

GREATER PHILADELPHIA



2022 STATE OF HOPE
PHILADELPHIA

Poverty continues to impact the daily lives of hundreds of thousands of Philadelphians. Yet, a glimmer of hope remains in the city, according to The Salvation Army in Greater Philadelphia. This report is the first of what will be an annual look into poverty in Philadelphia, along with The Salvation Army's efforts in mitigating the issue and meeting the needs of its struggling neighbors.

The numbers don't lie – 5,700 Philadelphians are experiencing homelessness. Nearly 21% of the city's population is experiencing food insecurity. 360,000 Philadelphians are living in poverty. These figures prove that there's still a long way to go in fighting the long battle of poverty in one of the poorest cities in the country.

For more than a century, The Salvation Army in Greater Philadelphia has led the fight against poverty, providing hope, comfort, and care to those who need it most. This has been especially true during the COVID-19 pandemic where hunger, homelessness, and other forms of economic distress continue to affect a wider swath of Philadelphians.

Since March of 2020, The Salvation Army in Greater Philadelphia has served more than 300,000 individuals in need in the region through a wide range of services and programs, such as housing, rental assistance, food pantries and distribution, youth programs, holiday services, and more.

"Poverty will not solve itself," said Major Tawny Cowen-Zanders, Divisional Secretary for The Salvation Army in Greater Philadelphia. "More than ever, families in need are calling on their neighbors for help so they can eat one more meal, sleep in their beds for one more night, keep the lights on for one more day. It is our duty and passion to represent the City of Brotherly Love by providing these basic necessities. The Salvation Army has been doing that for more than 150 years, and we don't plan on stopping."

Fighting Hunger

Since the beginning of the pandemic, more than 4 million meals have been provided to local individuals and families in need through The Salvation Army in Greater Philadelphia's food pantries and distribution programs. In 2021, more than 833,000 meals were provided. Several of the faith-based organization's community centers in Philadelphia allow for those in need of nourishment to come to the locations and pick food up from their pantries or to receive to-go boxes.

Fighting Homelessness

Philadelphia is the home of five main shelters operated by The Salvation Army in Greater Philadelphia. Services within the shelters range from long-term emergency housing for families to permanent supportive housing for individuals with a documented disability, intensive case management, after-hours emergency care, recreational programs for youth, and more.



Since March 2020, The Salvation Army in Greater Philadelphia has been responsible for more than 266,000 lodgings – 115,000 alone in 2021.

Uplifting the Youth

Children who are born into poverty lack the basic necessities that would otherwise allow them to thrive. However, The Salvation Army in Greater Philadelphia supports children’s physical and mental development through a variety of programs – such as fitness and recreation programs at its Philadelphia Kroc Center, after-school education programs at its seven corps community centers, back-to-school support with clothing and supplies, and more.

Since March 2020, more than 3,100 youth, ages 6-17, have been served by The Salvation Army in Greater Philadelphia. In 2021, alone, the number was nearly 2,000.

Combatting Human Trafficking

Human trafficking continues to plague Philadelphia neighborhoods, even while prostitution cases continue to plummet – down to four cases in 2021 – due to a variety of factors, primarily the pandemic. Victims are at a greater risk than ever when it comes to receiving the necessary resources to find a way out. Prosecutors are recommending now more than ever that those impacted by trafficking seek help from nonprofits and social service organizations to help lead them on a path to light.

Thankfully, since 2010, The Salvation Army in Greater Philadelphia’s New Day to Stop Trafficking has been a leader in providing a safe space and a second chance for survivors of human trafficking. In 2021, the program served nearly 1,170 individuals through a wide range of services – including food, clothing, and hygiene at its New Day Drop-In Center in Kensington; transitional housing for safe reintegration into communities; mobile case management; trauma-informed care in juvenile court; and police-assisted diversion.

How can the community help?

Although The Salvation Army in Greater Philadelphia is able to respond to the many needs of Philadelphians living in difficult circumstances, they rely on the army behind them – the surrounding community. Those who are looking to give their time, talent, and treasure to support The Salvation Army in serving those in need can do so by visiting www.saphilly.org.

“When a group rallies together to support a cause – that’s when we can make the biggest difference,” said Major Cowen-Zanders. “That’s the most beautiful thing about The Salvation Army. We’re made up of diverse, unique individuals who all share a common goal – to join the fight against poverty. I’d say we’re making headway.”



■ Since the beginning of the pandemic

■ FY 2021

