



General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Joint State Government Commission
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Report Summary in response to 2014 House Resolution 550

Homelessness in Pennsylvania: Causes, Impacts, and Solutions
A Task Force and Advisory Committee Report

House Resolution 550 of 2014 directed the Joint State Government Commission to establish a bipartisan legislative task force and an advisory committee to conduct a study of the occurrence, effects, and trends of homelessness in Pennsylvania and to report its findings and recommendations to the House of Representatives.

Shelter is a basic human need. As the Resolution states, “a stable, quality, affordable home promotes family stability, physical and mental health and enhances both adults’ and children’s ability to be productive. Conversely, the lack of a stable, quality, affordable home increases the risk of illness, failure at school, inability to find or hold a job, incarceration and nursing home placement, often at public expense.”

When homelessness is experienced in childhood, it can have a dramatic, ongoing impact on the individual’s life. The adverse effects of childhood homelessness on children’s health, development, and well-being are also associated with both short-term and long-term societal costs and impose a costly toll on society. Prevention and early intervention are critical.

Guided by the Resolution, the advisory committee undertook a comprehensive analysis of Pennsylvania’s homelessness problem and developed a set of recommendations that would move the Commonwealth toward permanently reducing and eliminating homelessness.

The advisory committee and the task force made general recommendations regarding

- Organization and planning
- Data collection and data sharing
- Homelessness prevention
- State housing policy
- Best practices interventions, and

specific recommendations designed to address the needs of several homeless subpopulations:

- Victims of domestic violence
- Former inmates
- Individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders
- People experiencing homelessness in rural areas
- Veterans
- Children and youth

Statutory recommendations are also included.

The full report is available on our website, <http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us/>