

Housing Finance Agency: Delaware State Housing Authority

Entry Title: Unhoused, Not Unheard

Category: Communications: Integrated Campaign



Unhoused, Not Unheard

The Delaware Interagency Collaborative to End Homelessness represents the first coordinated statewide effort, created under Governor Matt Meyer, to strengthen Delaware's homelessness response system.

As leaders of the Collaborative, DSHA knew that we needed a strong education and outreach campaign to explain the issues surrounding homelessness to the general public and to ensure that we gathered voices of those who have experienced housing instability.

Working closely with Policy and Planning, Public Relations created the concept of hosting resource-based listening sessions around the state where we would explain the collaborative's work, provide short presentations on services and resources that serve those who are unhoused and hear from the public on needs, questions and comments.

Our goal for these sessions, titled "Unhoused, not Unheard," was not to spend time talking about the problem of homelessness, but to focus on learning what's being done and what's needed.

We held two-hour events, largely at public libraries as they are a frontline resource for the unhoused, and at partner locations. Every stop highlighted a different element of the social services net involved in addressing homelessness, with short presentations from groups such as the Food Bank of Delaware, La Red Health Center, Code Purple and shelter organizations, as well as state agencies, such as the Department of Education, the Division of Libraries, the Department of Labor and the Delaware Division of Services for Children, Youth and their Families. One event showcased the work of a nonprofit group that built a pallet village in the southern part of the state that offered innovative supportive services and a lead coordinator from the state education department who explained McKinney-Vento services in Delaware's public schools.

We were intentional when gathering feedback to make sure people felt comfortable being honest, candid and confident in remaining anonymous, if desired. We acknowledged the existing homelessness response system had shortcomings and we welcomed people to be critical.

DSHA developed a short, electronic survey so the public could share their experiences, ideas, and input on homelessness outside of listening sessions.

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We promoted the survey through a QR code distributed at listening sessions, community events and through partner agencies and community groups as well as in a special banner at the top of our website.

With help from another state agency, we produced a video, “Faces of Homelessness,” that highlights an individual who has experienced homelessness, the barriers she faced to secure housing, the resources she used to find stable housing and her challenges/successes in general.

Along with the listening sessions, we pursued a digital education and awareness campaign to simply get people talking. We created a series of graphics that advertised learning opportunities on social media, our website and in our weekly housing e-newsletter to educate the public and our stakeholders about data, common terms and definitions, and social services related to homelessness.

The communications campaign was essential in helping the Collaborative create recommendations that reflect the voices of people with lived experience of homelessness, service providers, and community stakeholders. Their perspectives underscored recurring challenges in homelessness and helped mold the recommendations in our phase 1 report. Key recommendations focus on expanding street outreach, emergency shelter and navigation and enhanced discharge, exit and transition strategies.

Engage targeted audiences

As a first step, DSHA added a landing page for the Collaborative on our website to highlight the Governor’s Executive Order 8 that created the interagency task force and detail its members, goals and objectives. As the work progressed, we built on the webpage, advertising meetings and listening sessions, archiving meeting materials and recordings and offering social media graphics for download.

An email address was created so the public could reach us directly about the homelessness work: collaborative@delaware.gov.

We gathered email addresses at Collaborative meetings and listening sessions to build our e-newsletter audience.

Obviously, we knew that our established and active social media channels were a key engagement point for this campaign. We post information about all our programs there and added all Collaborative content, including meetings, listening sessions and general education about homelessness. We have 13,121 followers on Facebook, 3,152 on Instagram and 1,188 on LinkedIn.

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Grassroots outreach saw success through formal speaking engagements by our leadership, in small and large setting, as well as informal, tabling opportunities in the community by our Public Relations team. For instance, Delaware's Lt. Gov. Kyle Evans Gay invited DSHA Director Matthew Heckles to join her monthly affinity group calls, reaching leaders of Black, Hispanic, LGBTQ+ and Veterans communities. These are great opportunities to reach a cross-section of the state in a virtual setting, and the calls are followed by direct emails to attendees with links to our resources, website, etc.

Achieve measurable results

We have tracked the reach of our Collaborative work and the outreach campaign since its inception through our digital products. Our newsletter, with 26,171 subscribers, has almost weekly featured Collab-related material, linking readers to our website and related services.

We are proud of the reach the campaign has received, especially for our state, that only recently topped 1 million residents, and given that it has been a fully unpaid campaign in this first stage.

Among our notable numbers:

Survey QR code, 3,321 scans

Collab webpage views: 13,043

Facebook campaign reach: 171,412

Faces of Homelessness video views: 3,663

Visual aids and helpful links

Important links:

- Press release for EO8: <https://news.delaware.gov/2025/04/17/governor-matt-meyer-signs-executive-order-establishing-delaware-interagency-collaborative-to-end-homelessness/>
- The Collab webpage: <https://www.destatehousing.com/about/delaware-interagency-collaborative-to-end-homelessness/>
- Share your input link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/399YVSH>
- Faces of Homelessness video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSTW_LF3mr0&t=1s

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The Collab materials:

- The Collab's report: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:aeec645-598a-4a41-903f-8c7c33550b8f>
- Example of a Collab presentation: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:f93e52ce-7d31-42a2-868b-0577931e1212>

Media coverage:

- <https://statescoop.com/delaware-homelessness-group-2025/>
- <https://www.delawarepublic.org/politics-government/2025-04-19/gov-meyer-signs-executive-order-to-combat-homelessness-through-collaborative-effort>
- https://www.coastalpoint.com/news/state/governor-establishes-delaware-interagency-collaborative-to-end-homelessness/article_a1d95e5c-c3a9-456f-a760-0d4a02172bd6.html
- <https://www.wgmd.com/governor-meyer-to-sign-executive-order-establishing-collaborative-to-address-and-end-homelessness/>
- <https://baytobaynews.com/stories/gov-meyer-signs-executive-order-to-tackle-homelessness-in-delaware,219446>
- https://capture.udel.edu/media/Keynote+Address+and+DE+Interagency+Collaborative+to+End+Homelessness+Panel+%283+4%29/1_w2fqi42u/163420271

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MEETING DESCRIPTION

The Delaware Interagency Collaborative to End Homelessness was established by Governor Matt Meyer signing Executive Order #8. The overall goal of the Collaborative will be to cut homelessness in half and end youth homelessness in Delaware within the next five years.



LOCATION

Kent County Levy Court
Administrative Complex
555 Bay Rd. Dover, Delaware 19901
(Room 220, 2nd Floor)

VIRTUAL MEETING INFORMATION

September 29, 2025, 1:00 PM- 3:00 PM
Meeting ID: 274 841 652 834 5
Passcode: gj9ra6R6
<http://bit.ly/CollabSept29>

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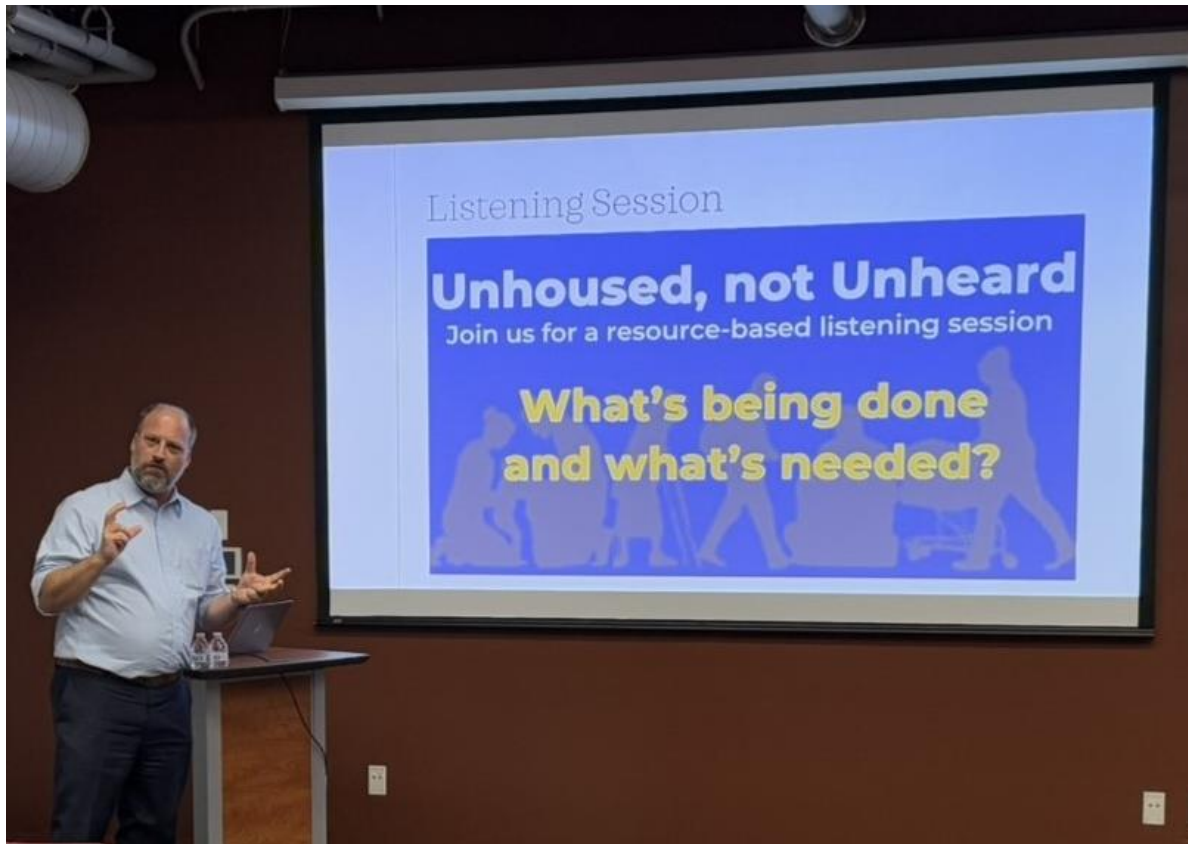
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Literally Homeless



When an individual or family lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes people living in shelters, cars, abandoned buildings, or places not meant for habitation.



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Housing First



- Permanent housing
- Ongoing support services
- Ideal for chronic homelessness
- Goal: end homelessness

Rapid Re-housing



- Short-term aid
- Temporary rental support
- Ideal for crisis response
- Goal: regain stability



<https://www.destatehousing.com/housing-terms-definitions/>

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Low Barrier Shelter



A low-barrier shelter is an emergency housing option with minimal entry requirements. It welcomes people regardless of sobriety status, identification, criminal history, and if they have pets, making it easier for those in crisis to get off the streets and access support.



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Street Outreach



Engagement



**Case
Management**



**Emergency
Health Services**

Street outreach refers to activities aimed at engaging unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness. These activities are designed to meet their immediate needs by connecting them with emergency shelter, housing, or critical services.



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Doubled-Up Homelessness



A term that describes individuals or families who avoid living on the streets by staying with friends or family.

This form of homelessness often results from economic hardship or housing loss and usually lacks a stable, permanent living situation.



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A screenshot of a Facebook post from the Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA). The post features a blue graphic with silhouettes of people and the text "Unhoused, not Unheard" and "Join us for a resource-based listening session". A large white banner with red cursive text says "Thank you!". The event details are: "Monday, December 15 | 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. Friendship House at Church on Main 44 W. Main Street Middletown, DE 19709". Logos for "THE COLLABORATIVE" and "EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY" are at the bottom. The post text says "Thank you! The Delaware Interagency Collaborative to End Homelessness thanks everyone who attended our 'Unhoused, not Unheard' resource-based listening session at Friendship House of Delaware at Church on Main last week. A heartfelt thank you to Kim Eppehimer, Kristen Reisor, and all the Friendship House staff for hosting an informative conversation about reaching the homeless in Delaware and explaining the services your organization provides. For information on the coll... See more". It has 3 likes and options to like, comment, or share. A comment box at the bottom says "Comment as Delaware State Housing ...".

Unhoused, not Unheard
Join us for a resource-based listening session

What's being heard

Thank you!

Monday, December 15 | 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Friendship House at Church on Main
44 W. Main Street
Middletown, DE 19709

THE COLLABORATIVE **EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY**

Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA)
Published by SocialPilot
December 22, 2025 · 🌐

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