



# United States Interagency Council on Homelessness

*Preventing and Ending Homelessness in the United States*

## **Creating an Effective State Interagency Council on Homelessness**

USICH looks to its partners in state governments to play a pivotal role in reaching the goals outlined in *Opening Doors: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*. Every state and territory has been encouraged by USICH to establish a State Interagency Council on Homelessness (SICH) by legislative action or a Governor's Executive Order with representation at the Cabinet level from the mainstream income support, health care, behavioral health, human services, veterans, corrections, transportation, education, and labor departments and agencies.

### ***Benefits of a State ICH***

A SICH allows all stakeholders in this issue to have a say in the development and implementation of the state plan to prevent and end homelessness, allowing for specific, measurable, and attainable goals to be established and worked towards at all levels of government. With the participation of legislators in the SICH, homelessness initiatives and resources are championed in the State Legislature for future funding. The collaboration between federal, state, and local resources and funding allows for greater systems integration across mainstream programs for this targeted population. State Interagency Councils best assert the needs, resources, and best practices of service providers to the State Legislatures and move Federal initiatives forward in the efforts to prevent and end homelessness in our nation.

### ***State ICH Functions***

State Interagency Councils serve as the single statewide homeless planning and policy development resource, beginning with the creation of a state plan to prevent and end homelessness aligned with *Opening Doors* and tailored to the characteristics of each state's homeless population. This state plan will develop measurable goals to end homelessness and then establish short and long-term statewide strategies for achieving these goals. Working with partners at the local levels of government and with Continuums of Care, the SICH will disseminate best practices in serving specific homeless populations and will become the hub for collaboration, accountability, and support for all programs serving the homeless population in the state.

### ***Characteristics of a Successful Council***

A successful SICH involves the following key members:

- Governor's office
- Legislators who have decision-making or legislative power
- Local Continuum of Care or Ten Year Plan representatives
- Key state agency directors
- Local federal officials
- Private sector/philanthropy

