A disability shouldn’t cause homelessness.

People who are unable to work due to mental illness, physical disability, or advanced age should be able to meet their basic survival needs; access safe, healthy and affordable housing; and experience a good quality of life. Unfortunately, for many people living in deep poverty, a disability and lack of income can lead to homelessness, serious mental & physical health consequences, and poor quality of life.

The Housing & Essential Needs and Aged, Blind & Disabled programs provide a lifeline of support to disabled & elderly adults. They are a last resort safety net for people unable to work & at extreme risk of suffering poor health and even death.

HEN, ABD, & SSI Facilitation Services provide critical support to elderly and disabled adults.

- The state’s Housing & Essential Needs (HEN) program ensures that people with temporary mental illnesses (64% of the caseload) or temporary physical disabilities can meet their basic needs and keep their home when facing extreme economic hardship. The program provides rental and utility assistance. And recipients have access to essential basic needs, including transportation assistance & health/hygiene items.

- The Aged, Blind & Disabled (ABD) program helps extremely low-income adults with permanent mental health illnesses (70% of the caseload) or permanent physical disabilities by providing cash assistance of up to $197/month while they apply to the federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. When people transition to SSI, the federal government retroactively reimburses the state for the full cost of the ABD cash grant. ABD also provides support to low-income elderly and disabled documented immigrants not yet eligible for federal medical and income support benefits.

- SSI Facilitation Services, provided by the state Department of Social & Health Services (DSHS), assists disabled individuals through the lengthy and complicated process of applying for federal SSI benefits. This process can take many years. SSI is funded at $733/month, so people are much more likely to meet their basic needs. These services are a win-win: people with disabilities access greater stability & the state receives federal reimbursement for the interim ABD support.

What is the legislative solution?

Maintain HEN, ABD, and SSI Facilitation Services at their current funding levels. We must ensure people with disabilities and seniors are able to meet their basic survival needs and access the resources they need to recover and experience a good quality of life.