



A COMMUNITY OF HOPE

Our **“Welcome Home Kit”** will benefit a resident of this innovative Tiny-House Community!



Sanctuary Village is a future tiny house community in Philadelphia designed and built with the express purpose of alleviating housing insecurity for those looking to transition out of homelessness.

We are bringing people together from various backgrounds, communities, and faith traditions to build a small community of security, hope, and healing. With this security and the case management that will be available, residents can move on to permanent housing when ready.

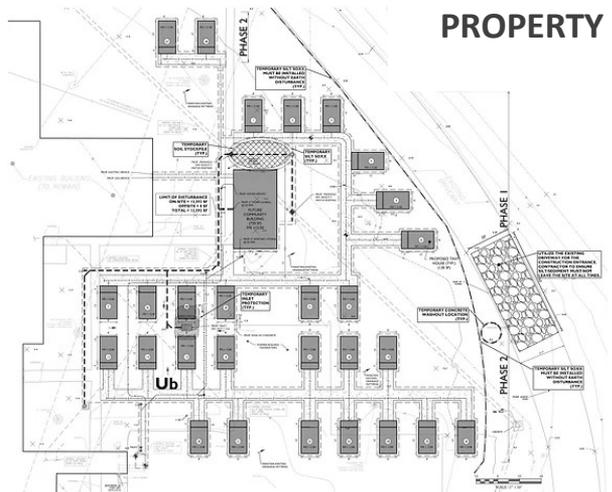
We have been chosen by the City of Philadelphia to build a tiny house village at 7979 State Road (in Holmesburg). Our residents will be women who have been experiencing homelessness and are at least 55 years old and/or have a condition making them most vulnerable to COVID-19.

WHY TINY HOUSES?

While traditional homeless shelters are generally cheaper to construct than conventional low-income housing units, they rank on par with the streets as a living preference because shelters often enforce strict rules and do not include private space.

A transitional tiny house village offers a cost-effective means for providing intermediate shelter option while preserving individual autonomy, privacy, and responsibility.

Sanctuary Village is a 501c3 that was created to offer an efficient and effective way to address chronic street homelessness in the city of Philadelphia by creating a village of tiny houses.



Our tiny houses will provide for the residents' basic needs—stability, security, privacy, and the ability to stay warm and dry—are met; a vast improvement from being without any shelter. The houses will be 8 feet x 12 feet with a 4-foot porch on the front with a price tag of \$20K (as listed on the sponsorship page).

WHY PHILLY?

Philadelphia has a 26% poverty rate, one of the highest in the nation. Of that 26%, over half are living in deep poverty, with incomes below 50% of the federal poverty limit. In 2019, approximately 8,300 unique individuals accessed emergency shelter in Philadelphia. Recent annual population increases and job losses due to COVID-19 have increased the numbers of people living on the streets.

Philadelphia Green-Lights Plans for First-Ever Tiny-House Village for Homeless

It's part of the agreement that closed the sprawling, controversial homeless encampment on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in October.

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The city's first ever tiny-house village will be built on the site of the Riverview Personal Care Home campus at 7979 State Road in the Northeast section of the city.

JOSE F. MORENO / Staff Photographer

City officials have selected a Hatfield nonprofit affiliated with a church that once sued the city on behalf of impoverished residents to create Philadelphia's first-ever tiny-house village for the homeless, *The Inquirer* has learned.

The agency, Sanctuary Village, will build the site on city-owned property at 7979 State Rd., the campus of Riverview Personal Care Home in Northeast Philadelphia, according to Liz Hersh, director of the city's Office of Homeless Services. No city money will go into the construction, the cost and timeline of which are still undetermined, she added.

As part of the agreement that closed the sprawling, controversial homeless encampment on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in October, the city committed to establishing two tiny-house villages to accommodate unhoused Philadelphians.

The other site, at 4917 Aspen St. in West Philadelphia, has yet to be awarded to an agency to operate. The Student-Run Emergency Housing Unit of Philadelphia, a nonprofit that works with college students to provide shelter for homeless people, has applied to the city to develop that site.

Hersh said that Sanctuary Village is affiliated with the Welcome Church, a religious organization without walls that serves people experiencing homelessness in Center City.

As a way to protect residents from COVID-19, the tiny-house village in the Northeast will serve as temporary housing for homeless people over 65 or those with underlying conditions. There are currently no provisions to give preference to anyone who lived in the encampment, city officials said.

Initially, Hersh didn't think a tiny-house village could work.

"I had to be convinced," she said. "Rowhouses are Philadelphia's original tiny houses, and we have lots. What convinced me was going to Seattle and seeing how tiny-house villages work so well."

Cathy Farrell, founder and board president of Sanctuary Village, said the Seattle tiny-house villages are the template for the Philadelphia site. Farrell serves as director of medical affairs at Janssen Pharmaceuticals, part of Johnson & Johnson in Horsham.

City documents show the State Road site is expected to comprise 12 to 24 single-room units that are 120 square feet each. While they'll be heated and have electricity, they won't have water or bathrooms. A central kitchen, as well as a building with bathrooms, showers, and laundry, will be constructed.

Services to help the homeless also will be available, some of them at the Riverview Personal Care Home. Such homes have been described as residences that provide shelter, meals, supervision, and assistance with personal care tasks, typically for older people, or people with physical, behavioral health, or cognitive disabilities who are unable to care for themselves but do not need nursing home or medical care.

Some of the costs of running it are expected to be covered by Philadelphia's share of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, also known

as the CARES Act, Hersh said. A city spokesperson added that the city has pledged up to \$500,000 in CARES money for the project.

Farrell, whose nonprofit was created to build tiny-house villages for the homeless, said that planning has been “a real hard slog.” But, she said, “the idea just spoke to me. I thought to myself, ‘You have to do this.’”

Contributing to the development of the Northeast Philadelphia site is Violet Cucciniello Little, pastor of the Welcome Church, which is part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The church conducts Sunday worship, mostly for homeless congregants, at Aviator Park across from the Franklin Institute.

In 2013, the church, with other organizations, sued the City of Philadelphia for banning them from feeding the homeless along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Little said.

“So, we’ve kind of developed a close association with the city,” she said, smiling. “The one thing we all agreed on was that the enemy was not the city but poverty and racism and homelessness.”

The city lifted its outdoor meal ban in 2016.

Little said that she, Farrell, and others were “dreaming” about a tiny-house solution for homelessness since 2017. “Cathy came to me with all this enthusiasm,” Little said. “And, God bless her, she never gave up. I give her a lot of credit. She’s been the driving force.”

In December, city officials had been contemplating a different site for the village, nearby at 8201 State Rd. at the Philadelphia Industrial Correctional Center, records show. The new site was determined to be a better fit, officials said.

As for the West Philadelphia site, the city has yet to determine who will run it.

That site will host permanent housing for 24 people. It will consist of 12 two-bedroom tiny homes, each under 400 square feet, all outfitted with utilities, bathrooms, and kitchens, people familiar with the plans said.

It is expected to cost \$1.2 million to develop, those same people said. As with the Northeast site, no city money will be used for construction.

During the summer, the encampment, which appeared in June on the Parkway at 21st Street, was organized both to protest homelessness and support issues related to the Black Lives Matter movement. At its peak, it was home to about 200 people.

Along with the tiny-house villages, as part of the agreement with organizers of the encampment, the city said it would provide 25 vacant houses in various neighborhoods for people experiencing homelessness. The Philadelphia Housing Authority pledged another 25.