

- 1. DE should take immediate action to increase the stock of supportive housing.** DE should do the following to ensure that more supportive housing is developed:
 - a. The incoming Governor should direct DHSS and DSHA to work together evaluate needs and to create and implement an ongoing supportive housing development plan/strategy.
 - i. DSHA and DHSS should be charged with working together to identify housing and services funding (state and federal) that can be used for supportive housing development and operations in DE.
 - ii. SRAP should be evaluated to determine if it meets the needs of DE's most vulnerable renters, and to ensure that it provides high quality supportive housing in a manner that is accessible and results in housing stability for the target populations served. An increase in funding for SRAP should be considered, as its funding has not been increased for many years to keep up with housing costs. SRAP is serving fewer people each year as housing costs increase.
 - b. DE should match the federal National Housing Trust Fund allocation to DE each year with state dollars (approx. \$3mil/year)
 - c. DSHA should ensure that HUD Section 811 units are being developed and/or preserved.

- 2. The state's FY26 budget should include funding to implement a statewide emergency rental assistance program for households in rental arrears that is sustainable, predictable, and accessible for renters facing eviction or displacement due to unpaid rent.**

Rationale: The Delaware Housing Stability Program (HSP) previously Delaware Housing Assistance Program (DHAP) provides rental assistance to households who are struggling to pay rent and the funding for this program will largely disappear in 2025. Many households face eviction because one catastrophic event in their life has put them a few hundred dollars behind. We must continue to consider how we can support the lowest-income households with one-time rental assistance during the current housing and economic crisis. DSHA has prevented thousands of families from becoming homeless through its administration of the DEHAP and HSP programs. This critical rental assistance has shown the absolute necessity of creating a permanent emergency rental assistance program in Delaware. DE should consider pairing this fund with the eviction defense program to ensure that low-income households facing eviction can quickly and seamlessly access funds to help pay arrears & avoid eviction.

- 3. Delaware's land use regulations and funding mechanisms should allow for high density and infill/adaptive re-use housing development, especially near transit-hubs, including micro-units, single room occupancy units, shared housing, and ADUs. Any residential projects taking advantage of higher densities should include units that meet the affordability needs of vulnerable populations that are being kept out of the current rental market.**

- a. Delaware should pass a law ensuring that all jurisdictions allow ADUs to be built. ADUs can be important housing options for seniors, as well as their caregivers, allowing more seniors to age in place and/or live with relatives.
- b. Delaware should pass a statewide law that prohibits local jurisdictions from having/enforcing local laws that prohibit more than a certain number of unrelated people from living together, as these laws prevent low-income people from renting rooms/living in shared housing, which may be their only affordable rental option.

Rationale: Higher density housing and smaller units can be significantly more affordable for all kinds of renters, including renters with disabilities, seniors, people on fixed incomes, and other special populations.

- 4. The Governor's Office should engage partners across multiple sectors to implement a workforce development strategy for human/social services workers and care workers. Examples of partners include DOE, DOL, MCOs, institutions of higher education, nonprofits, & DHSS. Special attention should be given to training, continuing education and competitive pay & wages.**

Rationale: Delaware's supportive services/care workforce has insufficient capacity to meet the need. Supportive services through DE's systems of care/DHSS are often unable to meet the needs of clients due to high staff turnover, lack of capacity/expertise, etc. This directly impacts the ability of people to remain stably housed, especially seniors and people with disabilities and/or medical issues.

- 5. Legislation should be passed to immediately seal eviction filings that did not result in a judgement, and to automatically seal any eviction record after 7 years. Further, landlords must be prohibited from considering any sealed eviction records obtained via third-party sources.**

Rationale: Public eviction filings and histories are a major barrier to housing. They keep people unstably housed and homeless and incentivize poor landlord behavior. Tenants will often "self"-evict to avoid a filing getting on their record, even if they are being asked to leave for an illegal reason. They are told if they do

not, the landlord will file. It also forces low-income tenants that may have had eviction histories to be forced to accept substandard housing options because they are screened out of better-quality housing options due to eviction history, not due to current income.

- 6. This subcommittee endorses the Construction Subcommittee's recommendation to adopt a statewide building code, and further recommends that any future statewide building code incorporate best practices to ensure that new construction is built to meet the accessibility needs of people across a range of disabilities. Such consideration should ensure compliance with the ADA.**