2           college educated. She had an  
3           18-month-old baby and she was pregnant  
4           with twins.

5                     I sent her to the Appletree  
6           Family Center to do intake. She was told  
7           she could not use their services unless  
8           she could provide proof that her partner  
9           was incarcerated. We called Police  
10          Victim Services Unit. They were not able  
11          to give us the paper or the proof that  
12          was needed. She was referred to Women  
13          Against Abuse. She was not high risk  
14          enough to qualify for their services  
15          because her partner was incarcerated. We  
16          were referred back to the Office of  
17          Supportive Housing.

18                    During that time of that back  
19          and forth, she became more and more  
20          unstable. She lost -- she was told by  
21          the shelter, when she was eventually told  
22          she could apply for shelter, that she  
23          would have to come back each morning with  
24          her child. That was misinformation I now  
25          know. She could have called in each day.

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2                   She eventually lost her  
3       employment because she needed to complete  
4       intake for shelter. She lost her child  
5       care assistance and lost her employment.

6                   That's a really common story  
7       for the women that I work with. Pregnant  
8       and parenting women should not be losing  
9       their employment in order to maintain  
10      their benefits. They shouldn't be losing  
11      their employment in order to apply for  
12      benefits to maintain their housing.

13                  Eventually as a result of  
14      homelessness, oftentimes I'll lose  
15      clients because they can't keep their  
16      phones on, because they can't keep  
17      their -- they have no stable address, so  
18      finding them can be really challenging.

19                  I lost touch with this young  
20      woman, and when we regained communication  
21      a few months later when she wanted to  
22      start services again -- our program will  
23      accept anyone back in as long as their  
24      child is less than two years of age. We  
25      don't boot people for not showing up.

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2           The story that she told me  
3           about our time apart was really hard to  
4           hear. Shortly after we lost contact, she  
5           went into premature labor. One of her  
6           twins did not survive the delivery. The  
7           other twin was in the NICU and had a lot  
8           of complications, but is doing --  
9           eventually was doing very well and was  
10          released.

11          This woman was a wonderful  
12          mother. Her 18-month-old was doing  
13          tremendously well despite couch surfing  
14          and instability and insecurity. The baby  
15          was scoring off the charts for a lot of  
16          her development.

17          The depression that accompanied  
18          the loss of the child accompanied a loss  
19          of energy for parenting, and that's what  
20          depression does, maternal depression.

21          I think that some unfortunate  
22          things -- when my client lost her  
23          benefits, she wasn't informed by the  
24          County Assistance Office that she could  
25          use their address until she had a

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permanent address. She was told, You have to have a permanent address to have benefits. Numerous of my clients are told that. It is misinformation that's regularly given at the County Assistance Office level that prevents people from maintaining some of the only things that keep them afloat during difficult periods of crisis.

She was never informed of the family violence option, which is legislation that exists to help families when they're experiencing family violence to maintain their benefits so that they can keep their children safe and healthy and themselves safe and healthy. She didn't know about it, and neither did I at that point.

Had she just gotten some rental assistance in the beginning, that would have made a huge difference. Had she received better counseling services related to her rights as a victim of abuse, she may have known about those

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2           different options that existed to her to  
3           help her maintain those benefits.

4                     A part of this conversation is  
5           the very real health costs associated,  
6           and I think in this story, you can see  
7           that potentially she could have had a  
8           healthy pregnancy outcome and had two  
9           healthy twins. She didn't. She was  
10          failed at multiple system levels. And I  
11          am an excellent advocate. I make phone  
12          calls. Sometimes with homeless families  
13          I'll spend 10 to 15 extra hours calling  
14          every agency I can think of and speaking  
15          with every representative I can think of  
16          to try and help a family, with no  
17          success. And not very many families have  
18          a nurse home-visitor. I think about all  
19          of the families that don't have access to  
20          services.

21                     For every day an infant spends  
22          in the NICU, or the Neonatal Intensive  
23          Care Unit, it may cost up to \$11,000.  
24          Most of the families I serve are on  
25          Medical Assistance. That money comes

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from somewhere, and I think if we can house a family for a year by preventing one day an infant spends in the NICU related to a stress-related negative pregnancy outcome, that's \$11,000 a day.

For lead-exposed children, the cost can be a million dollars over the lifetime of that child. That's enough to do a lot of housing improvement and to service a lot of families by preventing one child from becoming lead exposed, and yet we do not aggressively enough go after repeated perpetrators of lead issues in this city.

I think that also looking at the home visitation model and its ability to partner with the programs that service families to prevent homelessness, home visitors need to be recognized as qualified people to make referrals for prevention funding. Currently, families have to qualify to get into DHS. They have to qualify to get into some sort of program before they can qualify to get

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the funding to maintain the housing they have. Nurse home-visitors are in a unique perspective to really know what a family's strengths are and to help them navigate and positively use that prevention funding to maintain housing.

Because I kind of changed direction a little bit, I am a little lost on what I was -- everything I was going to say.

Toxic stress has life-long consequences. If you're unfamiliar with the Adverse Childhood Event Study, the ACE's study, I recommend familiarizing yourself with it. Heart disease, lung disease, cancer, loss of -- our city loses a lot of money every year that could come in as lost wages over the lifetime of people that have severe toxic trauma as children and are unemployable or have a very challenging time maintaining employment as adults because they developed reactive personality issues as a direct result of living in

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2           deep poverty.

3                   Preventing deep poverty,  
4           preventing homelessness pays out, and we  
5           have to invest in it on the front end.  
6           Not just because it's economically the  
7           right thing to do, but because it's the  
8           ethical thing to do. And every day I see  
9           the results of policies being put into  
10          practice rip out without flexibility to  
11          meet the families they're supposed to be  
12          serving, and it's a crisis.

13                   Thank you.

14                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you  
15          very much. Thank you.

16                   Next panelist.

17                   MS. MADDOX: Good afternoon.

18          My name is Latoya Maddox and I am an  
19          employee of Liberty Resources. I work in  
20          the CIL as an Intake Specialist.

21                   Liberty Resources, Inc. is a  
22          non-profit, consumer-controlled  
23          organization that advocates and promotes  
24          independent living for all persons with  
25          disabilities. As a Center for

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Independent Living, Liberty Resources  
advocates for disabled people  
individually and collectively to ensure  
our civil rights and equal access to all  
aspects of life in the community.

Liberty Resources is one of the  
first Centers for Independent Living in  
Pennsylvania and has been consistently  
able to add services to address the need  
of our community.

As an intake specialist, I  
speak to people on a daily basis and try  
to assist them with information or  
resources that they need in order to live  
each day in the community. One of the  
top calls each day is consumers informing  
me that they are disabled and not able to  
stay in the shelter because it is not  
accessible or they will not allow the  
attendant to come into the shelter to  
provide the care that the person needs.  
So they end up back on the streets or in  
a nursing home because they are unable to  
make it in the shelters. This gives the

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2           disabled community no hope of being able  
3           to live in a shelter and have equal  
4           access and the same opportunities that  
5           everyone else has.

6                   Being a disabled -- being  
7           disabled and a parent myself, I am very  
8           scared that if I were to end up in a  
9           shelter, that I would lose my child to  
10          DHS because they would think that I could  
11          not care for my son without attendant  
12          services being placed or family support  
13          care for him. I always have the fear as  
14          a parent that I could lose my son to the  
15          system because if one day I were ever to  
16          lose my home and have to go to the  
17          shelter system and it's not accessible,  
18          that he would have to go into DHS and  
19          possibly get lost in the system.

20                   This is something that needs to  
21          be addressed so that children with  
22          disabled parents are not placed in the  
23          system because of the accessibility, and  
24          this is unacceptable for the disabled  
25          people that live within the City and are

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only a paycheck away from being in the  
shelter or on streets.

As an employee of Liberty  
Resources and a parent, I feel as though  
the shelter system should look into  
transitional housing for those who are  
disabled and entering the shelter. This  
would allow for those who are disabled to  
enter the shelter and have a safe place  
to live and receive the services they  
need in order to keep them off the  
streets. This is a great opportunity for  
the City to assist the disabled community  
most in a time of need.

The disabled population are  
always thought of last, and I think that  
this would allow them to receive the same  
treatment as everyone else entering the  
shelter and receive equal opportunity.

The shelter system in  
Philadelphia needs a lot of improvements,  
and I think the transitional housing  
program would improve this system  
immensely.

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2                   I appreciate you taking the  
3       time to listen to my testimony today in  
4       regards to the need of improvements in  
5       the Philadelphia shelter system and take  
6       serious consideration of transitional  
7       housing options, especially in a city  
8       that is on the forefront addressing the  
9       need of diverse communities.

10                  Liberty Resources thanks you  
11       also since we are in the front lines to  
12       keep those in nursing homes and living --  
13       I mean out of the nursing homes and  
14       living in the community.

15                  COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you  
16       very much, Ms. Maddox.

17                  Our next panelist.

18                  MS. POKEMPER: Thank you. Good  
19       afternoon, and thank you very much to  
20       Council for letting me speak today. My  
21       name is Jenny Pokemper. I work at the  
22       Juvenile Law Center, and I want to talk  
23       today about recommendations with respect  
24       to two systems that really offer us  
25       important opportunities to really prevent

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2           homelessness, and that's the child  
3           welfare and juvenile justice system.

4                     As you heard earlier, there has  
5           been a lot of attention to this issue. I  
6           looked back. We had a hearing about  
7           almost a year ago, in April of 2016, and  
8           there has been a lot of attention on the  
9           issue of youth homelessness. The City is  
10          now engaged in a 100-day challenge to end  
11          youth homelessness, and a lot of progress  
12          has been made.

13                    I do want to focus on even  
14          going further back into our prevention  
15          strategy to just prevent those youth from  
16          aging out to homelessness at all so we  
17          don't need to provide all these services  
18          afterwards, even though we still do need  
19          a lot of bridge of services out in the  
20          system.

21                    My written testimony contains a  
22          lot of data, and I won't go into that  
23          now, but it is really clear that the  
24          bottom line is that the connection  
25          between child welfare involvement and

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2       juvenile justice and homelessness is  
3       undeniable. We heard today from  
4       Ms. Jordan vividly about that example.

5           My hope today is that as we  
6       move forward on this issue, that we  
7       really do try to break the connection  
8       between these systems and homelessness,  
9       and I really do wish that people would be  
10      more outraged that kids who are in our  
11      care that are our responsibility, they're  
12      not unknown. We know exactly who they  
13      are, that they're so vulnerable to  
14      becoming homeless, and we have a crucial  
15      opportunity to intervene.

16           I think this is a really  
17      important issue again, the topic of  
18      prevention. Our national expert but  
19      local expert, Dennis Culhane, has been  
20      doing a lot of research on this and is  
21      really saying to us that the fastest  
22      growing group at risk for homelessness is  
23      transitioning youth, and that youth in  
24      the child welfare system and the juvenile  
25      justice system are the most at risk. So

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any homeless prevention strategy we have to be effective needs to include those young people or we're not going to be able to be successful.

I want to just quickly tell you a little bit about why these young people are so vulnerable to homelessness, and they should make sense just -- we're not happy that they occur, but they make sense, but there are things we can really attack.

Young people in these systems aren't necessarily attached to families that can provide that crucial buffer to homelessness or we haven't invested enough to shore up the support of family that then could be the buffer. So we're talking about young people that are put on their own, and we all know whether we have our own kids or are close enough to that transition age, that we can't expect 18 and 21-year-olds to completely be on their own, particularly in our housing market. And we know this from all of the

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research. It's not at all new findings to anyone that youth are not ready, that the transition to adulthood age really is mid 20's, but most of our systems and our services to our most vulnerable kids are at 18 or 21, exactly when we know they're not ready, and we continue to do that over and over again.

Many youth in these two systems have histories of abuse and neglect. That's why they're in the systems. And they have these additional barriers as they're leaving the system. So we need services in the system and outside that respond to those issues.

We also find that youth in these two systems really are educationally behind. They leave the system without the skills, academic, and employment to be able to get the jobs we need them to get to have independent housing.

So I'll quickly get to some of the recommendations. And, again, the

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2           written testimony has more detail, but I  
3           just want to highlight a couple of  
4           things.

5                       We really do recommend that  
6           this issue of programs and services to  
7           transition-age youth really needs to be  
8           elevated, and we do recommend that there  
9           be a Director of Transition-Age Youth  
10          Services in the Managing Director's  
11          Office for Health and Human Services.  
12          There needs to be leadership coordination  
13          and oversight and accountability. These  
14          kids are so at risk, we know who they  
15          are. We have an opportunity to  
16          intervene, but we have to do it more  
17          efficiently and effectively.

18                      We really do need to redesign  
19          the foster care system for kids between  
20          18 and 21. We now do have a good law  
21          that allows kids to stay in the foster  
22          care system if we haven't reunited them  
23          with family or connected them with family  
24          that they can stay until 21. We know  
25          that dramatically reduces their

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vulnerability to homelessness, but we need to revamp the system so that it is more effective and it does acknowledge that they are young adults. They are not kids. They are like, again, all of us can either experience with our own kids or if we can remember how challenging we were at that age, that it is a challenging time, and the programming needs to match those needs and that specialization that we need for those young people.

In terms of juvenile justice youth, we really need to provide services in the community for them after they leave the juvenile justice system. We do that with child welfare to some degree, but for juvenile justice youth when they leave the system, the only way they can get services is by coming back into the system. That's not the best way to serve them. We need to have resources in the community to bolster their transition home and really help them attack the

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2           challenges that they are addressing.

3                     And for both populations, youth  
4           and juvenile justice in child welfare, we  
5           need expanded employment and career  
6           training and opportunities. We have a  
7           good base and foundation for a lot of  
8           those training programs in the City, but  
9           we need to expand them, and we also need  
10          to make sure they can attack the  
11          particular challenges that juvenile  
12          justice and child welfare youth face, and  
13          then I think we really give them more of  
14          the tools to be able to live on their  
15          own.

16                    Finally, and I know this is  
17          going to sound like a little bit of a  
18          vague recommendation, but it is so  
19          compelling to me when I hear from youth,  
20          the young adults in the child welfare and  
21          juvenile justice system, we need to  
22          express to them that we value them and we  
23          do want to help them and we want to  
24          engage them in services. So many youth  
25          tell us that they do not feel valued,

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they do not feel respected, they do not feel heard. They feel like it's a fight to get services. They don't feel like we want them to get services, and that's just going to push them further and further to disengage from everything we're doing.

So I feel that we really need to just in our program design as well as in our messaging really tell these young people we want to help them and that we value them. And some of the ways we can do that is by having services that have low barriers to access and high support, that really don't make you jump through hoops to get those services, and make it very hard for us to cut off services from you; that we will not give up on young people and that we will make it really hard for us to close that case to cut off those services.

And another way I think we can express to young people how much we do value them is, I think the City should

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embrace a policy that no youth that comes into contact with any City-serving system can be discharged to homelessness, that that is a good goal. And it's not just a DHS or juvenile justice goal. It has to be a commitment from all City agencies, Behavioral Health and all our support systems. But we need to send that message, that that's not something we're willing to do.

And I think that there's so much good that is going on, the hundred-day challenge. What came out of last year's hearing I think was really positive, but I think we need to hold ourselves accountable to going further, and when we say "prevention," it does really mean starting in some of these systems where we know young people are coming from.

Thanks.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you very much for your testimony.

I have a question just in

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general. Any idea of the amount of children you think is in that category that you're describing, the numbers?

MS. POKEMPER: So I think the numbers we see from aging out of DHS each year is anywhere from 600 to 800.

In terms of juvenile justice, we've been -- we've requested those numbers. I think it's definitely lower. That's a different system obviously, not supposed to be a custodial system, but I think -- again, I'm asking for these numbers and can submit them to Council. I think they're in the range of 150 to 200. They reported in the needs-based budget that 188 received reintegration services. I just can't tell you if -- the number might be higher of youth who actually exit and are ineligible for those service. So I think we're talking then roughly about 1,000, 1,200 a year, but then, remember, we have to multiply over time because we're talking about kind of 18 to mid 20's.

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2                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Would you  
3 think then most have a job or don't have  
4 a job?

5                   MS. POKEMPER: I think it's  
6 mixed, and there's definitely probably  
7 providers in the room that can speak with  
8 more accuracy. I think it's very  
9 challenging. We do hear that a lot of  
10 youth aren't graduating exactly at 18, so  
11 they're spending more time in school,  
12 which we want them to, to get those  
13 skills, but we are hearing that it is  
14 very challenging to find a job and maybe  
15 more challenging to keep one and get into  
16 the kind of careers and just employment  
17 where there is a career ladder. So  
18 thinking about employment that would pay  
19 a living wage, I think we don't see many  
20 young people as quickly getting into that  
21 and needing more support.

22                   Some of our best, I think,  
23 employment programs for young people  
24 really do look at the challenges that  
25 they face. Philadelphia Youth Network,

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2           PowerCorps, there's a lot of good  
3           examples that are trying to address so  
4           that in the end of their services, they  
5           can get them in that career path, but I  
6           think that that's a huge challenge for a  
7           lot of young people between 18 and mid  
8           20's.

9                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank  
10          you. Thank you very much.

11                  MS. BLAIR: Could I speak to  
12          that? The population of young women that  
13          are pregnant or parenting that I have  
14          transitioning to adulthood, regardless of  
15          their involvement with juvenile justice  
16          or with DHS or foster care, are at the  
17          greatest risk of homelessness of many of  
18          the families that I work with. They need  
19          more support.

20                  But in answer to your question  
21          about employment, I have many clients  
22          that go through many, many jobs.  
23          Unfortunately, our labor standards don't  
24          support low-income workers in the way  
25          that they need to, and in the last nine

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years that I've been doing this job, when I started, families used to piecemeal work together. They would have two to three jobs. With the introduction of robotic scheduling, many of my moms are required to work seven days a week, three possible shifts, and given somewhere in the range of 8 to 22 hours. So they have to have ultimate availability for an unset schedule, and it sets them up to fail. If they receive childcare assistance, for example, they'll often lose their childcare assistance because no childcare provider will provide childcare assistance for somebody that's working a 3:00 to 11:00 one day and a 5:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. shift the next day and then not working for a week and a half. Unfortunately, a lot of those same employers receive tax benefits for hiring high-risk families, with no accountability in making sure that the employment they provide while receiving those tax benefits actually promotes them

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2           in maintaining employment or improving  
3           their outcomes as far as decreasing their  
4           use of TANF and other social services.

5                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank  
6           you.

7                   Well, thank you to the  
8           panelists for coming today. Thank you  
9           very much for your testimony. We  
10          appreciate you being here.

11                   Can we call on the fifth panel,  
12          please.

13                   THE CLERK: We have Beth  
14          McConnell and Kathy Desmond.

15                   (Witnesses approached witness  
16          table.)

17                   MS. McCONNELL: Good afternoon.

18                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Good  
19          afternoon.

20                   MS. McCONNELL: Chairman Domb,  
21          Vice Chair Blackwell, Councilman  
22          Taubenberger, thank you for the  
23          opportunity to testify. My name is Beth  
24          McConnell, the Policy Director with the  
25          Philadelphia Association of Community

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Development Corporations.

I'll be brief. I know we have another hearing that's about to start. But I just want to put the testimony that we heard today in the context of Philadelphia's growing affordable housing crisis and implore City Council and the Kenney Administration to make affordable homes a much bigger priority by, at minimum, doubling dedicated revenue to the Philadelphia Housing Trust Fund.

Philadelphia's high poverty rate and low wages, combined with rising home prices and rents, is contributing to a growing affordable housing crisis. More than 70,000 extremely low-income Philadelphians pay an unsustainably high percentage of their monthly incomes on rent, making it impossible for them to build any savings to deal with emergencies.

Philadelphia also lost more than 23,000 units of low-cost rental units between 2000 and 2014, again, due

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2           to rising rents on market-rate units and  
3           expiring subsidies on affordable units,  
4           and we're projected to lose thousands  
5           more in the next five years.

6                     And we know that more than  
7           100,000 Philadelphians are looking for  
8           help with affordable housing, but are on  
9           waiting lists, told that waiting lists  
10          are closed because they're too big or are  
11          turned away. Just last week, New  
12          Kensington CDC announced that they got  
13          over 600 applications for just 51 units  
14          of affordable rental.

15                    As you've heard from other  
16          witnesses this morning, Philadelphia is  
17          not investing adequately in homelessness  
18          prevention programs, and unfortunately  
19          the same is true for a range of programs  
20          and services needed to provide low-income  
21          Philadelphians with affordable, safe, and  
22          stable homes. And unfortunately as we  
23          also heard from Ms. Fadullon, there's  
24          great uncertainty in the future of  
25          federal funds, to put it mildly.

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All Philadelphians, including those with low incomes, should benefit from the building boom and the strengthening housing market. That's why Council and the Administration should enact policies to capture a greater portion of revenue from property sales or construction to, at minimum, double dedicated revenue to the Housing Trust Fund to at least 25 million a year or more. This would give agencies like DHCD and OHS a greater pool of flexible funds that can be used for homelessness prevention programs like those we heard of today, preserve more existing affordable homes, and produce more low-cost units. And PACDC and others have already offered Council and the Administration several ideas for how to capture more revenue for the Housing Trust Fund. We're actively developing a few more ideas that we'll be able to share with you in the coming weeks.

In closing, at a time when

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Philadelphia had a record number of home sales exceeding one million and when we make national headlines for our rising rates and building boom, not investing more significantly in housing security for low-income Philadelphians is a policy and it is a policy of inequality. We urge Council and the Administration to work together this budget cycle to step up investments in affordable homes and homelessness prevention and create a more equitable Philadelphia.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

Thank you very much for your testimony.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Kathy.

MS. DESMOND: Good afternoon.

My name is Kathy Desmond. I am the President of the People's Emergency Center.

I'm going to forego a lot of my testimony, just get to the highlights.

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I want to emphasize the price we pay for doing nothing, and I think we've heard some of that today, the cost -- the added cost on the healthcare system, the child welfare system, the education system. I'd also like to mention the behavioral health system. The unmitigated trauma experienced by people living in homelessness is both a cause and a result of homelessness and exacerbates the need for behavioral health services.

I want to point out that HUD is developing criteria and benchmarks that it will use to effect future funding priorities. One of the criteria is that the community uses a prevention and diversion strategy. Without comprehensive homeless prevention services, Philadelphia risks performing poorly on meeting several of these benchmarks and key indicators, which will put the City at risk of funding reductions.

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2                   And, finally, the Family  
3       Service Provider Network recommends that  
4       you expand homeless prevention  
5       strategies. We specifically ask you to  
6       consider providing 3 million to the  
7       budget of the Philadelphia Office of  
8       Homeless Services that would allow them  
9       to develop creative lower-cost,  
10      short-term, community-based interventions  
11      to prevent people from falling into the  
12      downward spiral of homelessness while we  
13      are working towards meeting the needs for  
14      creating more housing.

15                These interventions should be  
16      delivered in key geographical locations,  
17      providing a variety of supports,  
18      including short-term rent assistance,  
19      master lease arrangements, coaching and  
20      supports for co-housing arrangements,  
21      support for responsible property managers  
22      and landlords willing to do work --  
23      willing to work with struggling families,  
24      one-time utility arrearages, case  
25      management, rapid rehousing, diversion,

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family reconciliation, and other  
stabilization services to 1,000 families  
a year based on OHS's evidence about who  
is most likely to become homeless. This  
could be done through the creation of a  
new program or could augment existing  
operations like the Benefit Access  
Centers.

I thank you for the opportunity  
to testify today.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you  
both for your testimony.

I'd like to recognize  
Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.  
Thank you both for all you do and all the  
work you've done on this hearing. The  
testimony was excellent.

My staff just reminded me that  
they are supposed to close some beds and  
some civic department at Norristown. So,  
I mean, all we need is more closure at  
Norristown. You all know what we've been  
through before. And I wondered if you

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2           all had any information on it and any  
3           opinions about what could happen.

4                   MS. DESMOND: I'm not aware of  
5           that, Councilwoman Blackwell, but I can  
6           imagine the impact that that will have on  
7           Norristown and areas like Philadelphia if  
8           those folks become homeless.

9                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.  
10          When we have mental health closures, it's  
11          always a problem.

12                   Okay. Thank you.

13                   MS. DESMOND: Thank you.

14                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,  
15          Councilwoman Blackwell.

16                   Just a quick question. The  
17          Housing Trust Fund, 3 million I think  
18          this year, is there any qualifier before  
19          people get those funds that we ensure  
20          that they've gone through all the other  
21          paths of receiving money such as -- I'm  
22          going to sound like a broken record --  
23          the Earned Income Tax Credit? Because  
24          I'm going to say this again, we're  
25          leaving \$100 million in Washington, DC of

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2           federal money. It's crazy.

3                   MS. McCONNELL: The Housing  
4           Trust Fund doesn't provide funds directly  
5           to individuals. It provides funds to  
6           non-profits that are serving individuals  
7           for three core areas - producing new  
8           affordable units, preserving existing  
9           affordable homes or homelessness  
10          prevention variety of strategies. So  
11          there isn't anything in the Housing Trust  
12          Fund legislation or Executive Order that  
13          does what you're requiring, but there's  
14          certainly more we could do to make sure  
15          that all the non-profits that are serving  
16          folks are making sure that they're  
17          enrolled in the EITC.

18                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Do they know  
19          about it, all the non-profits?

20                   MS. McCONNELL: I think many of  
21          them do, sure, but I don't know that I  
22          can answer how many do or don't.

23                   MS. DESMOND: I would also like  
24          to add that by augmenting this -- by  
25          using some of the Housing Trust Fund

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2           dollars to augment the services at the  
3           Benefit Access Centers where people do  
4           become aware of EITC dollars would be  
5           beneficial and a way to capture those  
6           dollars prior to entering other services.

7                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: That's  
8           excellent. Thank you both for your  
9           testimony today. Thank you.

10                   MS. McCONNELL: Thank you.

11                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Is there  
12           anyone else to testify on this  
13           resolution?

14                   (No response.)

15                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: Seeing no one  
16           else is here to testify on the  
17           resolution, this concludes the business  
18           of the joint Committee on Housing,  
19           Neighborhood Development and the Homeless  
20           and Education for today. The public  
21           hearing on Resolution No. 170027 is  
22           recessed to the call of the Chair.

23                   Thank you all very much for  
24           your attendance today. Thank you.

25                   (Committee on Housing,

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2       Neighborhood Development and the Homeless  
3       concluded at 1:00 p.m.)

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| 150:1 151:1 | <b>50</b> 32:2 38:15 | 133:24               |  |  |  |  |
| 152:1 153:1 | <b>50,000</b>        | <b>900-a-month</b>   |  |  |  |  |
| 154:1 155:1 | 129:12               | 58:17                |  |  |  |  |
| 156:1 157:1 | <b>500</b> 60:9 96:3 | <b>989</b> 104:15    |  |  |  |  |
| 158:1 159:1 | 133:19               |                      |  |  |  |  |
| 160:1 161:1 | <b>51</b> 165:13     |                      |  |  |  |  |
| 162:1 163:1 | <b>550,000</b> 78:9  |                      |  |  |  |  |
| 164:1 165:1 | <b>583</b> 104:16    |                      |  |  |  |  |
| 166:1 167:1 | <b>587</b> 82:10     |                      |  |  |  |  |
| 168:1 169:1 | <b>595</b> 132:6     |                      |  |  |  |  |
| 170:1 171:1 | <b>595,000</b>       |                      |  |  |  |  |
| 172:1 173:1 | 71:16                |                      |  |  |  |  |
| 174:1       | <b>6</b>             |                      |  |  |  |  |