

### **APPLICANT INSTRUCTIONS:**

This is a companion guide to submit for the Lancaster County Joint Funding Homelessness Grants and should be used as an instructional guide for completing the application(s) in the Neighborly portal.

**BACKGROUND:** Prior to 2016, each Lancaster County service provider submitted multiple applications to each funding source to receive funds for homelessness services. The local funders began to collaborate and developed one application for funding homelessness services. Upon inception of this Joint Funder's application, this new process now brings together funders in a collaborative effort to provide a systematic approach to service provision and act as best stewards of available funding for Lancaster County residents experiencing homelessness.

Lancaster County is a designated "entitlement" community known as the PA-510 Continuum of Care by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Each entitlement community receives a formulaic award.

**CONTINUUM OF CARE (COC):** The Lancaster County Continuum of Care Program is designed to promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; and provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, and State and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness; promote access to and effect utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

**ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:** Non-profits in good standing that provide or desire to provide services in Lancaster County to individuals and/or families experiencing homelessness, imminent risk of homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Due to funding constraints, the central focus of Joint Funding is on HUD Defined Homelessness, Categories 1 & 4.

**JOINT FUNDING PARTNERS:** Community partners that typically contribute financially to Joint Funding include the County of Lancaster, City of Lancaster, Lancaster County Continuum of Care, Lancaster County Redevelopment Authority, United Way of Lancaster County, and the Lancaster County Community Foundation. The Office for the Homelessness Coalition continues to seek additional investors to increase the funding.

**JOINT FUNDS:** Total funds to be allocated are estimated at this time at \$1.4 million for the entire county. We are mindful that the current landscape regarding federal grant awards has become uncertain. Therefore, at this time, we anticipate conditionally awarding funds in May 2025. Services needed by Lancaster County's homelessness response system far exceed that which is available through this Joint Funding process. The eligible funding for fiscal year 2025 through this application process is:

- **Continuum of Care (CoC) Funds** – HUD funded/County focused/managed through the Lancaster County Housing and Redevelopment Authority.
- **Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Funds** – HUD funded/County focused/managed through the Lancaster County Housing and Redevelopment Authority.
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds** - HUD funded/County focused/managed through the Lancaster County Housing and Redevelopment Authority.
- **Homeless Assistance Program (HAP) Funds** – Commonwealth of PA funded/County focused/managed through the Lancaster County Housing and Redevelopment Authority and includes Client Financial Assistance Funds.
- **United Way of Lancaster County (UWLC) Funds** – Flexible funds addressing homelessness and housing insecurity.
- **City ARPA Funds** – Dedicated to Clay Street Emergency Shelter (available until April 2026)

# Lancaster County Joint Funding FY25-26 Homelessness Services Grants Overview Packet

- **Katherine K. Gaeth Fund (Gaeth)**– Local fund financially managed by the Lancaster County Community Foundation.

**ELIGIBLE PROGRAMS:** At this time, these programs are funded in part through this funding process:

**Street Outreach** – Engagement (short term), assessments, and case management: The role of the Street Outreach team is to provide services such as engagement, coordinated entry assessment, case management, and other services as needed to unsheltered individuals living in the community. The main goal for the Street Outreach team is housing for individuals who are HUD defined as homeless.

**Coordinated Entry Agency** – The Coordinated Entry Agency, in partnership with the O4C, is responsible for handling incoming requests for homeless services and moving individuals quickly through the assessment process.

**Coordinated Entry Manager:** The Coordinated Entry Manager, in partnership with the O4C, is responsible for training and guidance surrounding the CE System. This includes any changes to Empower Lancaster processes such as Referrals or Events. The CE Manager also shares management responsibility of the Lancaster County By-Name List (BNL) with the O4C. This position is expected to maintain a working knowledge of the Homeless Response System (e.g., Prevention, Outreach, and Housing Programs) to be able to support providers and engage in system improvement.

**Emergency Overnight Shelter and Winter Shelter (Night):** Emergency Shelters in Lancaster County focus on serving individuals and families experiencing homelessness. These programs provide a temporary warm, safe, and dry place for unsheltered individuals to stay while transitioning into permanent and stable housing. Between early December and late March, additional bed spaces are opened to temporarily increase the available shelter capacity during the cold winter months.

**Emergency Day Shelter and Winter Shelter (Day):** Emergency Day Shelters (Day Centers) in Lancaster County focus on serving individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Providing a temporary daytime warm, safe, and dry place for unsheltered individuals to stay while transitioning into permanent and stable housing. To meet a service gap within the homelessness response system, a separate category was created for Day Shelter in this application. Applicants seeking to host a day center should apply for Day Shelter, not under Street Outreach.

**Pathways (Rapid Rehousing) - Case Management:** Pathways is Lancaster County’s Rapid Rehousing (RRH) program, a housing-first initiative focused on quickly moving people off the streets and out of shelters. Time-limited financial assistance and targeted supportive services are intended to help people regain and maintain long-term housing. Working alongside Pathways case managers, individuals and families set housing sustainability goals, develop a plan that includes mainstream and other resources, and take action to achieve their success.

**Prevention - Case Management and Limited Financial Assistance:** This program’s intent is to serve individuals at risk of becoming homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness. Providing supports such as case management, limited financial rental and utility assistance, advocating with landlords for lease renewals and payments, accessing mainstream resources and government benefits, with the overarching goal to keep people housed. This includes a client centered approach of exploring a household’s natural community resources and addressing barriers to maintaining housing.

**Special Projects for HUD Defined Homelessness (Categories #1 and #4 only):** This limited funding category is an opportunity for agencies to apply for programming that specifically addresses individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Innovative programs or other programs that do not align with the above categories can apply through Special Projects.

# Lancaster County Joint Funding FY25-26 Homelessness Services Grants Overview Packet

**NOTE:** Permanent Supportive Housing, Crisis Housing, and match funds for other HUD programs are not eligible programs under this joint funding application.

**TIMELINE:** This timeline is constructed using all available information as of the time of its creation. Any revisions or updates to significant dates will be communicated through the LCHRA website.

Item	Important Dates
<b>Application Release</b>	<b>February 19, 2025</b>
<a href="#">Funding Forum Presentation – Virtual</a>	<b>February 25th, 2025 9:30 am – 11 am</b>
<b>Virtual Open Office Hours (click date to attend)</b>	<a href="#">March 4th 2-3:00</a> <a href="#">March 6th 9-10:00</a> <a href="#">March 12th 11-12:00</a> <a href="#">March 20th 1-2:00</a>
<b>Frequently Asked Questions Deadline (FAQs can be found <a href="#">LCHRA.com</a>)</b>	<b>March 25, 2025 by 5 pm</b>
<b>Final Applications due in the Neighborly Portal</b>	<b>March 27<sup>th</sup> by 5 pm</b>
<b>New Applicant In-Person Presentations @ LCHRA</b>	<b>April 28<sup>th</sup> May 2<sup>nd</sup></b>
<b>Questions to Renewal Applicants</b>	<b>April 28, 2025</b>
<b>Renewal Applicants Responses Due Back</b>	<b>May 2, 2025</b>
<b>Homelessness Coalition Steering Committee Approval</b>	<b>May 14, 2025</b>
<b>LCRA Board of Directors Approval</b>	<b>May 27, 2025</b>
<b>Conditional Award Announcements (contingent upon approval dates)</b>	<b>May 29, 2025</b>
<b>Contract Meetings with Grantees</b>	<b>June 9<sup>th</sup> through June 20<sup>th</sup> 2025</b>
<b>Contract Period</b>	<b>July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, through June 30<sup>th</sup> 2026</b>

## **APPLICATION SUBMISSION THROUGH NEIGHBORLY PORTAL:**

We use a software platform called Neighborly to handle the applications and disbursement of funds. To access the platform, go to [https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/lchra\\_pa/participant](https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/lchra_pa/participant). New users will need to register their account and should click on “Sign Up Now.” Once logged in select the Start Application button next to the Public and Homelessness Services Application. (Note: you won’t see this listed until the application period is active.) Follow the prompts to complete the application. If you have questions on the Neighborly portal, please contact Beth DeGoede at [bdegoede@lchra.com](mailto:bdegoede@lchra.com).

## **APPLICATION AND PROCESS CHANGES/ADDITIONS:**

**APPLICATION:** Each request needs a separate application completed in Neighborly. **For your convenience, we have attached the Application in Word format for you to draft responses.** However, you must input the content into the Neighborly software.

**REQUIRED MATCH:** This year, all program applications require a minimum of *10% cash or in-kind match*.

**SCORING AND RANKING:** The applications will be scored and ranked by the Funders and Review Committee and will focus on the following areas and support:

1. Agency and Program Description (Joint Funding Application)
2. Program Performance Measures (Empower Lancaster)
3. Program Engagement (Office for the Coalition)

The Review Committee consists of members from LCHC Steering Committee’s Grant Action Team, United Way of Lancaster County, Lancaster County Redevelopment Board, City of Lancaster, and the general community of Lancaster County including individuals with lived homelessness expertise.

# Lancaster County Joint Funding FY25-26 Homelessness Services Grants Overview Packet

**PRESENTATIONS:** All eligible new applicants will be invited to present their program to the Review Committee during the week of April 28<sup>th</sup> through May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2025 (20–30 minute presentation with Q&A). *Renewal applicants from last fiscal year are not obligated to present to the Review Committee this year.* Alternatively, renewal applicants can expect questions by email inquiring on details of the application, program specifics, and/or clarifications during the week of April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**APPLICATION QUESTIONS:** Upon release of the Application, questions should be directed to Beth DeGoede at [bdegoede@lchra.com](mailto:bdegoede@lchra.com) for review. All questions and responses will be available on the <https://lchra.com/our-organizations/homelessness-coalition/funding-opportunities/>. The Q&A will close on Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 4:30pm.

**REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION:** Along with a completed application in the Neighborly portal, supportive documentation will need to be uploaded including:

- ADA Compliance Certification (required)
- Anti-Lobbying Certificate (required)
- PA Bureau of Charitable Organization Certificate (current good standing) (required)
- Organizational Grievance Policy (required)
- Client Satisfaction Survey (required)
- ~~Racial Equity Survey (required)~~
- Counter Terrorism Compliance (required)
- Most Recent Audited Financials (required)
- Non-Discrimination Policy (required)
- IRS 501(c)3 Determination Letter (required)
- Lived Experience Support Letter (letters from individuals participating in boards, as employee) (optional)
- Other (Please upload any additional material you would like to share with the review team.)

## **OVERVIEW OF SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS FOR 2025:**

**Program #1: Coordinated Entry:** Streamlining the system for more rapid engagement.

**Goal #1: Single Provider:** In FY25, Lancaster County seeks to improve the efficiency of its Coordinated Entry (CE) system. To achieve this, we are looking for a single organization to be the county's one-step coordinated entry provider, screening the needs of clients, verifying homelessness, performing HUD assessments, and administering a prioritization tool. (Apply in this application for this role.)

**Goal #2: Simplify the CE assessment tool.** In FY25, we will adopt a simpler, locally designed needs assessment tool in lieu of the VI-SPDAT vulnerability index. (Future discussions will occur among CE providers with a launch by July 1.)

**Goal #3: Publish CE Manual:** Implement a defined set of standards and procedures to ensure CE is more transparent, and equitable with a process for addressing concerns about services.

### **Why are these goals important?**

Lancaster County's Coordinated Entry, as it currently exists, needs to be stronger in two areas: one, getting clients who are seeking help onto the county-wide By Name list, and two, getting prioritized clients list matched with resources.

Empower Lancaster data shows that in the first six months of FY24 (July 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024), only 65% of the households enrolled in Prescreen Coordinated Assessment (the first of two enrollments required to get clients onto the prioritization list) went on to be enrolled in the Coordinated Entry System. The other 35% were, for the purposes of Coordinated Entry, lost. A portion of this could have been from clients self-resolving their housing

## Lancaster County Joint Funding FY25-26 Homelessness Services Grants Overview Packet

needs outside of the homeless response system. Additionally, at the same time, only four Coordinated Entry Events were entered, signifying that a client household was matched with a housing resource

These changes will allow the CoC will seek to (1) screen and assess clients immediately rather than having a “two-stage” system to more efficiently place homeless clients on the By-Name prioritization list and (2) intentionally and actively move clients off the prioritization list and into housing resources, entering a Coordinated Entry Event every time a resource “match” occurs.

In short, the process looks like:

- Centralized CE agency – this is a one-step (1 call /1 person) transaction that will move people quickly through the assessments.
- All homelessness services providers are expected to be knowledgeable of the process and connect to the centralized number.
- A new assessment tool is being drafted and will be vetted with key partners in the coming months.
- Street Outreach is considered as mobile CE access with enrolling people into CE and performing required assessments.

Any provider interested in being the county-wide centralized CE agency, should apply for the Coordinated Entry program.

### **Program #2: Coordinated Entry Manager:**

The Coordinated Entry Manager position is expected to maintain an active knowledge of the Homeless Response System and co-lead in facilitating the BNL/Case Conferencing Meetings, in which providers will help identify and prioritize the most vulnerable individuals. This will ensure transparency in the process and that it is not a singularly guided decision on who is housed. The CE Manager will then connect the BNL household with a program for potential enrollment based on eligibility and the availability of services.

**Goal #1: Compliance with the Prioritization Policy:** Ensure that individuals who are added to the By Name List are assessed and prioritized according to CoC standards. This ensures equity of access to housing opportunities across Lancaster County and ensures that assessments are current.

**Goal #2: Co-Facilitation of the By Name List and Case Conferencing Meetings:** This position is expected to maintain an active knowledge of the Homeless Response System, including the availability of program services. The CE Manager will also coordinate with Street Outreach Workers and Case Managers to maintain current household information on the BNL.

**Goal #3: Collaborate with the O4C on Grant Compliance:** Ensure compliance by entering a Coordinated Entry Event (CE Event) in the Empower Lancaster HMIS every time a client on the By-Name List is matched with a housing resource.

**Program #3: Street Outreach:** In FY25, Lancaster County’s outreach strategy will continue to prioritize locating, assessing, and serving clients in unsheltered locations and serving as a mobile Coordinated Entry point of contact.

**Goal #1: Reaching the “hardest to reach” people:** The CoC is expected to continue to tailor its street outreach to people experiencing homelessness who are least likely to request assistance and to serve clients regardless of where they are located within the CoC’s geographic area. This means that effective street outreach reaches clients where they are and seeks to serve the clients with the highest needs.

**Goal #2: Depth not Breadth:** To maximize the efforts of assisting unsheltered individuals, the CoC encourages even deeper engagement with unsheltered clients to advocate for housing programs especially with the by-name list case consultations.

# Lancaster County Joint Funding FY25-26 Homelessness Services Grants Overview Packet

**Goal #3: Verification of Homelessness:** Street Outreach will perform all HUD assessments and gather Verification of Homelessness for every new client they are enrolling. Street Outreach will be equipped to perform the CoC Prioritization Tool as a function of mobile Coordinated Entry.

## **Why are these goals important?**

Lancaster County's Homeless Street Outreach programs engage a high number of clients; however, the data shows limited success in placing people into emergency, temporary, institutional, or permanent housing—any of which align with the intended outcomes of this program. The data suggests that Street Outreach primarily involves brief engagements rather than focused efforts on housing transitions.

In the first six months of the 2024-2025 contract year, the funded Street Outreach programs registered 720 unique clients across 863 enrollments (since some clients were enrolled in multiple SO programs). Of these, 27 enrollments (3.1%) ended with housing destinations other than the street or incarceration. Additionally, 458 enrollments (53.1%) ended without an exit interview, primarily due to automatic exits after 90+ days of inactivity in HMIS. During this period, the average number of hours per client entered was 1.9 hours, suggesting limited engagement per client. Aside from this data, we know there are more engagements happening.

The CoC will seek to fund Street Outreach that prioritizes locating unsheltered individuals and actively engaging these clients with the goal of moving clients off the streets and into residential projects, including shelter, transitional housing, treatment, and permanent housing. This will necessarily require engagement and rapport building between outreach and clients, along with cash assistance to help with small needs like replacement identification, transportation, clothing, bedding, etc. Because the target population of Street Outreach is people in unsheltered locations, once clients are securely placed in a residential setting Street Outreach will close their clients and move on to serving other unsheltered people.

## **Here's how the CoC will improve the Street Outreach program by:**

1. Combining all the county's Street Outreach programs into a single shared program in Empower Lancaster. This means that there will be a single HMIS program called "Street Outreach" where clients are enrolled, and services and case notes are logged that is shared by all funded SO providers rather than each provider keeping a separate set of enrollments. This will save time and bring Lancaster County in line with other CoCs.
2. Street Outreach will also move toward a caseload strategy for active clients in Empower Lancaster. Using "case manager assignments" in Empower Lancaster to designate which outreach worker holds primary responsibility for each client.
3. Empower Lancaster changes include:
  - Ending case manager assignments and closing outreach enrollments once a client is no longer unsheltered. A client moving into an emergency shelter or transitional housing program is a success for outreach. Clients should expect to receive the same level of support and service from shelter and transitional housing programs that they did from outreach. Outreach will prioritize serving unsheltered clients.
  - Recording client contacts in Empower Lancaster: To meet HUD's annual reporting requirements, Street Outreach will begin to use a specific form when entering case management units. This form, called Outreach Contacts, will record the date of service, the client's current living situation, and the number of 1/4-hour case management units delivered. It will be easily accessible in Empower Lancaster.

## **Lancaster County Joint Funding FY25-26 Homelessness Services Grants Overview Packet**

4. Steet outreach will continue to prioritize moving unsheltered clients into sheltered locations or permanent housing. Exits to shelter, treatment, long-term care, transitional housing, and permanent housing will be outreach's output goal. A secondary goal will be getting unsheltered clients onto the by-name list to facilitate those exits to shelter/housing.

We will be working collaboratively to ensure these changes are made as seamlessly as possible. Please consider your agency's role in these homelessness and homelessness prevention programs and join us for the virtual forum.

Sincerely,

The Office for the Homelessness Coalition (O4C)  
February 19, 2025

Revised March 19, 2025