



**A business-led initiative investing in  
real solutions to street homelessness.  
#PHLCares**

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## **City Business Leaders Launch PHLCares, a New Initiative to Address Chronic Homelessness by Funding Permanent Supportive Housing**

***Pennsylvania Convention Center steps up with \$500,000 Challenge Grant to match donations to PHLCares dollar-for-dollar***

PHILADELPHIA, PA - Leaders of Philadelphia's hospitality, retail, and commercial property business sectors have joined together to launch PHLCares, a new business-led initiative to address the issue of chronic homelessness in Philadelphia. The new initiative seeks to bring the city's business community together to provide the financial and strategic resources needed to provide permanent supportive housing and rental-based assistance with wrap-around services to homeless individuals.

PHLCares was created by some of Philadelphia's highest profile business and hospitality sector leaders: John McNichol, President and CEO of the Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority (PCCA); Dave Simonetti, Senior Director of Store Operations for Wawa; and Joe Coradino, Chairman and CEO of PREIT. Through their volunteer work in support of Mayor Jim Kenney's Shared Public Spaces Working Group, they recognized that the city needed additional financial resources to better address homelessness. Together, they created PHLCares, a donor-advised fund that will raise financial resources from the business community to provide additional permanent housing—an evidence-based approach that, according to the City of Philadelphia's Office of Homeless Services, has an average 90 percent success rate at preventing a return to homelessness.

"Thirty years ago, the business community joined forces with our state and city government to champion the creation of the Pennsylvania Convention Center to address a looming economic challenge facing Center City and breathe new life into the region's hospitality industry," said Gregory J. Fox, Esquire, chairman of the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority. "Given that history, it's fitting that the Pennsylvania Convention Center is now working to rally the business community behind an effort to address another crisis that is facing Center City – chronic homelessness. I am proud that the Center and our board is stepping up to be part of the solution by funding a \$500,000 challenge grant to match dollar-for-dollar any donations made to PHLCares."

PHLCares launched last week at a luncheon attended by business leaders, city officials, community groups, and homelessness advocates. At the luncheon, organizers made the case for investments from the business community, noting that every \$12,500 raised through the effort will fund one permanent supportive housing unit in Philadelphia for a year.

PHLCares will initially focus its efforts on the homeless community surrounding the Convention Center. According to data from the city's homeless outreach team, the area surrounding the Center has become the epicenter of homelessness in Center City. Taking a business-minded approach to solving homelessness, organizers hope to demonstrate a quantifiable Return on Investment (ROI) for residential, commercial, hospitality, and retail entities that contribute to PHLCares.

"Helping provide the financial resources for permanent supportive housing is the moral and compassionate thing to do, and it is also an investment in the continued growth and vitality of our great city," said John McNichol, President and CEO of the PCCA and co-chair of Mayor's Shared Public Spaces Working Group

Subcommittee on Chronic Homelessness. “The sad reality is that there is a backlog of people who want to come in off the streets but have no permanent housing available to them. Through PHLCares, we are essentially looking to ‘unclog’ the pipe by providing funds for additional housing inventory and the means to effectively provide supportive services.”

“While PHLCares is still in its launch phase, I am encouraged by the discussions I have had with business leaders who are eager to support our efforts and take an active step in improving the lives of all our residents,” said Julie Coker Graham, resident and CEO of the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau (PHLCVB) and co-chair of the Mayor’s Shared Public Spaces Working Group.

PHLCares will be a new donor-advised fund at the Philadelphia Foundation. Decisions about the use of the funds and the investments it makes will be made by the founding board of PHLCares. Speaking at last week’s luncheon, Pedro A. Ramos, resident and CEO of the Philadelphia Foundation, noted that many of the city’s most transformational moments—such as the raising of the city’s building height limits, the construction of the Pennsylvania Convention Center in the 1990s, and the creation of the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority (PICA)—occurred through civic involvement, advocacy, and collaboration among the Philadelphia business community. Ramos said he saw PHLCares as a similar, potentially transformational, moment for the city.

Paul Levy, President and CEO of the Center City District, also spoke at the luncheon about his organization’s close work with the City to address chronic homelessness. He underscored the insufficient availability of permanent housing, noting that there are a number of homeless individuals who would readily come in off the streets but that the housing inventory is simply not there.

“Acting alone, there is only so much that individual businesses can do to address chronic homelessness,” said Dave Simonetti, Senior Director of Store Operations for Wawa. “But by working together and combining our resources, we can create a critical mass of funding to provide the permanent housing needed for those living on the city’s streets.”

“Historically, the city’s business leaders have always demonstrated a commitment to making Philadelphia a great place to live, work, and play,” said Joe Coradino, Chairman and CEO of PREIT. “PHLCares is a recognition that the City alone cannot solve chronic homelessness on its own and that there is a role for the business community to play in ensuring that the funding is there to implement effective solutions.”

The first \$500,000 donated will be matched dollar-for-dollar by the Pennsylvania Convention Center. Donations to PHLCares can be made by:

- Mailing checks to: The Philadelphia Foundation, P.O. Box 826728, Philadelphia, PA 19182. Please note “PHLCares” in the check’s memo.
- Visiting [www.philafound.org](http://www.philafound.org) and clicking the “Give Now” tab. Enter “PHLCares” into the donation form.
- Wire transfers or by donating appreciated stock—for details, please email Lois Gabin-Legato at [llegato@philafound.org](mailto:llegato@philafound.org).

Business leaders with additional questions are encouraged to contact John McNichol at the Pennsylvania Convention Center at 215-418-4795 or via email at [jmcnichol@paconvention.com](mailto:jmcnichol@paconvention.com)

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