



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) and Chris Cassidy (ccassidy@newbethanyministries.org).



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[@LehighValleyRHAB](#)



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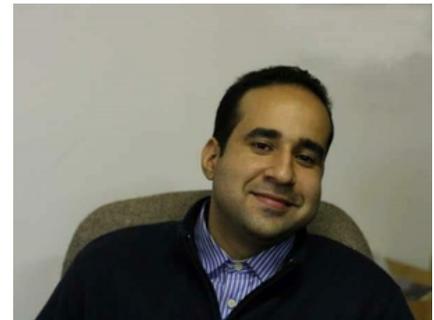
Join us on Slack
[#lehigh-valley-rhab](#)
[Click Here to Register](#)



<https://lvrhab.org/>

Introducing Francisco Figueroa as Coordinated Entry Regional Manager!

Francisco Figueroa started as the Coordinated Entry Regional Manager for Connect To Home: Coordinated Entry System of Eastern PA in the Lehigh Valley in June, replacing Julie Kennedy, who moved to a new position. The Coordinated Entry System (CES) coordinates and manages access, assessment, prioritization, and referral to housing and services for any person(s) experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness. More information about Connect To Home can found [here](#).



Francisco Figueroa, CES Regional Manager

Francisco is based at the Lehigh Conference of Churches, where he previously worked as a Coordinated Entry Specialist/Housing Assessment Worker. He earned a bachelor's degree in social work from Cedar Crest College. Prior to the Conference, Francisco was a case aid/manager at the Salvation Army.

Francisco is charged with coordinating and managing housing services for people experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness. He also coordinates the By-Name List meetings. Please reach out to him if you would like to attend. Francisco can be reached at FFigueroa@lehighchurches.org or 610-433-6421 x6213.

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is November 12-20!

Each year, Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week (November 12-20) draws attention to the challenges faced by people in our community who are experiencing food insecurity and homelessness. Participating groups spend the week holding educational, service, fundraising, and advocacy events.

Locally, the Lehigh Conference of Churches will host a week of daily activities to educate the community, advocate for change, and raise funds to help those facing hunger and homelessness in the Lehigh Valley. The Conference is especially proud to present Keynote Speaker Dr. Matthew Desmond, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, who will appear at DeSales University on November 14. Please visit the Conference's [website](#) for more details and get your tickets today!

With both virtual and in-person events, we invite all LVRHAB members to join us in exploring these important issues. It offers a terrific opportunity to introduce these topics to the stakeholders in our community. Please see the flyer on the back of the newsletter for more details!

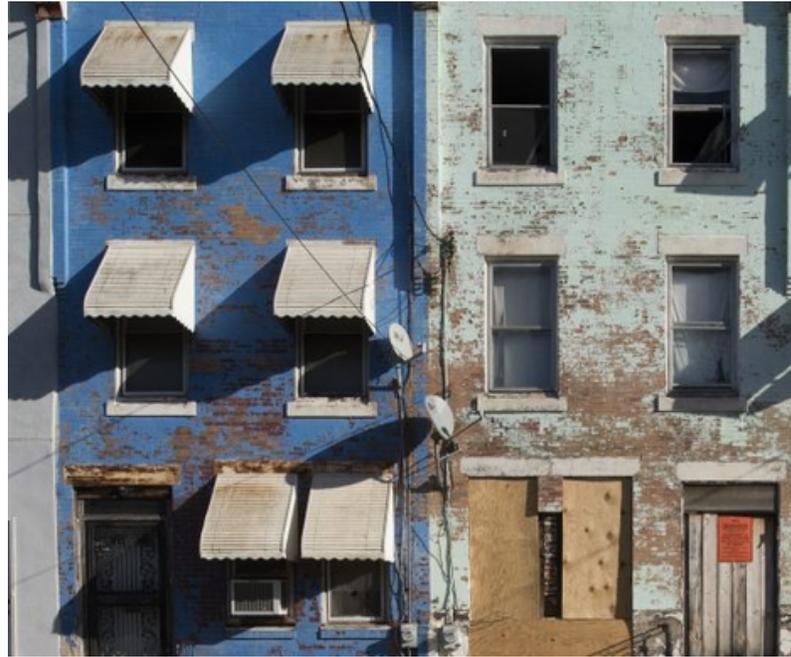
Whole Homes Repair Bill: Combating the Climate Crisis and Helping Our Communities

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

For many homeowners and renters, trying to keep up with home repairs can come at a huge cost to their wallets and well-being. From cracks in the foundation to leaks and old pipes, the costs can add up and with the current economic crisis it can be hard for people to prioritize fixing up their homes versus paying for medicine, food, and bills. Not to mention Pennsylvania has some of the oldest houses and apartments in the nation (according to the U.S. Census, over a quarter of was built prior to 1940 and nearly 60% before 1970).

This is where PA State Senator Nikil Saval comes in. The Philadelphia State Senator introduced the Whole Homes Repair Act in March 2022, and it has received bipartisan support from several state lawmakers. The Whole Homes Repair bill provides eligible residents with grants amounting up to \$50,000 to make needed home repairs. Landlords who own smaller properties may apply for the same amount in forgivable loans. In addition to home repairs, this bill will increase investments in workforce development, which will increase the number of workers qualified to make these types of repairs.

As a renter in the Lehigh Valley, I struggled to find housing before moving to Allentown. Due to the economy and the ever-increasing costs that come with it, finding safe, affordable, and accessible housing can be challenging and discouraging at times. Once I found an apartment that was affordable and in a location that is accessible to the downtown, several pharmacies and grocery stores, it became apparent that it had many issues with the foundation, a porch in need of a brand-new roof and new support structures. As a historic city, Allentown also requires many permits and permissions to “maintain its historic integrity” before beginning any type of repairs, which can be a time-consuming process. For those who rent or own property as their primary source of income, it can be challenging to afford



repairs and not lose tenants due to increasing rent costs. This causes a lot of landlords to cut corners but eventually their properties become unsafe for their tenants.

Another reason the bill has become a necessity is the on-going climate crisis. Since 1958, precipitation from heavy storms has increased by 70% in the Northeast. Due to inaction from state and federal governments over the last 64 years, the climate crisis is predicted to create an increase in extreme rainfall events by 8% over the next 30 years while the state's average temperature is expected to rise by 6 degrees Fahrenheit in the same period. This hotter and wetter weather will continue to accelerate the deterioration of Pennsylvania's aging housing stock under conditions these homes were never designed to withstand.

While the evidence is clear that Pennsylvanians need the Whole Homes Repair bill, it wasn't a breeze to pass. But with the insistence of Pennsylvanian renters and homeowners who held actions and support from housing, legal and environmental organizations, enough pressure was put on politicians to pass the bill and add it to the budget in July 2022.

For more information on the bill please visit [here](#) and [here](#).

**WHOLE
HOME
REPAIRS**



Dixie Cup Site: What Happens Next?

by Armando Moritz-Chapelliquen

With Northampton County Council's rejection of a LERTA tax benefit for the Dixie Cup site, the question that has hung over the site for 40 years, "what happens next?" is top of mind for many.

After decades of false starts and continued deterioration, this site should be redeveloped equitably and responsibly. Several neighbors, residents, and business owners have excellent ideas for this site's future. Now is the time to share those ideas through a community survey.

Instead of having community continually be reactive to developers' plans, this survey will inform a proactive community vision for the Dixie Cup site. Through collective feedback, a community-led vision for this site would help the current owner, Wilson Park LTD, weigh prospective offers and provide insight to elected officials who may be asked to consider tax benefits to potential plans.

Community development is best when community is leading the process. This is our opportunity to set the terms of this site's future. Let's make the most of it!



QR code for survey

Join the Landlord Engagement Team!

This team engages landlords to join a network of their peers who have agreed to rent to homeless or at-risk households by ensuring guaranteed rent, reimbursement for property damage, missed rent, case management for tenants, and other supports. This creates increased access to safe, affordable units, which, in turn, reduces homelessness and housing insecurity in the Lehigh Valley. If you are interested in being involved, please reach out to Michele Albright.

Attention Caseworkers:

One-Time Homeless Prevention Funds Available!



PREVENTION ACTION TEAM
ROOSTER'S RELIEF FUND

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 and Ben Stephens for more information and a copy of the Standard Operating Procedures.

Reading Resources

[How CoCs Can Engage Local Leaders on Affordable Housing](#)

[America's first homelessness problem: Knowing who is actually homeless](#)

[Opinion: Strom Thurmond blocked me from renting a home](#)

[What Does Spatial Justice for Unhoused People Look Like?](#)

[60% of renters saw rent increases in the past 12 months, Freddie Mac survey shows](#)

[To Address Youth Homelessness, New York City Turns to Those With Experience](#)

[Poor Housing Conditions Increased the Risk of Dying from COVID-19 Mortality](#)

Upcoming Meetings

Attendance Reminder:

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

LVRHAB Quarterly Meeting Schedule

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

October 11 & December 13

[Click Here to Register](#)

Advocacy & Communications Team

2nd Wednesday of every 2 months, 3-4PM

Contact [Erin Connelly](#) and [Marc Rittle](#) for more information.

Affordable Housing Committee

Thursday, October 27, at 4 PM

[Click Here to Register](#)

Contact [Abby Goldfarb](#) for more information.

Landlord Engagement Team

Next meeting October 3 at 3 PM

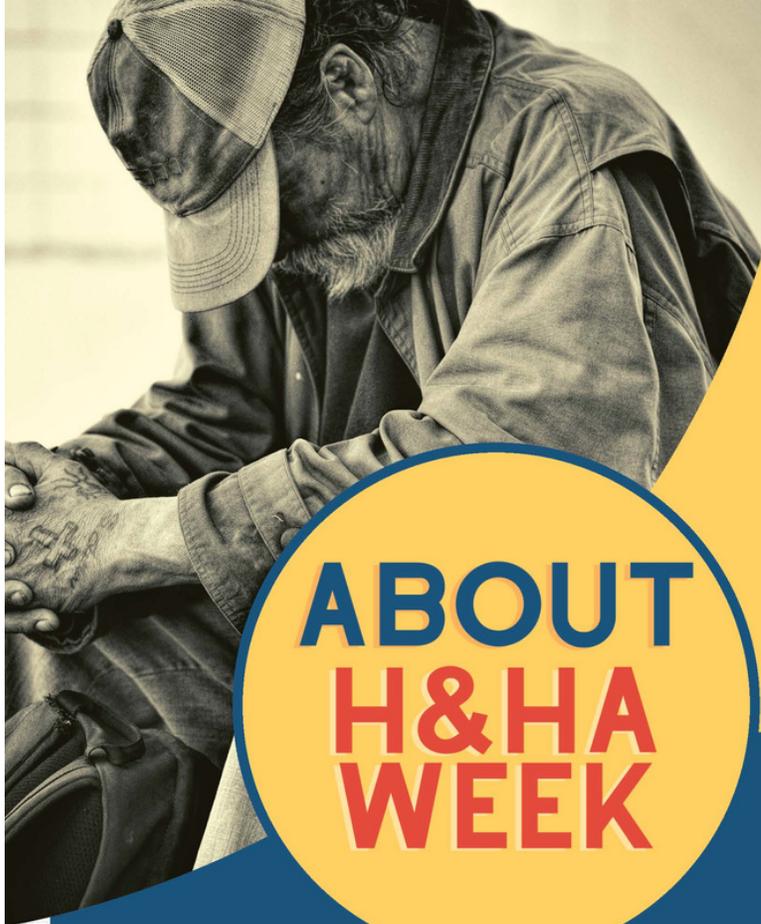
Contact [Michele Albright](#) for more information.

Prevention Action Team

First Thursday of every month at noon (next meeting is October 7)

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Contact [Seth Campbell](#) and [Ben Stephens](#) for more information.



ABOUT H&HA WEEK

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is an annual program where people come together across the country to draw attention to the problems of hunger and homelessness. Participating groups spend the week holding a series of educational, service, fundraising, and advocacy events.

Locally, the Conference will engage in a week of daily activities to educate the community, advocate for change, and raise funds to help those facing hunger and homelessness in the Lehigh Valley.

Contact cmoran@lehighchurches.org for details



Hunger & Homelessness
Awareness Week



The Lehigh
CONFERENCE
of CHURCHES

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week

November 12-20, 2022

- (11/12-11/13) Kick Off: Uniting Faith Communities To End Hunger & Homelessness
- (11/14) Community Forum •
Featuring Keynote Speaker •
Matthew Desmond •
- (11/15) The Official Brunch •
Boys Presents "Afternoon of •
Advocacy" Podcast / •
Sponsorship Mixer •
- (11/16) Game of Rent
- (11/17) Faces of
Homelessness Panel
- (11/18) Moment of Silence -
Prayer Vigil
- (11/19-11/20) One Night
Without a Home

Sponsorship Opportunities Available