



May 16, 2022

Dear City Council Members:

We are requesting that Council direct \$15 million of the City of Philadelphia's \$42 million for homelessness from the American Rescue Plan for prevention rather than the currently proposed \$5 million.

We suggest to Council that investing \$15 million is a more cost-effective and equitable use of public funds to address homelessness.

While the need for affordable housing is very important, thousands of Philadelphians need help today.

Some of the challenges include:

- The rate of eviction filings has increased since February 2022;
- 400+ families and 400+ single individuals are living in homeless shelters and another 1,000 are on the street;
- There are 1,500 households on a waiting list for prevention services at two prevention programs, and all other prevention programs are not using a waiting list for lack of funding; and
- More than 13,000 households have asked Office of Homeless Services (OHS) for assistance between July 1, 2021 and January 31, 2022, indicating current need.

Philadelphia has an historic one-time opportunity to use its \$42 million to potentially end homelessness for thousands of our neighbors. While it is laudable that the current plan is to use \$23 million for development and preservation to build 345 new units of housing, we suggest that more people would be helped through prevention.

Using information from the Office of Homeless Services, we understand that the average support for homelessness prevention is \$2,500. If \$15,000,000 were provided, the City could potentially support 6,000 of the most at-risk households over the next few years.

In summary, we request that City Council work with the Administration to target \$15 million of the American Rescue Plan for prevention.

Sincerely,

Angelica Bernard, Hildaliz Escalante, **Congreso De Latinos Unidos, Inc.**
Rachel Falkove, **Philadelphia Interfaith Hospitality Network**
Jessica Humphries, Joe Willard, **People's Emergency Center**
Alyssa Weinfurtner, **Valley Youth House**
Greg Wertman, **HAPCO Philadelphia**