

## Community Advocacy/Talk Points

### Overview

- Allegheny County DHS (AC DHS) is most in need of additional funding for **Mental Health Base (MH Base)** and the **Homeless Assistance Program (HAP)**.
- These are two relatively flexible funding streams designed to support mental health and homelessness services, two of our community's fastest growing needs.
- While the most recent state budget enacted increases to both funding streams, the impact to Allegheny County is relatively small with the expected increases representing less than 5% of the costs currently supported by these awards.

### Mental Health Base

- AC DHS relies on MH Base to provide behavioral health supports that cannot be billed to Medicaid (i.e., HealthChoices) or private insurance.
- Current demand for mental health services exceeds system capacity. For example, 50% of children **wait over 6 weeks** for family-based mental health services, and 25% of children wait over 9 weeks.
- This year's state budget included an increase of \$20 million to MH Base, which will be allocated across PA's 67 Counties.
- Allegheny County expects to receive a roughly \$1.6 million increase over last year, or less than 5% of the costs currently supported by this award.
- The County Commissioners Association of PA (CCAP) is seeking a statewide increase of **\$250 million** to appropriately meet growing need and stabilize the sector given widespread capacity and workforce challenges.

### Homeless Assistance Program

- AC DHS relies on HAP to address emergent needs in the community related to housing and homelessness, including street outreach, emergency shelters, bridge housing, case management, and eviction prevention services.
- In recent years, both the number of people needing these services and the cost of services have increased.
  - Between 2022 and 2023, Allegheny County's annual point-in-time (PIT) count<sup>1</sup> demonstrated a 24% increase in the number of people staying in emergency shelters or experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
  - Between state fiscal year 2019 to 2023, ACDHS increased its spending on homelessness services by \$13 million without additional state funding.

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<sup>1</sup> Each year, Allegheny County participates in a national census, required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), of the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night

- In state fiscal year 25, for the first time in more than a decade, the state increased HAP funding by \$5 million, which will be distributed across Pennsylvania's 67 counties. If AC DHS receives 10% or \$500,000 (an amount equal to Allegheny County's proportion of the state population), it will enable us to increase our annual HAP spending over SFY23 by roughly 1%.
- An investment of an additional \$20M (or about 6.5 times the anticipated SFY25 allocation) to Allegheny County would help to support the existing investments and allow us to expand efforts to address the need.

### ***Additional Resources***

- [ACDHS state 2024-25 proposed budget brief](#)
- [Allegheny Analytics](#): Includes briefs and interactive dashboard related to housing and homelessness in Allegheny County
- [QuickCount](#): Includes interactive tools to describes trends in needs and services by district
- For additional information on budget advocacy efforts on behalf of counties, we recommend engaging with the PA Association of County Human Services Administrators ([PACHSA](#)) and the County Commissioners Association of PA ([CCAP](#))