



# **United States Interagency Council on Homelessness**

## **Fiscal Year 2012 Congressional Budget Justification**

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Barbara Poppe, Executive Director

**UNITED STATES INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS  
FISCAL YEAR 2012 SUMMARY STATEMENT**

|                            | <u>Enacted/ Request</u>         | <u>Carryover</u> | <u>Supplemental/<br/>Rescission</u> | <u>Total<br/>Resources</u> | <u>Obligations</u> | <u>Outlays</u>     |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b><u>2010 Enacted</u></b> | <u>\$2,450,000</u>              | <u>-0-</u>       | <u>-0-</u>                          | <u>\$2,450,000</u>         | <u>\$2,294,717</u> | <u>\$2,294,717</u> |
| <b><u>2011 CR</u></b>      | <u>\$2,450,000</u>              |                  |                                     |                            |                    |                    |
| <b><u>2012 Request</u></b> | <u>\$3,880,000</u> <sup>1</sup> |                  |                                     |                            |                    |                    |

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<sup>1</sup> Per Administration direction, a 5% reduction from FY 2011 Appropriation of \$2.68 mil, and the additional costs of 10 regional coordinators directly employed and support by USICH.

## I. **FY 12 Budget Request and Revisions to Statute**

To achieve its mission and work as directed the by Administration and Congress, and in particular its proposed implementation work on *Opening Doors*, USICH requests **\$3,880,000** for the FY 12 budget year. Additionally, as part of this budget presentation and to support its work on *Opening Doors* implementation, USICH proposes here to expand its regional involvement throughout the country with an increase in its number of regional coordinators, from 5 to 10, and to delete the agency's sunset date to permanently authorize the agency as it carries out its mission to prevent and end homelessness in the United States. USICH also requests a change in the salary level for its Executive Director, from an EX V to IV, to be consistent with equivalent positions in the federal sector.

## II. **FY 12 Budget Request -- \$3,880,000 -- by Object Classification**

### *OC 11, Personnel: \$2,365,320*

The amount requested is based on a staff of 26.75 FTE. USICH, fully staffed and engaged, will ensure active and complete coverage for all USICH activities and will help achieve its performance goals.

### *OC 12, Benefits: \$456,507*

This amount represents USICH's contributions for employee benefits.

### *OC 21, Travel: \$340,000*

This category includes all travel costs for all USICH activities, such as supporting the travel necessary to manage implementation of *Opening Doors* and provide technical assistance to jurisdictions.

### *OC 22, Transportation of Things: \$5,865*

This category's estimates are for local and long distance courier and overnight delivery services as well as postage for mailings.

### *Object Class 23, Communications, Utilities, and Miscellaneous Charges: \$424,000*

This estimate represents USICH's cost for rental of office space for Headquarters as well as communications services such as broad band internet and phone services.

### *Object Class 24, Printing and Reproduction: \$15,000*

This category supports the printing and reproduction of USICH materials and other routine costs incurred in the operations of USICH.

### *Object Class 25, Services: \$230,000*

The costs for this category include outsourced services such as web site maintenance, computer network support, administrative support from GSA, audit services and other routine administrative services.

### *Object Class 26, Supplies and Materials: \$43,308*

Anticipated expenses include routine office supplies, subscriptions and other materials, as well as technical and other reports and studies.

### III. Overview and Mission

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) was established in 1987 by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (later renamed the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act). USICH's mission, per the HEARTH Act of 2009 is to:

"Coordinate the Federal response to homelessness and to create a national partnership at every level of government and with the private sector to reduce and end homelessness in the nation while maximizing the effectiveness of the Federal Government in contributing to the end of homelessness."

USICH is currently comprised of the heads (or the designees) of 19 Federal departments and agencies:

- Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Department of Commerce (Commerce)
- Department of Defense (DoD)
- Department of Education (Education)
- Department of Energy (DOE)
- Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Department of the Interior (DOI)
- Department of Justice (DOJ)
- Department of Labor (DOL)
- Department of Transportation (DOT)
- Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)
- General Services Administration (GSA)
- Social Security Administration (SSA)
- U.S. Postal Service (USPS)
- White House Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI)
- White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

Additionally, the White House Domestic Policy Council actively participates in Council activities. Special Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs Derek Douglas is the primary liaison.

### IV. Organization

- Council

During FY 10, the full council met three times -- October 19, 2009, February 8, 2010, and May 19, 2010. Thus far in FY 11, Council met in November and December of 2010 with additional meetings planned for March, June, and September.

During these meetings, Executive Director Poppe was appointed, and discussions were held on the development and status of the federal strategic plan, required by the HEARTH Act.

- Chair

At its initial meeting under the Obama administration on June 18, 2009, the full Council elected HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan as chairperson and Labor Secretary Hilda Solis as vice chairperson. Throughout 2010 the executive director met monthly with the chairperson. In December 2011, the full Council elected Labor Secretary Hilda Solis as chairperson and HHS Secretary Sebelius vice chairperson.

- Staff

*Headquarters*

The daily activities of USICH are managed by Executive Director Barbara Poppe, who was appointed by the full Council in October 2009. Executive Director Poppe reports directly to the USICH Chair, and is supported by policy and administrative staff. For FY 12 headquarters, USICH proposes 17.75 FTE as follows: executive director, 6 senior staff (3 Deputy Directors, a Director of Finance and Administration, Director of Communications and a Research Director), 1 communications staffer, 5 professional support staff, and 9 intermittent interns.

*Regional Coordinators*

The Budget request proposes funding sufficient for USICH to increase the number of regional coordinators from 5 to 10 and to have them directly employed by USICH to ensure proper coverage across the country. Costs for payroll and travel are included in this request. These regional coordinators will serve instrumental roles in implementing *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness (Opening Doors)*, encouraging state and local coordination through such vehicles as 10-year plans and state interagency councils, ensuring effective coverage, and support and technical assistance to communities across the United States by providing leadership in developing intercommunity collaborations. The regional coordinators will work to organize and support strategies to end homelessness in the federal regions, states and local communities across the nation, and be instrumental in convening regional and state interagency council representatives to mirror the work of the federal partners in Washington, DC to make resources more available and accessible to people who are homeless. By having a regional coordinator actively engaged in every region, USICH will be more effectively structured to fully carry out its statutorily mandated mission, provide support, and build strategic relationships in every region that will set the stage to prevent and end homelessness nationally.

For FY 12, USICH proposes 10 regional FTEs, for a total of 27.75 agency FTEs.

- Council Policy Group

The Council Policy Group (CPG) consists of at least one senior representative from each of the nineteen member agencies. The CPG provides a regular forum for coordinating policies and programs, collecting data, developing special initiatives, and preparing recommendations for consideration by Council members.

During FY 10, the CPG met six times with high participation rates from all member agencies. As much of the work of USICH was focused on the completion of *Opening Doors*, the CPG's involvement was vital to the completion of the Plan. Representatives were also involved in a number of strategic meetings regarding the completion of the Plan, interagency work groups, and in the interagency clearance process. The CPG also is playing an integral role in the implementation of *Opening Doors*. CPG meets at least quarterly.

## V. **FY 10, 11, and 12 Activities**

Consistent with its mission, USICH is working to coordinate the national effort to end homelessness through activities involving all levels of government, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector through the vehicle of its strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, as required by the HEARTH Act of 2009.

### **FY 10 Activities**

- Opening Doors: The Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness

#### Overview

On June 22, 2010, USICH submitted to Congress and the President the nation's first-ever comprehensive federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness. *Opening Doors: the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* serves as a roadmap for joint action by the 19 USICH member agencies. It provides a reference framework for the allocation of resources and the alignment of programs to achieve the goal to prevent and end homelessness in America.

*Opening Doors* outlines an interagency collaboration that aligns mainstream housing, health, education, and human services to prevent Americans from experiencing homelessness. As the most far-reaching and ambitious plan to end homelessness in our nation's history, *Opening Doors* will both strengthen existing partnerships—such as the combined effort of HUD and Veterans Affairs to help homeless Veterans—and forge new partnerships between agencies like HUD, HHS, and the Department of Labor.

The Plan is focused on four key goals:

- Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness in five years;
- Prevent and end homelessness among Veterans in five years;
- Prevent and end homelessness for families, youth, and children in ten years; and
- Set a path to ending all types of homelessness.

*Opening Doors* proposes a set of strategies that call upon the federal government to work in partnership with state and local governments, as well as the private sector to employ cost effective, comprehensive solutions to end homelessness. *Opening Doors* highlights that by collaborating at all levels of government, the nation can harness public resources and build on the innovations that have been demonstrated at the local level and in cities nationwide to provide everyone—from the most capable to the most vulnerable—the opportunity to reach their full potential. *Opening Doors* includes 10 objectives and 52 strategies as well as 4 signature initiatives focused on the target population groups. Together, these contribute to accomplishing all four goals of the Plan.

#### Development of *Opening Doors*

USICH provided unprecedented opportunities for public comment into the development of *Opening Doors*. USICH provided the framework and principles to all key stakeholders for public comment prior to the drafting of the Plan. USICH invested significant resources and time to secure public comment into the development of *Opening Doors*. This comment period has occurred from early February through March 22, 2010.

The opportunities for public comment included workgroups of federal staff to develop strategies based on best practices developed by innovative providers and communities across the country. All told, more than 100 staff from 19 agencies participated in the five workgroups that studied Veterans, families, youth, chronic homelessness, and community. Concurrently, USICH launched regional stakeholder meetings, focus groups, and an online forum. Nearly 1,000 people directly participated in face to face meetings or conference calls. In addition, over 7,700 people visited the special online forum. The breadth of ideas as well as the clarity and concurrence around key themes was remarkable.

Building off the momentum generated across the country by the release of *Opening Doors*, USICH and its 19 member agencies immediately turned from the development of *Opening Doors* to action. On July 7, 2010, the USICH staff met with the CPG to discuss the implementation process and the roles of each going forward.

Currently, work is underway in the early implementation stages of facilitating and overseeing the 52 strategies and 4 signature initiatives in *Opening Doors* with its 19 member agencies that have the responsibility to move the Plan forward through their

mainstream and targeted programs. Achieving targeted reductions in homelessness requires a collective effort focused on solutions. *Opening Doors* is a call for collective action. No level of government can or should do this alone. Success will require the collaboration and organization of federal, state, tribal, and local governments to execute these strategies effectively. Implementation will require leadership at all levels and partnerships between the public and the private sector, building on effective partnerships where they exist, and forging new partnerships where they are needed.

USICH has divided the responsibility for being the primary liaison with its 19 member agencies among the USICH deputy directors. In their role as strategy or initiative lead, the deputy directors provide active leadership as the project manager, responsibility for the process and identifying resources, and are the point of contact with the public on the respective strategy or initiative. Examples of the tasks the deputy directors engage with their agencies on include:

- Supporting policy decisions in their respective areas that relate to *Opening Doors*;
- Seeking opportunities for new initiatives within and between agencies;
- Providing linkages between the federal agencies and partners out in field; and,
- Procuring new relationships with program staff and agency leadership for “mainstream” programs.

Smart implementation includes prioritization. USICH recognizes that it cannot start working on all 52 strategies and four initiatives at once. The agency has prioritized its areas of responsibilities, while taking advantage of efforts already underway in its member agencies. The strategies that USICH expects to provide primary leadership on are described in FY11 and FY12 activities. USICH is not detailing the strategies that our role will be as participants in Council member led activities, including the HUD – HHS homelessness demonstration projects, increasing access to assistance, the affordable housing efforts led by HUD, increasing work for Veterans, preparing for Medicaid expansion, etc.

#### Roll out of *Opening Doors*

USICH staff, including Regional Coordinators, will have presented *Opening Doors* to more than 30 different key audiences through the end of FY10. Significant press attention to the Plan included coverage in the Washington Post, Economist, San Francisco Chronicle, NPR, and CNN Radio. USICH hosted a live webcast with representatives from key member agencies to discuss the Plan and answer questions from the public. Engagement with states and local communities will continue through the 5-year term of the Plan.

- USICH is working collaboratively with HUD and VA to develop and publish a HUD-VASH technical assistance guide for use by the implementing agencies -- VA medical centers/outpatient clinics and public housing authorities – and their community partners – street outreach, shelters, etc. This guide will serve as a tool to be used to provide



training to personnel responsible for implementation of HUD-VASH in their community. This training will incorporate best practices related to housing first. After the guide is published, it will be available at [www.usich.gov](http://www.usich.gov) and disseminated through regional coordinators, the USICH newsletter, and in partnership with HUD and VA for the benefit of assisting local communities to fully utilize HUD-VASH vouchers for homeless Veterans.

- In order to conduct joint training on how to effectively deliver housing, education, and related services to children that experience homelessness or at risk of homelessness, in March 2010, HUD staff presented on its Homeless Assistance Programs at the annual conference of the Department of Education's Education of Homeless Children and Youth program. Education will present at HUD's two national grantee meetings that will take place in September 2010. USICH's role here was to facilitate the two parties' coming together to dialogue about this important issue.
- USICH is also working with the VA and HUD to address HUD-VASH utilization in communities nationwide. This strategy, known as the High Low strategy, involves visiting low performing and high performing communities as it relates to getting vouchers into the hands of Veterans and Veterans finding and getting into housing. The visit to high performing communities is to absorb and understand what would seem to be best practices, and then visit low performing communities to intervene and recommend some of the best practices to improve their performance.
- USICH is required to submit an annual report to the President and Congress that assesses the nature and extent of homelessness and describes USICH's activities and accomplishments. Each member agency's report describes its homelessness assistance programs, impediments to access, and efforts to increase access. USICH's report is to include an assessment of the nature and extent of the problems relating to homelessness and the needs of people experiencing homelessness, the activities of Federal agencies as well as recommendations for legislative and administrative actions to address the problems and needs identified. The FY 09 Annual Report was submitted in April 2010 and work on the FY 10 Annual Report will commence soon with its submission to Congress by June 2011. USICH will continue to coordinate the preparation and submission of this report in conjunction with similar reports required of each of its member agencies.

#### **FY 11 Activities (including activities that will continue into FY12)**

- USICH staff worked with OMB and its key member agencies to develop FY12 member agency budget proposals that reflect the funding needs for *Opening Doors* implementation. The resource needs to achieve progress on the *Opening Doors'* goals were carefully considered. These needs are reflected in cross-agency collaborative requests as well as targeted program requests.
- *Opening Doors* includes a strategy to coordinate federal technical assistance (relevant agencies may include Agriculture, Corporation for National and Community Service, Education, HHS, HUD, Justice, Labor, USICH, SSA, VA, and the White Office of Faith-Based and

Community Initiatives). USICH envisions that this could result in a common portal for communities to access technical assistance (TA) that's available through various federal agencies to develop and implement strategies that prevent and end homelessness built upon best practices and alignment with *Opening Doors* and based on the community's need. During FY 11, USICH will collect essential information to develop a one stop shop on its redesigned website that points communities in search of TA to the pertinent agency for easy access to related information.

- USICH has identified its new Research Director to lead the *Opening Doors'* strategies to aggregate significant research and evaluation reports on federal, state, and local initiatives to reduce homelessness and to develop a framework to review the outcome measures of federal program investments. In order to accomplish this work, a federal interagency work group will be established to bring together agencies that are funding or conducting research on homelessness interventions to compile federal research, to identify gaps in research, and to develop a federal research agenda on homelessness, a review of outcomes that are measured in targeted homeless programs will be done, along with other activities to support this initiative. Work will begin in FY 11 and continue through FY 12.
- Pursuant to a Congressional mandate in HEARTH and *Opening Doors*, the planning phase of the Alternatives to Criminalization project was begun during the fourth quarter of FY 10 upon completion of the Plan. A summit held in collaboration with DOJ that would involve the spectrum of relevant state, local, nonprofit, business, and homeless stakeholders from across the country occurred on December 1, 2010. A document of best practice alternatives will be shared widely as well as with Congress.
- Pursuant to a Congressional mandate in HEARTH, USICH convened a meeting on January 26, 2011 to discuss the GAO report on homeless definitions. The report recommends that the USICH develop joint federal guidance that establishes a common vocabulary for discussing homelessness and analyze the costs and benefits of implementation for targeted homeless programs. See FY12 initiatives for more information about the common data standard project. The recommendations from the January convening will be developed into a report that will be shared widely as well as with Congress.
- Pursuant to *Opening Doors*, USICH will publish an annual report card on progress towards *Opening Doors'* goals and targets, and progress in implementing strategies at the federal level and across the country. USICH will consider annually what has changed in the environment, successes, unexpected opportunities and barriers, and new research and information; subsequent to this review USICH may provide an update to *Opening Doors*. Public input will be garnered throughout the Plan's implementation. This will allow USICH and others at all levels to make adjustments as needed.
- USICH plans to utilize its website as a primary portal on the issues, topics, and research regarding homelessness at all levels. USICH intends for the website to be the premier website and prime repository of the most comprehensive information on the topic of

homelessness to include past and present progress on managing and ending homelessness and any new, emerging research and best practices in this area, as well. Plans are currently underway for selection of a vendor for design and hosting of the site. The anticipated project completion date is in FY 2011 for the general website upgrade. USICH will also expand its social media presence in order to deliver its message in a timely fashion to its key stakeholders throughout the country. Additional enhancements of the website as it relates to our research agenda, is described more in FY 12 Initiatives section of this justification.

### **FY 12 Activities (new)**

- Rewarding Collaborating Communities Interagency Pilot – USICH is proposing to develop a cross agency initiative to reward collaborating communities, per a strategy in *Opening Doors* to, “seek opportunities to reward communities that are collaborating to make significant progress preventing and ending homelessness.” The purpose is to provide additional funds to communities that have demonstrated progress in ending and preventing homelessness through local efforts that engage multiple local entities and funding streams to create community-wide systems for effective crisis response. Success would be evidenced by numeric outcomes measured across the partnering federal agencies. Rewards could be given to communities through set-asides or “bonuses” within competitive grant programs or other flexible funds. The effort could be co-branded and co-administered but funds would not be pooled (due to the administrative burden and need for legislative changes). Multiple agencies could identify a small set of funds to dedicate to this effort with measures that align.
- Youth Strategic Initiative Pilot – To address the needs of youth who are at extreme risk of becoming homeless, USICH will develop a cross agency initiative for a pilot program to specifically address the housing and service needs of youth in transition to prevent homelessness. This pilot could include those aging out of foster care and the juvenile justice systems. USICH will collaborate with the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs for this pilot program.
- Homeless Children and Youth Summit –USICH proposes to work with Council member agencies to host a one-two day intensive summit that will focus on current knowledge regarding homeless children and barriers to mainstream and trauma services for this population. The summit would focus on improving access to child and family services that improve early child development, educational stability, youth development, and quality of life for families who are experiencing or most at risk of homelessness.
- Rural Homelessness Summit – USICH proposes to work with Council member agencies to host an interagency summit on rural development to study and report on access to housing and housing solutions, which is outlined in *Opening Doors* as one of the objectives. This summit would be an opportunity to highlight federal progress on the recommendations from the July 2010 GAO report on rural homelessness. The summit will specifically address a strategy in *Opening Doors* for HUD and HHS to “more formally

link housing and supportive services—in the most appropriate forms and combinations of mainstream and targeted programs identified by both agencies—with specific consideration for how such collaboration could minimize barriers to service provision in rural areas”. The proposed summit would also align with HUD implementation of new rural housing program as part of HEARTH.

- Common Data Standard Initiative – USICH will conduct a feasibility study for creating a common data standard regarding housing stability across all targeted and mainstream programs. This study is an *Opening Doors* strategy and is a GAO report recommendation. This would facilitate data exchanges and comparisons between both targeted homelessness programs and mainstream systems in order to improve identification of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. It would also increase opportunities for measuring program impact and effectiveness as it relates to housing stability.
- Public Information— pursuant to strategies in *Opening Doors*, USICH will coordinate with Council member agencies to disseminate best practices on strategies to prevent and end homelessness as outlined in *Opening Doors*. A public education campaign could be undertaken to engage states, localities, the private sector, and citizens in preventing and ending homelessness. Activities may include: a Public Service Campaign; production of marketing materials; creation of a website - homelessness.gov.

## VI. FY 12 Performance Goals

To support the mission of USICH, and to advance some of the Council’s most important priorities, our agency’s performance goals for FY 12 are to: 1) Strengthen the capacity of public and private organization to prevent and end homelessness; and 2) Coordinate the Federal government’s response to homelessness to maximize the impact of Federal resources. Specific strategies and measures within each area are discussed below.

### **1. Strengthen the capacity of public and private organizations by increasing knowledge about specific subpopulations, the costs, and consequences of homelessness, and effective solutions and program models for preventing and ending homelessness.**

Preventing and ending homelessness will only be possible through coordinated efforts of strong public and private organizations. Across the country, capacity varies from community to community, especially as it relates to the ability to use data for system and program design, evaluate program effectiveness and nimbly make changes where needed, and target interventions to people for whom they are best suited. The Federal government can lead by making best practices standard operating procedure as we adopt an increasingly evidence-driven approach.

Significant research and evaluation has been and is being conducted on homelessness and strategies to prevent and end it. There is tremendous opportunity to better understand and apply what is being learned by coordinating and sharing research across federal agencies and with states and local communities. Research must be conducted to understand more about how to end homelessness for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, unaccompanied youth, youth

aging out of foster care, and other unique groups. Defining a federal research agenda focused on gaps in knowledge about preventing and ending homelessness could ensure that future investment and policies contribute to solutions.

Specific strategies and measures related to increasing knowledge and strengthening capacity are as follows:

**Strategy #1: Compile and disseminate research findings; identify information gaps.**

USICH will compile and catalog research in an effort to more effectively distill and disseminate findings and lessons learned to the field, as well as to identify gaps in the body of knowledge.

Measure #1a: USICH will compile, catalog, and make available online a homeless research compendium by December 30, 2011.

Measure #1b: USICH will develop a federal research agenda that prioritize areas of study and focuses efforts to fill gaps in knowledge by December 30, 2011.

**Strategy #2: Disseminate, promote, and facilitate use of best practices.**

USICH will identify best practices and model programs and make this information more readily available to stakeholders - including funders, advocates, grantees, and service providers. USICH will use multiple methods to disseminate information about best practices, including its website and newsletter, social media, webinars, partnerships with advocates, and direct contact/meetings with stakeholders. The database will cover system-level, program-level, and client-level practices and will span the strategies and populations covered in the Federal Strategic Plan.

Measure #2a: USICH will disseminate information on best practices and model programs and facilitate peer-to-peer sharing through the creation of a searchable, online best practices database. This database will be populated and launched by December 30, 2011.

Measure #2b: Throughout its outreach to communities across the country, USICH will get 10 communities to model/adopt use of a specific best practice (which practice will be determined by the circumstances, needs, and capacity of the community) by September 1, 2012. Further, HUD is developing measures of high performing communities as required by the HEARTH Act. USICH will work with HUD to assess the correlation between high performing communities and adoption of best practices to help inform next steps.

**2. Coordinate the federal government's response to homelessness to maximize the reach and impact of federal resources.**

The need for homeless assistance and services in this country far outweighs available resources. Compounding this challenge is the fact that federal funding for homeless assistance flows through programs administered separately by multiple Departments, each of which has its own set of priorities and processes. Over time, separate programs and budget streams have created some

inconsistencies and overlap in administrative requirements, resulting in unnecessary complexity and cost. As such, strengthening the country's capacity to prevent and end homelessness will require effective collaboration within the federal government to address inconsistency, reduce duplication of effort, increase economies of scale, and identify points of synergy.

True collaboration means being open and transparent about resources, data, assumptions, perceptions, and decisions, and takes concerted effort and leadership to be realized. USICH is a unique agency in a unique position, offering the Federal government the opportunity to test and model interagency collaboration. Specific strategies for the coming months are outlined below.

### **Strategy #3: Coordinated, Strategic Investments.**

Over one-half of the overall population of people experiencing homelessness is located in just 45 (or 10 percent) of the Continuum of Care jurisdictions. In order to move the needle nationally and make progress against the Federal Strategic Plan, it is essential to focus our efforts and invest our resources more strategically. For example, Federal agencies currently invest extensively in technical assistance, but it is generally not coordinated across agencies, or even programs within agencies. Towards this end, USICH will identify a set of priority communities for monitoring, engagement, and technical assistance, as needed. These communities will also serve as laboratories for testing and modeling collaboration, systems change, and innovative strategies.

Measure #3a: USICH will identify/adopt a set of "priority communities" by January 1, 2011.

Measure #3b: Each community will undergo an assessment and develop a "next steps" plan that identifies high priority needs and key areas for action. USICH will assist in coordinating federal technical assistance resources to address the needs identified in the plans. These plans will be completed by September 1, 2011.

Measure #3c: By September 1, 2012, USICH will compile lessons learned from the work with the priority cities, assess the barriers and opportunities related to coordinated federal technical assistance, and determine if (and how) such efforts can be brought to scale.

### **Strategy #4: Coordinated Data Collection.**

Collection, analysis, and reporting of quality, timely data on homelessness is essential for targeting interventions, tracking results, strategic planning, and resource allocation. Currently, each Federal program uses a different vocabulary, different data standards, different reporting systems, and different reporting requirements. This creates both confusion and duplication of effort in the field, as providers that rely on multiple funders have to respond to each independently. Movement towards a common vocabulary and data standard across targeted federal programs would – for localities – simplify procedures and reduce administrative costs. Nationally, it would provide us with better data and consequently a more comprehensive understanding of the scope and dimensions of homelessness in the country.

Measure #4a: USICH will convene an interagency working group to conduct a feasibility analysis and identify and implement steps (even if incremental) towards a common vocabulary

and data standard. USICH will focus on convening, relationship building, and translating, such that the group will operate independently by June 1, 2012.

Measure #4b: USICH will continue to explore, promote, and support the use of HUD's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) by grantees of other Federal agencies with the goal of two other Federal agencies transitioning to the use of HMIS by December 31, 2014.

## **VII. Agency Management and Other Areas**

- **Strategic Management of Human Capital**

Testing of the agency's new performance management system started in FY 2010 and USICH plans to fully implement the system in FY 2011. This new system will support fair and objective measurement of job performance and regularly scheduled employee reviews, thus enabling USICH to ensure it employs and maintains a high level staff. Employees' performance goals will be tied directly to the mission, strategies and objectives of USICH.

As part of input obtained from employees on their view of the organization, USICH recently reviewed its organizational structure and related policies and procedures to update as necessary and ensure that as an organization, its work environment is positioned in a manner that promotes productivity and employee job satisfaction. Finally, USICH will continue our regular training sessions for employees that started in FY 10, to include an annual staff training conference for all employees to further support and enhance our growth as a collective staff, as well as completing its first employee survey in FY 11 in efforts to continuously improve its work environment and job satisfaction for employees.

USICH will also actively encourage employees to attend health fairs and other health-related events specific to promoting employees' wellbeing, and will encourage health and fitness through various initiatives throughout the fiscal year.

- **Contracting**

USICH continues to strategically outsource several major components of its operations to other entities after cost-effectiveness determinations. Via the Economy Act, USICH maintains agreements with divisions of the General Services Administration to provide operational support that would be exorbitant to perform in-house, as well as website and network support from other outside sources. Those costs continue to be included in USICH's budget request.

USICH will continue to plan its procurements in a timely manner in order to reduce to the maximum extent possible, the agency's reliance on high-risk contract vehicles.

- Financial Management

USICH has received consecutively clean audit opinions since its initial FY 05 audit by an independent, outside CPA firm. The FY 2010 audit is currently underway, and a clean audit opinion is expected.

- Improper Payments Reductions

Improper payments are reviewed as part of USICH's annual fiscal year audit. For FY 2009, USICH reports no improper payments. The FY 10 audit is underway, and we expect to report no improper payments for this period, as well.

- Women and Girls

USICH will coordinate with key federal partners to ensure the safety and security of families fleeing domestic violence situations in all efforts to implement *Opening Doors*. The partners will include the Office of the Vice President, the Family Violence Division within the Administration for Children and Families at HHS and the Office of Violence Against Women at DOJ. In the implementation of the Signature Initiatives, USICH will identify housing and health models that provide trauma informed care to participants as needed.