

**U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness
Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness**

**External Stakeholder Input Report: Region 5 Regional Interagency Council on
Homelessness (ICH) Stakeholder Input
February 22, 2010 Chicago, Illinois**

Attending:

Sue Augustus, CSH	Cathy Leonis, CMS/Medicaid
Tim Barry, FEMA	Carmen M. Moreno, SSA
Tomasa Cadiz, DHHS-ACF	Doug Nguyen, SSA
Ray Candola, HUD	Lisa Patt-McDaniel, Ohio ICH
Deborah Culpepper, Featherfist	Barry Ramsey, USDA
Jim Galloway, HHS	Dottress Reeves, VETS
Mike Gates, VA	LaQuita Rogers, HRSA
Sally Harrison, MSHDA	Tim Soderlund, VETS
Luz Hein, VA	Floretta Strong-Pulley, VA Medical Center
John Hosteny, CNCS	Kathleen Swantek, Blue Water Dev. Housing, Inc.
Laura Kadwell, State of MN	Taylor D. Sykes, SSA
Larry Keillor, SSA	Katrina Van Valkey, CSH
Kelly Kent, CSH	Jenny Weiser, HHS
Pam Kies-Lowe, Michigan DOE	Louis K. Wilcox, HHS/ACF
Suzanne Krohn, HHS	Ray Willis, HUD
Niki Lee, ACF	Mary Ann Wren, HHS

*We thank you for your participation and apologize to anyone inadvertently left off this list.
We tried our best to read the handwriting of each person who signed in for the meeting.*

USICH Staff

Jennifer Ho and Michael German

Meeting Summary

Jennifer Ho welcomed the group and facilitated introductions. She then gave an overview of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and the framework for the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. The Plan will serve as a roadmap for joint action by the 19 Council agencies to guide the development of programs and budget proposals towards a set of measurable targets to pursue over a five-year period. USICH is centering its Plan on the belief – the moral foundation – “no one should experience homelessness—no one should be without a safe, stable place to call home.” There are five areas of concentration: Preventing and ending homelessness among 1) families with children, 2) youth, 3) Veterans, and 4) adults experiencing chronic homelessness; as well as 5) in the context of state and local communities, mobilize community participation, forge partnerships, and align resources.

The Council affirmed six core values to be reflected in the Plan:

- Homelessness is unacceptable.
- There are no “homeless people,” but rather people who have lost their homes who deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Homelessness is expensive; it is better to invest in solutions.
- Homelessness is solvable; we have learned a lot about what works.
- Homelessness can be prevented.
- There is strength in collaboration and USICH can make a difference.

The Plan's strategies will:

- identify and target to reach and match people with appropriate interventions;
- ensure access by people to needed programs, housing and services;
- retool crisis response to avert and shorten entry into homelessness;
- provide housing and supports;
- build opportunity such as jobs and education;
- enhance capacity in the service system to deliver quality; and
- document results.

The meeting facilitators introduced the World Café process, a conversational process that builds on previous conversations as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas, and discover new insights into the questions being discussed. Thank you to volunteers from Art of Hosting for their help to facilitate these conversations.

Small groups of three to five participants each discussed question one and recorded their key answers. After a short report-back session, the small groups were randomly re-mixed and the new groups discussed question two. The process was repeated for a discussion and recording of insights and answers to question three.

The questions for discussion:

1. What do we need to understand about the scope and causes of homelessness?
2. What should be the key goals and strategies of the plan that will take us toward that vision?
3. How can federal resources and practices be wisely aligned and cost-effectively applied to amplify our state/local work?

Before concluding the meeting, Jennifer outlined the next steps in the development of the Plan and attendees were thanked for their participation.

Following the meeting, the responses were categorized into themes. The percentage of comments for each theme is listed for each question followed by the text of every comment, listed alphabetically by theme. USICH has used our best efforts to ensure accuracy in capturing and categorizing comments.

Question 1: What do we need to understand about the scope and causes of homelessness?

10%	Impressions of Homelessness	Comments about the experience of homelessness itself.
10%	Investment Target – Housing	Comments suggesting increased funding for housing solutions, including more affordable housing, housing vouchers, PSH, and other specialized housing models.
10%	System Design	Comments relating to the promotion of effective system practices or recommended ways of designing homeless systems or delivering homeless assistance.
9%	Communication (external)	Comments highlighting the need for enhanced communication between Federal agencies and communities, concerted strategies to raise public awareness, the need to make information on programs widely available, and for coordinated messaging from agencies.
9%	Mainstream System Accountability	Comments on the responsibility of mainstream systems to address homelessness, and those that pertain to assessment and removal of barriers that drive people to homelessness or complicate access to solutions.
7%	Coordinated Interagency Strategy	Comments that suggest a need for holistic and coordinated planning across Federal agencies and mainstream systems to better address homelessness.
7%	Investment Target – Services	Comments indicating a need for increased funding for treatment services, early intervention, child-focused services, and life skills training for homeless people.
5%	Coordinated Federal Grants	Comments suggesting the need to pool funding, better coordinate funding applications and grant program regulations, or align grant restrictions across agencies.
5%	Investment Target – Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing	Comments advocating for increased funding for prevention and rapid re-housing models.
5%	Research	Comments suggesting areas where we need more research to inform strategy development of homeless assistance.
3%	Causes – Myriad of Factors	Comments indicating there are numerous causes of homelessness, as opposed to one specific cause.
3%	Causes – Systemic Factors	Comments suggesting that factors such as entrenched poverty or inadequate education to prepare for future self-sufficiency cause homelessness.
3%	Data Collection and Reporting	Comments advocating for consistent and streamlined data collection and reporting requirements across agencies, including issues with HMIS.
3%	Miscellaneous	A comment that does not fit it any of the thematic codes.
2%	Causes – Local Factors	Comments suggesting that homelessness is due to issues with the local service system, poverty rates, urban density, and/or a lack of governmental supports.
2%	Causes – Mental Health/Substance Abuse	Comments suggesting that mental health and substance abuse issues and lack of access to or availability of treatment of these issues contribute to homelessness.
2%	Costs of Homelessness	Comments about the long-term impacts of homelessness and the subsequent costs of homelessness to mainstream systems.

2%	Definitions	Comments requesting consistent definitions and common requirements to document homelessness and other related terms.
2%	Investment Targets – General	General comments advocating more funding/resources for programs, communities, or subpopulations.

Question 1: What do we need to understand about the scope and causes of homelessness?

<p>Inability of agencies to provide supportive actions in a cooperative action. Splitting families, for example.</p> <p>Need to include homeless populations and sub-populations when considering health needs</p> <p>Lack of understanding of the issues that impact people and cause homelessness: substance abuse, mental health, lack of skills for jobs and independent employment</p> <p>Limited safety net</p> <p>Person unable to access services (health, legal, social, etc)</p> <p>Vulnerable population leads to more/deeper issues</p> <p>All available resource are not known by practitioners. HUDs homeless peer to peer conference sharing of best practices. RHYTTA-HHS Runaway Youth</p> <p>Need more awareness-raising</p> <p>Politicians should be on board to ICH plan in five years</p> <p>Society perceptions. Society interaction forcing intervention</p> <p>Understand how to help as an individual as well as a society/government, etc.</p> <p>Federal mainstreamed funds should be provided via incentives rather than mandates</p> <p>Integrated funding streams from fed agencies so fed agencies funds work together</p> <p>Interagency RFPs</p> <p>Better discharge planning/coordination among fed/state/local so that institutionalized individuals are not discharged into homelessness</p> <p>Decrease the number of steps for decision making</p> <p>Elimination of red tape at federal level</p> <p>Priority—among all collaborative agencies</p> <p>Investments in homelessness means less money for education, employment training, future.</p> <p>Have access to better data</p> <p>Need to incorporate all data available, not only housing data</p> <p>Need a common definition of homelessness (HUD of McKinney vs education)</p> <p>Don't focus enough on causes.</p> <p>Human rights of homeless individuals?</p> <p>Invisible people matter.</p> <p>Political will is non-existent. Follow the money to see what is important.</p> <p>Stereotypes: societal view of homeless and the lack of sensitivity to the individual issues.</p> <p>Waste of human capital.</p> <p>Changing the focus from emerging shelter to prevention and rapid re-housing</p> <p>Deal with massive need for affordable housing</p> <p>Focus on keeping people housed.</p> <p>Identify unused resources (eg buildings) and convert with political will to one-step shelter.</p> <p>More subsidized housing and supportive housing</p> <p>Needs for long term support, permanent supportive housing</p> <p>Developing and sharing strategies for prevention and housing people</p> <p>Getting early on case management and resources in line to help prevent home foreclosure</p> <p>Prevention needs to be a high priority (investments in supports that are longer term than one month).</p> <p>Dedicated supportive services funding is critical to keeping people housed</p> <p>Get all states on board with HHS/SSA's "SOAR" projects. Get federal funding for SOAR projects to expand to all states to provide for more entities to be trained</p> <p>Long-term resources for case managers, facilities for placement, continued partnerships</p> <p>Resources need to be available to provide holistic service delivery to prevent and stop homelessness</p> <p>Recommend immediate resources—housing, food, cash—without financial qualifying restrictions</p> <p>Endless loop of looking for help leads to frustrated individuals. Transfers to numerous NPOs, agencies</p>	<p>Causes – local factors</p> <p>Causes – mental health/SA</p> <p>Causes - myriad</p> <p>Causes - myriad</p> <p>Causes – systemic factors</p> <p>Causes – systemic factors</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Coordinated Federal Grants</p> <p>Coordinated Federal Grants</p> <p>Coordinated Federal Grants</p> <p>Coordinated Interagency Strategy</p> <p>Coordinated Interagency Strategy</p> <p>Coordinated Interagency Strategy</p> <p>Coordinated Interagency Strategy</p> <p>Costs of homelessness</p> <p>Data Collection and Reporting</p> <p>Data Collection and Reporting</p> <p>Definitions</p> <p>Impressions of homelessness</p> <p>Impressions of homelessness</p> <p>Impressions of homelessness</p> <p>Impressions of homelessness</p> <p>Impressions of homelessness</p> <p>Impressions of homelessness</p> <p>Investment target – housing</p> <p>Investment target – housing</p> <p>Investment target – housing</p> <p>Investment target – housing</p> <p>Investment target – housing</p> <p>Investment target – housing</p> <p>Investment target – housing</p> <p>Investment target – prevention & RR</p> <p>Investment target – prevention & RR</p> <p>Investment target – prevention & RR</p> <p>Investment target – services</p> <p>Investment target – services</p> <p>Investment target – services</p> <p>Investment target – services</p> <p>Investment targets – general</p> <p>Mainstream system accountability</p>
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Ensure access to programs that families are eligible for such as SNAP, Health. Strengthen collaborations and eligibility enrollment.	Mainstream system accountability
How do we make process more seamless for individuals or families experiencing homelessness? Silos, turf issues, sep. processes, communication lacking	Mainstream system accountability
Level of assistance. Folks that are mentally disabled and homeless are usually approved. Who helps those not meeting disability requirements?	Mainstream system accountability
Reduce fragmentation	Mainstream system accountability
Connecting or reconnecting	Misc
Ground level intervention	Misc
The inter-relationship between homelessness and other societal issues	Research
What role disability plays in creating homelessness	Research
What role does income/\$ play	Research
Change policies that contribute to homelessness. For example, can't take teens to shelters	System Design
Lack of comprehensive assessment and accommodations of the family/individual	System Design
Provision of case management in order to assure continuity of family	System Design
Rural needs are so different from urban or suburban. Contract out services to community-based providers. Must also provide training and technical assistance	System Design
So many sub populations overlap and services can duplicate; need to coordinate and focus point of contact locally for services	System Design
Use electronic medical records/NHIN in discharge planning	System Design

Question 2: What should be the key goals and strategies of the plan that will take us toward this vision?

13%	Communication (external)	Comments highlighting the need for enhanced communication between Federal agencies and communities, concerted strategies to raise public awareness, the need to make information on programs widely available, and for coordinated messaging from agencies.
13%	Mainstream System Accountability	Comments on the responsibility of mainstream systems to address homelessness, and those that pertain to assessment and removal of barriers that drive people to homelessness or complicate access to solutions.
10%	Investment Target – Services	Comments indicating a need for increased funding for treatment services, early intervention, child-focused services, and life skills training for homeless people.
10%	Performance-based Funding	Comments promoting greater accountability for local programs and grantees, investment in performance, and the shifting of resources away from poorly performing strategies and programs.
6%	Coordinated Interagency Strategy	Comments that suggest a need for holistic and coordinated planning across Federal agencies and mainstream systems to better address homelessness.
6%	Innovation	
6%	Investment Target – Housing	Comments suggesting increased funding for housing solutions, including more affordable housing, housing vouchers, PSH, and other specialized housing models.
6%	Investment Target – Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing	Comments advocating for increased funding for prevention and rapid re-housing models.
6%	Miscellaneous	A comment that does not fit it any of the thematic codes.
6%	System Design	Comments relating to the promotion of effective system practices or recommended ways of designing homeless systems or delivering homeless assistance.

3%	Coordinated Federal Grants	Comments suggesting the need to pool funding, better coordinate funding applications and grant program regulations, or align grant restrictions across agencies.
3%	Flexibility	Comments suggesting a need to maintain or enhance the flexibility and versatility of funding and programming for homeless services.
3%	Investment Target – Education/ Employment	Comments suggesting a need for increased funding and resources for education and employment strategies for homeless people.
3%	Investment Targets – General	General comments advocating more funding/resources for programs, communities, or subpopulations.
3%	Potential Revenue	Comments presenting ideas on new revenue sources that could be used to fund proposed interventions.

Question 2: What should be the key goals and strategies of the plan that will take us toward this vision?

Increased education and awareness around prevention programs to increase visibility and access	Communication
Make the public aware of the issues of homelessness.	Communication
Market during prime time and in the daily newspaper the ramification of homelessness and its impact on society at large	Communication
Policy changes across the board discussion with mayors so they can insure that there is affordable housing in various communities	Communication
Integrate federal funding streams to make it easier to create supportive housing. Interagency RFPs;	
Change policies to be supportive of integration of federal funding streams from multiple agencies	Coordinated Federal Grants
Closer relationships between fed/state/local entities-aligned-understanding role of each-work strategies up and down through including common definition of homelessness	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Mechanism for increased coordination across systems	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Federal mainstream resources should be more flexible to allow state to use funding more creatively. Allow Medicaid funds to be used more flexibly.	Flexibility
Expansion of national health information network (NHIN) and use of electronic medical records to help with post-discharge intervention and placement	Innovation
Health care reform	Innovation
Increase job training-incentivize/assist people to gain skills they need to be employable.	Investment target – ed/emp
Build on HUD-VASH model to create funding for all people who are homeless to access and maintain housing, e.g., HUD Section 8 and HHS service funding	Investment target – housing
Create more affordable units and don't price people out of neighborhoods. Increase percentage of units in public housing development to target lower income families.	Investment target – housing
Better prevention programs	Investment target – prevention & RR
Letting early-on case management and resources designed to prevent foreclosure on mortgages	Investment target – prevention & RR
Fund case coordination	Investment target – services
Improved access to mental health and substance abuse treatment	Investment target – services
Raise the eligibility requirements for supportive services (resources-child care, WIC, transportation when you work harder and increase your income). Need to incentivize people	Investment target – services
Build capacity of community-based organizations	Investment targets – general
Better discharge planning/coordination between federal agencies and institutions so that patients are not discharged into homelessness, particularly for mentally ill patients	Mainstream system accountability
Make the government, state, local and Federal responsible to the people who these policies impact	Mainstream system accountability
One stop shop in each neighborhood/community with employment, housing and other services = no wrong door	Mainstream system accountability

Remove barriers to access to federal supports (e.g., Medicaid, SSDI, WIC, TANF) and gear them toward prevention (e.g., home-based services to family to prevent youth homelessness	Mainstream system accountability
Discharge planning and resourcing beginning when person enters institution	Misc
Outcomes oriented with incentives for agencies to utilize and coordinate. Targeting for hardest to serve	Misc
Audit existing program. Look at outcomes and stop funding those that don't work and redirect resources to evidence-based practices with proven results.	Performance-based funding
Eliminate funding for programs that do not have good outcomes in preventing or moving people out of homelessness so dollars can be reinvested in programs that do.	Performance-based funding
Funding is dependent on collaboration both initial and ongoing	Performance-based funding
Create a federal check-off for homelessness services	Potential revenue
Create "one door" for service eligibility, access and ongoing case coordination.	System Design
One stop shop/consolidated application process across departments	System Design

Question 3: How can federal resources and practices be wisely-aligned and cost-effectively applied to amplify our state/local work?

14%	Coordinated Federal Grants	Comments suggesting the need to pool funding, better coordinate funding applications and grant program regulations, or align grant restrictions across agencies.
14%	Performance-based Funding	Comments promoting greater accountability for local programs and grantees, investment in performance, and the shifting of resources away from poorly performing strategies and programs.
12%	Communication (external)	Comments highlighting the need for enhanced communication between Federal agencies and communities, concerted strategies to raise public awareness, the need to make information on programs widely available, and for coordinated messaging from agencies.
12%	Coordinated Interagency Strategy	Comments that suggest a need for holistic and coordinated planning across Federal agencies and mainstream systems to better address homelessness.
7%	Mainstream System Accountability	Comments on the responsibility of mainstream systems to address homelessness, and those that pertain to assessment and removal of barriers that drive people to homelessness or complicate access to solutions.
7%	System Design	Comments relating to the promotion of effective system practices or recommended ways of designing homeless systems or delivering homeless assistance.
5%	Data Collection and Reporting	Comments advocating for consistent and streamlined data collection and reporting requirements across agencies, including issues with HMIS.
5%	Definitions	Comments requesting consistent definitions and common requirements to document homelessness and other related terms.
5%	Flexibility	Comments suggesting a need to maintain or enhance the flexibility and versatility of funding and programming for homeless services.
5%	Investment Target – Regional Coordination/Planning	Comments pertaining to support or increased funding for regional coordination efforts and planning at the regional/local level.

5%	Investment Target – Services	Comments indicating a need for increased funding for treatment services, early intervention, child-focused services, and life skills training for homeless people.
5%	Miscellaneous	A comment that does not fit it any of the thematic codes.
2%	Consumer/stakeholder participation	Comments encouraging input from consumers and other front-line and local stakeholders in the planning and decision-making processes.
2%	Investment Targets – General	General comments advocating more funding/resources for programs, communities, or subpopulations.
2%	Technical Assistance (TA)	Comments related to the need for training and provision of technical assistance to improve use of federal resources and to disseminate effective strategies and best practices.

Question 3: How can federal resources and practices be wisely-aligned and cost-effectively applied to amplify our state/local work?

Become more knowledgeable about the services and oversight provided at federal level by all departments, to avoid duplication and to promote partnerships.	Communication
Local entities should have federal resource guide easily accessible and current with resources to end homelessness	Communication
Maintain a good dialogue with our state and local government and non-governmental agencies to create a “two-way” street while establishing goals/priorities and setting budgets	Communication
Market and broaden to the public and break through the barriers. Market the services. Increase the knowledge of services to individuals so folks who have lost their home can understand and navigate needed services.	Communication
One stop website to end homelessness	Communication
Maintain a good dialogue with our state and local government and non-governmental agencies to create a “two-way” street while establishing goals/priorities and setting budgets	Consumer/stakeholder participation
Encourage local HUD-VASH implementees to allow _____ of voucher	Coordinated Federal Grants
Federal agencies collaborate across and through joint RFP. Relax some regulations and merging funds across agencies	Coordinated Federal Grants
For RFPs: Integrated NOFA between agencies; joint review of applications; consensus awards; joint evaluation; accountability	Coordinated Federal Grants
Joint RFPs	Coordinated Federal Grants
One-step services at the federal level to make funding opportunities available to state and local agencies	Coordinated Federal Grants
Streamline applications and policies	Coordinated Federal Grants
Become more knowledgeable about the services and oversight provided at federal level by all departments, to avoid duplication and to promote partnerships.	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Building/strengthening collaborative and interagency relationships. Partner and combine resources toward a more consistent direction/reducing replication and to leverage resources to ensure non-duplicative efforts or that we’re working in silos.	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Decide this issue is a priority in every federal department	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Mandatory collaboration between federal, state and local levels	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Strengthen the partnership and get the federal agency partners (HUD, SSA, HHS) more directly involved in funding and directing the “SOAR” projects, with its state partners	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Do not support systems that support invalid data, e.g., HMIS 1600 vets in 1200 beds	Data Collection and Reporting
Streamline reporting. How many hours are being used for reporting?	Data Collection and Reporting
Common definitions	Definitions

Supplemental Document to Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness :: 2010
Region 5 Chicago Regional ICH Stakeholder Input

Policies, definitions, regulations should be standardized. Should compliment and not compete with each other	Definitions
More flexibility in regulations. No micro-managing	Flexibility
More flexibility in the regulations.	Flexibility
Appoint program coordinators to collaborate locally—to make sure homeless are prioritized. That local agencies understand resources that are available.	Investment target - regional coord/plng
Local or state version of USICH structure to coordinate efforts locally.	Investment target - regional coord/plng
Fund case coordination through Medicaid. Everything else is useless if not coordinated	Investment target – services
Strengthen the partnership and get the federal agency partners (HUD, SSA, HHS) more directly involved in funding and directing the “SOAR” projects, with its state partners	Investment target – services
Enhancement for grant per diem programs	Investment targets – general
Hold federal agencies accountable to collaborate to improve the effectiveness of the programs. Housing needs to be linked back to the services. Evictions (lower)—full vacancies and support people.	Mainstream system accountability
HUD-VASH needs to educate people better about where they need to go to get a voucher (People from southern Indiana need to go to Kansas City to get voucher) Can HUD-VASH vouchers be administered in a more integrated way (integrated with other funds and services)	Mainstream system accountability
Reducing barriers to accessing mainstream resources. One program as opposed to multiple systems and application process	Mainstream system accountability
Come to meetings to accomplish something—not just talk about it.	Misc
Reduce duplications	Misc
Are we duplicating grants/services to one NPO? Full disclosure of all sources of funding including in-kind to guarantee bang for one buck. Do the due diligence necessary to ensure funding is appropriate.	Performance-based funding
Audit existing programs and redirect funding to evidence-based practices that show results	Performance-based funding
Encourage and make aware collaboration in the funding process	Performance-based funding
Evaluate programs and reward successful programs and increase funding of these programs	Performance-based funding
For RFPs: Integrated NOFA between agencies; joint review of applications; consensus awards; joint evaluation; accountability	Performance-based funding
Use performance-based model ie, HUD-VASH	Performance-based funding
Collaboration between service agencies amd funding resources and expand from lessons learned using technology for open communication and share data	System Design
Coordinated service delivery	System Design
Support local efforts for resource guide	System Design
More sophisticated federal TA	Technical Assistance (TA)