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Anonymous  
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Genuardi Family Foundation  
HealthSpark Foundation  
The Montgomery County Foundation, Inc.  
Montgomery Bar Foundation  
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Wells Fargo Foundation  
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## GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

Montgomery County Commerce Department  
Montgomery County Commissioners  
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services  
Montgomery County Office of Housing & Community Development  
Montgomery County Planning Commission

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

2-1-1 of Southeastern PA  
Access Services  
Advanced Living Communities  
Carson Valley Children's Aid  
Catholic Social Services  
Clarifi  
Creative Health Services  
ElderNet  
Genesis Housing Corporation  
Habitat for Humanity of Montgomery County  
Hedwig House  
Inter-Faith Housing Alliance of Ambler  
Interfaith Hospitality Network of the Main Line  
Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia  
Laurel House  
Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania  
Keystone Opportunity Center  
Manna on Main Street  
Montgomery Bar Association  
Montgomery County Emergency Services  
Montgomery County Housing Authority  
Municipality of Norristown  
Norristown Hospitality Center  
North Penn School District  
Philanthropy Network of Greater Philadelphia  
Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities  
Resources for Human Development  
Salvation Army of Norristown and Pottstown  
Siemer Institute for Family Stability  
Sunday Rescue Breakfast Mission  
United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey  
Valley Youth House  
VNA Community Services  
Veterans Multi-Service Center

## YOUR WAY HOME ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

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**Sunanda Charles**, *Executive Director*, Norristown Hospitality Center  
**Richard Cirko**, *Executive Director*, VNA Community Services  
**Arlene Daily**, *Executive Director*, Keystone Opportunity Center  
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**Dr. John J. George**, *Executive Director*, Montgomery County Intermediate Unit 23  
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**YOUR WAY HOME**  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

**Your Way Home Call Center:** 2-1-1 or 1-866-964-7925

**Facebook:** Your Way Home Montgomery County

**Twitter:** @YHWMontCo

**The Web:** www.YourWayHome.org



# 2017-2018 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



**YOUR WAY HOME**  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY





Your Way Home is Montgomery County's unified and coordinated housing crisis response system for families and individuals experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness.

Our vision is to make the experience of homelessness in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania rare, brief, and non-recurring.

## OUR IMPACT

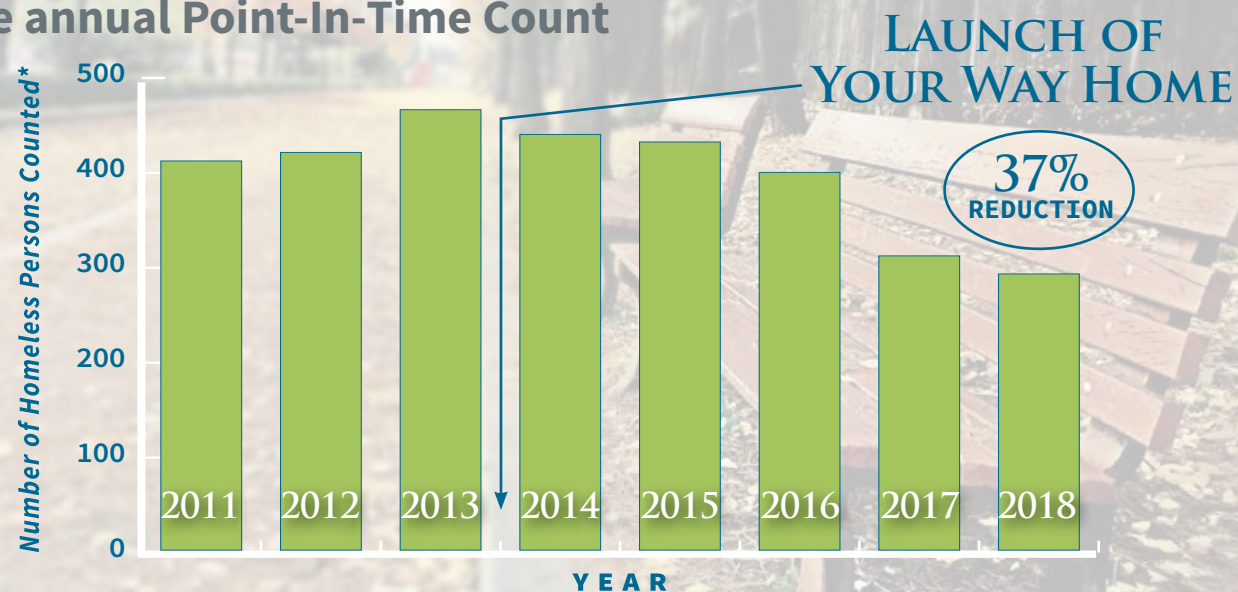
Your Way Home has significantly reversed the problem of homelessness in Montgomery County. Homelessness was trending upward in the County since 2011, peaking at 464 individuals who were homeless on a single night in January 2013. Since then, Your Way Home has reduced homelessness by **37%**, to 291 individuals on a single night in January 2018.

### TOTAL SERVED THROUGH THE YOUR WAY HOME PROGRAM IN 2017

Total served in homeless projects in 2017 (in Street Outreach, Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, and Permanent Supportive Housing): 1,624

- Veterans: 55
- Families: 255
- Gender: 52% Female, 48% Male, 0.1% Trans Female
- Race: Black or African American: 51%  
White, Not-Hispanic: 41%  
Asian American: 1%  
Multiracial: 1%  
Other: Less than 1%
- Disabilities: 50% with 1 or more conditions
- Domestic Violence History: 14% of adults

**Your Way Home has reduced homelessness by 37%, since its launch in 2014, as measured by the annual Point-In-Time Count**



\*Total individuals identified on one night in January. Data source: Montgomery County PIT Count

## HOW IS YOUR WAY HOME MAKING HOMELESSNESS RARE, BRIEF, AND NON-RECURRING?

### RARE

**85%** of households (**503 of 586**) at risk of homelessness are diverted from entering an emergency shelter.

### BRIEF

The median length of stay in shelter was **56 days in 2017**.

### NON-RECURRING

**86%** of people who exited Rapid Re-Housing to permanent housing have not returned to homelessness within 2 years (**276 of 320** people who exited to permanent housing over 2 years ago have not returned to homelessness).



## YOUR WAY HOME'S PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Your Way Home Montgomery County is supported by a public-private partnership between government, philanthropic, nonprofit and community organizations whose common agenda is to improve the health, housing stability and economic security of residents who are experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness. The Montgomery County Foundation, Inc. is a founding member of the Your Way Home Advisory Council and acts as the fiscal sponsor of the Your Way Home Initiative Fund.

### 2017 PRIVATE GRANTS

- Temporary Financial Assistance:** \$62,083  
*Flexible Consumer Assistance for Rapid Re-Housing and Diversion clients*
- Capacity Building:** \$25,000  
*System and Provider*
- Scaling Impact:** \$274,923  
*Annual Summit, Pilot Projects, Research Studies, Landlord Engagement, etc.*
- Total Private Investment:** \$362,006

### 2017 PUBLIC GRANTS

- Outreach and Engagement:** \$539,736  
*Call Center and Street Outreach*
- Emergency Shelter:** \$2,014,498
- Transitional Housing:** \$207,913
- Housing Resource Centers:** \$3,039,629  
*Housing Counseling and Rapid-Re-Housing, plus specialized programs for Seniors, Youth, and Victims of Domestic Violence*
- Homeless Prevention & Food Pantries:** \$21,500
- Permanent Supportive Housing:** \$1,688,461
- Other Supportive Services:** \$726,811  
*Legal Services, SOAR, programs for Veterans and Financial Literacy, etc.*
- Data Management:** \$174,053
- Planning & Administration:** \$426,608
- Total Public Investment:** \$8,839,209



Your Way Home is making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring through the adoption of 6 Core Strategies: Coordinated Entry, Emergency Shelter, Housing Resource Centers, Connection to Supportive Services, Collective Impact, and Prevention.

## CORE STRATEGY 1: COORDINATED ENTRY

Through coordinated entry and assessment, Your Way Home prioritizes housing and services based on vulnerability and need rather than on a first-come, first-served basis. Through progressive engagement, consumers are given the services and support they need to succeed.

The Your Way Home Call Center and Street Outreach Team provide crisis response to people experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness in Montgomery County through safety planning, VI-SPDAT screening, and referral to housing and emergency shelter.

### KEY PARTNERS

- **2-1-1 SEPA:** Montgomery County's Call Center for individuals experiencing homelessness. This 24/7 helpline offers toll-free assistance in an effort to connect callers to the help, supports, and information they are looking for.
- **Access Outreach:** A robust, multidisciplinary, and trauma informed, Street Outreach team that are deployed anywhere in the county 24/7.

### COORDINATED ENTRY IMPACT

- **1,817** households were newly homeless and assessed by the Your Way Home Call Center in 2017. Of those households, 1,205 were single adults and 612 were families.
- In 2017, **679** people (including 46 families with children) were served by the Street Outreach team.

## CORE STRATEGY 2: EMERGENCY SHELTER

Your Way Home Emergency Shelters empower families and individuals experiencing homelessness to regain permanent housing as quickly as possible while providing a safe place to sleep and housing-focused case management services.

### KEY PARTNERS

- Coordinated Homeless Outreach Center (CHOC)
- Interfaith Housing Alliance
- Interfaith Hospitality Network
- Keystone Opportunity Center
- Laurel House
- Salvation Army Norristown
- Salvation Army Pottstown

### EMERGENCY SHELTER IMPACT

- In 2017, **57%** of people exited Emergency Shelter directly to permanent housing.
- **75%** of people in Emergency Shelter, in 2017, exited with non-cash benefits (SNAP, TANF, WIC, or others).

In 2017, 778 people were served in emergency shelter. 683 of those people were served by year-round shelters and 166 were served by Code Blue\* shelters (71 people were served by both).

*\*In periods of extreme, life-threatening weather, defined as a wind-chill factor of 20°F or below, Montgomery County will call a Code Blue. The goal of the Code Blue is to provide temporary shelter, food, and clothing to those in need.*

## CORE STRATEGY 3: HOUSING RESOURCE CENTERS

Your Way Home Housing Resource Centers (HRC) provide a coordinated response for families and individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Each HRC delivers services as appropriate to clients' needs: emergency housing, housing counseling (diversion from the shelter system), or rapid re-housing in apartments in the Montgomery County communities with which they identify.

### KEY PARTNERS

- Carson Valley Children's Aid
- Keystone Opportunity Center
- Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities
- Valley Youth House

### HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER IMPACT

- **86%** of people who exited Rapid Re-Housing to permanent housing have not returned to homelessness within 2 years.
- The average length of time it took for an individual to move through the Rapid Rehousing program into permanent housing was **56** days.



## CORE STRATEGY 4: CONNECTION TO SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Your Way Home embraces a "housing first" approach to ending homelessness by first helping people find or maintain permanent housing with stability and then connecting them with the community, health, human, and financial services they need to prevent future experiences of homelessness.

### KEY CONNECTIONS

- Early Education
- Financial Literacy
- Healthcare
- Job Training
- Legal Services
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Public Benefits
- Public Housing

### CONNECTION TO SUPPORTIVE SERVICES IMPACT

Common Grounds Food Service Training to Employment Program is a free, 14-week food service training program operated by Manna on Main Street. Common Grounds' trainees represent individuals living in economic instability who have made the commitment to invest in themselves and their future through job training.

- In 2017, **10** graduates of the Common Grounds program were referred through Your Way Home. **5** of those graduates found employment through the program.





## CORE STRATEGY 5: COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Your Way Home embraces a Collective Impact approach to solving complex, large-scale social issues through cross-sector collaboration. Your Way Home’s partnership of nearly 50 government, philanthropic, nonprofit and community partners share a common agenda to improve the health, housing stability and economic security of families and individuals experiencing homelessness. This agenda is advanced through a shared set of guiding principles, strategic goals and annual performance measures.

### PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE

The **Your Way Home Advisory Council** sets the overall strategic direction for the initiative. The twenty-five members of the Advisory Council are appointed by the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners, and represent a broad set of industries and sectors that are invested in ending homelessness in the county.

The **PA-504 Continuum of Care Governance Team** is designed to promote community wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. The thirteen Continuum of Care Governance Team members are elected by the Your Way Home community annually.

The lead public agency of Your Way Home is the **Montgomery County Office of Housing and Community Development**. The Your Way Home Operations Team provides the backbone support to Your Way Home, including policy and program coordination and oversight, data analysis, communications and marketing, grants management, and partnership development. Technical assistance is provided by Capacity for Change, LLC.

The lead private agency and fiscal sponsor of Your Way Home is the **Montgomery County Foundation, Inc.** The Montgomery County Foundation, Inc. holds the Your Way Home Initiative Fund, and its President serves as the Your Way Home Advisory Council Chair.

Your Way Home’s **Action Teams** provide policy-specific guidance, recommendations, and input on various topics. Action Teams may be ad-hoc to address a specific but time-limited issue, or recurring. Participation on an Action Teams is available to any member of our Your Way Home community.

## CORE STRATEGY 6: PREVENTION

Homelessness prevention is an expansion of the work already done by Your Way Home, and targets those who are at risk of losing their housing. As Your Way Home’s homeless crisis response system is able to more effectively divert, triage, and re-house literally homeless residents, our partnership can now begin to identify strategies for preventing homelessness from occurring among vulnerable populations.

In order to understand how to expand its services to include homelessness prevention, Your Way Home undertook a research study in 2016-2017 to study homelessness prevention and eviction prevention best practices. This study resulted in the report “Unlocking Doors to Homelessness Prevention”, completed by Barbara Poppe and Associates and sponsored by the Healthspark Foundation. This report helped guide Your Way Home to identify the need in Montgomery County, the resources currently available, and identify a few models of programs that could be piloted locally to address those needs.

*Ending homelessness is possible. The work being pioneered in Montgomery County and the “Unlocking Doors” report identify innovative strategies for eviction and homelessness prevention strategies. With successful partnerships and strong political support it is possible to achieve our vision that no one should be without a safe, stable place to call home.*

– BARBARA POPPE, BARBARA POPPE AND ASSOCIATES

Since 2014, our system has evolved to include a single call center, diversion from shelter for those that have alternative housing options, housing-focused emergency shelters, a robust rapid re-housing program, and prioritization for permanent supportive housing for those that need more support to maintain housing stability. As a result of these system transformations, Montgomery County has reduced homelessness by 37% in four years.

**However, our work is not done.** If we are to truly meet our goal of making homelessness a rare event, we must start to work “upstream”.



## EPIC

The Eviction Prevention and Intervention Coalition (EPIC) is a pilot project designed to stabilize vulnerable families and individuals in Montgomery County who are facing eviction by providing them with free legal and social services support on the day of their eviction hearing.

The program is designed to provide financial assistance to prevent evictions, and connection to the long-term financial and social supports needed to prevent future housing instability.

EPIC is the result of a cross-system partnership between the following organizations:

- Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania
- Montgomery County Courts
- Montgomery Bar Association
- The Montgomery County Foundation
- Montgomery Bar Foundation
- Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities

**2018 pilot program** helped helped approximately 40 at risk households to avoid eviction in Greater Norristown.

**Potential for High Impact:** 2,120 orders of possession were issued during 2016. If just 20% of evictions were stopped, 400 families would be spared and their housing stabilized.

## THE SPROUT INITIATIVE



The Sprout Initiative is a school-based homelessness prevention program that works to stabilize families with young children who are imminently at risk of becoming homeless by providing social services and housing stability supports.

The ultimate goal of the initiative is to demonstrate that stable housing can lead to better educational outcomes among vulnerable children. The initiative will use a 2-Generation approach to coordinate care holistically for parents and children.

The Sprout Initiative is the result of a cross-system partnership between the following organizations:

- North Penn School District
- Keystone Opportunity Center
- Your Way Home Montgomery County
- United Way of Greater Philadelphia & Southern New Jersey

**30% of all homeless individuals** are children under age 18

**25% of all homeless individuals** are African American children under age 18

**Potential for High Impact:** Reduce impacts of high mobility on all children served by schools with high rates of homelessness: 683 children were homeless under the McKinneyVento Education definition and served by Montgomery County schools during the most recent school year that data was available. Nearly 70% of these children were living doubled up and at-risk of literal homelessness.