



*A newsletter for LVRHAB members and community partners*



## What is the LVRHAB?

The Lehigh Valley Regional Homeless Advisory Board is a collaborative, community-based response to homelessness in our community.

Also known as the LVRHAB or RHAB, we are comprised of representatives from City and County governments, social service agencies, veterans support groups, faith-based and other community organizations, advocates, people who have or are currently experiencing homelessness, representatives from legislators, and other interested parties with the mandate of ending homelessness and housing insecurity in the Lehigh Valley.

The LVRHAB is one of five RHABs across 33 counties that make up the Eastern Pennsylvania Continuum of Care (Eastern PA CoC). If you are interested, the CoC is recruiting for committee membership. Apply [HERE](#).

For more info about the LVRHAB and how you can join, please contact:

Jenna Sentz ([jsentz@thirdstreetalliance.org](mailto:jsentz@thirdstreetalliance.org)) and Chris Cassidy ([ccassidy@newbethanyministries.org](mailto:ccassidy@newbethanyministries.org)).



**Facebook**  
**@LehighValleyRHAB**



**Twitter**  
**@LV\_RHAB**



**Join us on Slack**  
**#lehigh-valley-rhab**  
**[Click Here to Register](#)**

## Volunteers Needed for PIT Count

*By Marielle Miller, United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley  
AmeriCorps VISTA 211 & Housing*

The LVRHAB is seeking volunteers to assist with the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) mandated Point in Time (PIT) Count of people in Lehigh and Northampton counties who are experiencing homelessness.

**This count will occur in the evening of Feb. 23rd into the day Feb. 24th.**

HUD mandates that the PIT Count be conducted every year in January to gather statistics about people experiencing homelessness (it was delayed to February this year due to COVID-19). This includes people who are staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and safe havens on a single night, as well as those who are living outdoors or in other locations unfit for human habitation.

HUD's goal, alongside other federal, tribal, state, and local partners, is to re-house 100,000 households experiencing homelessness through a Housing First approach. This PIT Count will help aid those efforts.

Trained volunteers will collect data during a single point-in-time on people, both sheltered and unsheltered, who are experiencing homelessness. The information gathered during the count is crucial in helping to determine the need for services and to create strategies to end homelessness in our community. The results of this count determine how much funding the Lehigh Valley receives to assist the most vulnerable members of our community.

In early 2020, the PIT Count and its volunteers were featured in the **Morning Call** for their efforts. Pre-pandemic they found that 574 people in the Lehigh Valley were homeless. In 2019, a total of 2,885 people who were at risk of being homeless or already homeless sought out services from the Connect to Home: Coordinated Entry System of the Eastern PA Continuum of Care. Numbers are expected to be significantly higher than the 2020 PIT Count due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing lack of affordable housing.

The PIT Count organizers are seeking LVRHAB members to volunteer for the unsheltered count. **If you are interested, there is a mandatory training on Thurs., Feb. 17, 9:00AM-10:30AM. [Click HERE](#) to sign up.**

For more information, please email Michelle Wagner ([michelle.wagner@valleyhealthpartners.org](mailto:michelle.wagner@valleyhealthpartners.org)) and Bob Rapp, Jr. ([bobrapp@christucc.org](mailto:bobrapp@christucc.org)).

# Eviction Expungement

By *Gardyney Deshommies, Lehigh University Community Fellow*

The current eviction process bars individuals and families from accessing housing, continuing the cycle of poverty and homelessness. When a landlord files for eviction, which is the ordering for the removal of a tenant out of the property they are renting, it appears on the tenant's record. Evictions occur because of nonpayment of the full rental amount, foreclosure on the property, the property being converted for a different use, and a myriad of other reasons. Even in situations where the tenant is not at fault, the eviction record then causes issues for tenants to access housing in the future.

There are no laws in Pennsylvania that makes it possible to seal or expunge eviction records, which is an increasingly high occurrence that prevents individuals and families from getting housing. For this reason, the LVRHAB Advocacy Committee will be launching an awareness campaign in support of future state legislation that calls for eviction expungement and eviction record sealing.

Although there is a partisan nature to every issue, we must recognize and confront the current housing epidemic that is plaguing the Lehigh Valley, together. Towards that end, the LVRHAB Advocacy Committee will be seeking volunteers to reach out to Lehigh Valley legislators to educate them on why this issue is important and how implementing eviction expungements removes the barrier to stable housing.

More details are forthcoming, but in the meantime, you can learn more by reading the articles linked below.

## Reading Resources

### Eviction Expungement

[Breaking the Record: Dismantling the Barriers Eviction Records Place on Housing Opportunities](#)

[Eviction Record Expungement Can Remove Barriers to Stable Housing](#)

[State Policymakers Are Working to Change How Courts Handle Eviction Cases](#)

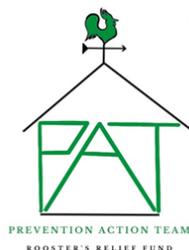
Also of note...

[Mayors and America's Homelessness Crisis: How much control does your mayor have over the issue of homelessness?](#)

[Homelessness and Housing Instability Among LGBTQ Youth](#)

# Attention Caseworkers:

One-Time Homeless Prevention Funds Available!



The Rooster Relief Fund proactively prevents homelessness by providing one-time financial assistance to households who do not qualify for government grants or other existing preventive services.

Named in honor of retired Allentown School District homeless liaison, Russell "Rooster" Valentini, the program is administered by the LVRHAB's Prevention Action Team.

If you are working with a client you think might qualify, please reach out to Seth Campbell ([seth.campbell@valleyhealthpartners.org](mailto:seth.campbell@valleyhealthpartners.org)) and Ben Stephens ([bstephens@lehighchurches.org](mailto:bstephens@lehighchurches.org)) for more information and a copy of the Standard Operating Procedures.

## Meetings

### Attendance Reminder:

For all RHAB related meetings, please mark your attendance using this link: [HERE](#)

### LVRHAB Quarterly Meeting Schedule

2nd Tuesday of the Month, 10:00AM-11:30AM

**Registration link will be sent via email**

March 8

June 14

September 13

December 13

### Sub-Committee/Working Group Formation

**Organizational Meeting** (including Affordable Housing, Coordinated Entry, Lived Expertise, Veterans, and more). All are welcomed!

Led by Rob Nicolella, Catholic Charities

March 22, 10:00AM

[Click Here to Register](#)

### Fair Housing Training for Housing Providers

This training is required for CoC funded providers.

April 6, 10:00AM-12:00PM

[Click Here to Register](#)