

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

**External Stakeholder Input Report: Region 10 Regional Interagency Council on
Homelessness (ICH) Stakeholder Input**
March 3, 2010 **Seattle, Washington**

Attending:

Jody Becker-Green, WA HHS
Michael P. Burns, Census
Martha Dilts, HUD
Melinda Dyer,
Rob Hard, VBA
Kay Holmes, Alaska DOE
Janice M. Holt, HHS ACF
Dennis Hunsinger, FEMA
Gerald Hunter, Idaho ICH
Tedd Kellerher, WA DOC
Betty Lock, DOL
Janet Lovell-Smith, ID Housing Finance
Tryna M. Luton, Oregon DOEd
Karen Matsuda, HHS
Mary McBride, HUD
Tina Minor, HHS ACF
Bobbie Mowery, HHS

Patrick O'Carroll, HHS
Jo Ann Oram, FEMA
Suzi Pearson, Alaska Coalition on Housing and
Homelessness
Jack Peters, HUD
Linda Polley, DOEd
Robin Prichard, HUD
Pat Prieb, VBA
Tammy Repine, USDA
Sturgis Robinson, Census
Mark Romick, Alaska Housing Finance
Karen Seay, ID DOE
Ann Shahan, VA
Mario Villanueva, USDA
Julie Williams, ID Housing Finance

*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

Sharon Price and Paul Carlson

Meeting Summary

Sharon Price 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, Sharon 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?

15%	Impressions of Homelessness	Comments about the experience of homelessness itself.
11%	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%	Causes – Economic	Comments stating that homelessness is caused by faltering local economies, a disconnect between income and housing costs, or lack of employment opportunities.
10%	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.
8%	Causes – Myriad of Factors	Comments indicating there are numerous causes of homelessness, as opposed to one specific cause.
8%	Miscellaneous	A comment that does not fit it any of the thematic codes.
8%	Research	Comments suggesting areas where we need more research to inform strategy development of homeless assistance.
5%	Costs of Homelessness	Comments about the long-term impacts of homelessness and the subsequent costs of homelessness to mainstream systems.
5%	Data Collection and Reporting	Comments advocating for consistent and streamlined data collection & reporting requirements across agencies, including issues with HMIS.
3%	Causes – Systemic Factors	Comments suggesting that factors such as entrenched poverty or inadequate education to prepare for future self-sufficiency cause homelessness.
3%	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.
2%	Causes – Family/Violence	Comments related to family instability, violence, and lack of support networks as a cause of homelessness.
2%	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.
2%	Coordinated Federal Grants	Comments suggesting the need to pool funding, better coordinate funding applications and grant program regulations, or align grant restrictions across agencies.
2%	Coordinated Interagency Strategy	Comments that suggest a need for holistic and coordinated planning across Federal agencies and mainstream systems.
2%	Definitions	Comments requesting consistent definitions and common requirements to document homelessness and other related terms.
2%	Flexibility	Comments suggesting a need to maintain or enhance the flexibility and versatility of funding and programming for homeless services.
2%	Investment Target – Education/ Employment	Comments suggesting a need for increased funding and resources for education and employment strategies for homeless people.
2%	Investment Target – Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing	Comments advocating for increased funding for prevention and rapid re-housing models.
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?

Economic shifts in employment/occupations that require low education levels are gone	Causes – economic
Just get 2 or 3 jobs to make ends meet	Causes – economic
Poor credit histories	Causes – economic
Poor low income – not sophisticated enough to make it	Causes – economic
Working homeless due to non-livable wages	Causes – economic
Working poor – not enough low income housing	Causes – economic
Other reasons for homeless – children, women, fleeing domestic violence	Causes - family/violence
Active choice matter % policy – limiting hospitalization for mentally impaired	Causes – mental health/SA
Catastrophic health problems	Causes – mental health/SA
Chronic homeless issues (drug/mental/alcohol/medical etc...)	Causes – mental health/SA
Military services started cycle- alcoholism, PTSD, substance abuse, mental illness	Causes – mental health/SA
Substance abuse and mental health issues	Causes – mental health/SA
Visibility of homeless – mentally ill and substance abuse	Causes – mental health/SA
Homelessness is an affordable housing issue. (drug, alcohol, mental health, etc...)	Causes - myriad
Medical issues, economic homelessness address the specific issues because they can't all be lumped into one category of "homeless"	Causes - myriad
Multi dimensional – individual & family level. Basic needs are not being met. Fundamental right to have basic needs met. Homelessness looks different depending on where we are (rural is often overshadowed)	Causes - myriad
Unemployment and uninsured health costs – lack of access to employment and affordable health care; Mental health is a risk. Idaho has poor public support for critical services to support mental illness, disability, or multi-occurring illness.	Causes - myriad
Variables of causes and range of causes	Causes - myriad
Criminal histories even very old history	Causes – systemic factors
People falling from other program	Causes – systemic factors
Still acceptable at some level	Communication
Expenses to appropriate dollars effectively based on core issue of homeless	Coordinated Federal Grants
Increased focus on planning for the future	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Substantial impact on children/youth	Costs of homelessness
The impacts on the communities and the individuals who must have the experience – long-term costs to individuals (i.e. challenges to school age children and their future prospects)	Costs of homelessness
What matters? Homelessness is a destructive force that undermines individuals, families, and communities by destroying "ladders" to return to community participation, employment, and positive self-esteem. Current economic factors increase likelihood of long-term homelessness for an increasing number of individuals and families.	Costs of homelessness
Data for tracking homelessness (need for improvement)	Data Collection and Reporting
HMIS help understand	Data Collection and Reporting
Identifying gaps – data sharing agreements	Data Collection and Reporting
Not an agreed upon definition of homeless	Definitions
Waiving rules, flexibility census-hiring more services when get temporary job	Flexibility
Disappropriate % of homeless or veterans	Impressions of homelessness
Don't look homeless in the eye – act like they don't exist	Impressions of homelessness
Given opportunity to succeed, people not always successful in maintaining housing	Impressions of homelessness
Humanity and respect don't devalue their ability to effectively participate in their community	Impressions of homelessness
Individuals choosing "homeless"	Impressions of homelessness
Lots of homeless people don't want to be homeless but they tend to adapt to it	Impressions of homelessness
People assume people are homeless because of poor planning	Impressions of homelessness
People think people are not really homeless – out scamming when they are panhandling	Impressions of homelessness
People want to be homeless	Impressions of homelessness

Making sure kids are identified and controlled in school. Public schools are the largest service provider for homeless kids/families/youth serve and an effective prevention agent	Investment target – ed/emp
More focus on prevention – intervene early and address core issues	Investment target – prevention & RR
Connect people with services as quickly as possible – it shorten time people are homeless	Investment target – services
Deal with individuals in a holistic ways. Complex and be able to look at this in a broader sense – means education, health care, etc...	Investment target – services
Housing providers not doing the care management but individual come to housing with supportive services	Investment target – services
Increased focus on life skills and financial literacy	Investment target – services
Service doesn't match needs of individual	Investment target – services
Services not just about building shelter	Investment target – services
Substance abuse and mental health issues lack of follow up services/life skills	Investment target – services
Develop programs that accept the homeless regardless of their sobriety	Investment targets – general
Failed systems, i.e.: prison, parolees coming out become homeless	Mainstream system accountability
Working on intersection of child welfare and choosing kids in out of home care	Mainstream system accountability
How we break the cycle	Misc
Issues that cause homelessness	Misc
Most of our group new to homelessness	Misc
Most programs say you have to be clean and sober before u can get into their program	Misc
Personal or agency perspective	Misc
Core issues causes on effect, which leads to homelessness and other problems	Research
Core issues: youth – holistic approach – why do they leave home; how can they get employed; aging out of foster systems; build stronger transition plans that lower the age to get housing vouchers	Research
That we do not truly understand it	Research
Understand the problem in various communities: number of homeless and nature of homeless	Research
What reasons contribute homeless & what interferes with retaining housing	Research

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

17%	Coordinated Interagency Strategy	Comments that suggest a need for holistic and coordinated planning across Federal agencies and mainstream systems to better address homelessness.
17%	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%	Flexibility	Comments suggesting a need to maintain or enhance the flexibility and versatility of funding and programming for homeless services.
10%	Investment Target – Housing	Comments suggesting increased funding for housing solutions, including more affordable housing, housing vouchers, PSH, and other specialized housing models.
7%	Investment Targets – General	General comments advocating more funding/resources for programs, communities, or subpopulations.
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.
5%	Investment Target – Education/ Employment	Comments suggesting a need for increased funding and resources for education and employment strategies for homeless people.

5%	Investment Target – Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing	Comments advocating for increased funding for prevention and rapid re-housing models.
5%	System Design	Comments relating to the promotion of effective system practices or recommended ways of designing homeless systems or delivering homeless assistance.
2%	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.
2%	Coordinated Federal Grants	Comments suggesting the need to pool funding, better coordinate funding applications and grant program regulations, or align grant restrictions across agencies.
2%	Data Collection and Reporting	Comments advocating for consistent and streamlined data collection and reporting requirements across agencies, including issues with HMIS.
2%	Investment Target – Regional Coordination/Planning	Comments pertaining to support or increased funding for regional coordination efforts and planning at the regional/local level.
2%	Miscellaneous	A comment that does not fit it any of the thematic codes.
2%	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.
2%	Potential Revenue	Comments presenting ideas on new revenue sources that could be used to fund proposed interventions.
2%	Vision of Success/Indicators of Success	Comments regarding statements or goals pertaining to what a successful homeless system would look like.

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

Toward the goal of getting all of us to commit to work together to end homelessness – strategy needed is a sustained communication plan to educate RE: costs of homelessness to all of us	Communication
Agencies – grant application process/writing	Coordinated Federal Grants
Engage the private sector more in addressing this problem along with government, faith-based, and other organizations	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Leveraging the dollars – community partnerships	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Implement/coordinate/collaborative homeless	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Implementation of collaboration timeline of all services (fed, state, local and community based)	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Measure able strategies – VA goal of ending homelessness in 5 years	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
10 year plans were mandated but not funded	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
This could be an area stemming from USICH where fed agencies are mandated to assign permanent FTE to the homeless disaster response site	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Data sharing – HHS/DOE/HUD; single system – models	Data Collection and Reporting
Greater flexibility	Flexibility
More funding flexibility at local level – more integration of housing services	Flexibility
Less federal plan design, more local plan design	Flexibility
More flexible reporting structures focused on outcomes rather than processes	Flexibility

Supplemental Document to Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness :: 2010
Region 10 Seattle Regional ICH Stakeholder Input

Children: a) increase in school stability and improve educational outcome b) resources to school districts (funding) c) transportation	Investment target – ed/emp
Provide opportunities for people to get back on their feet: a) job training b) support services	Investment target – ed/emp
Increasing HUD VASH; “housing first model” “no wrong door”	Investment target – housing
Increase resources for affordable housing for all populations a) rentals b) home ownership c) supportive housing	Investment target – housing
Youth: more housing and resource/services for unaccompanied youth; a) homeless (street youth) b) children in “out of home care” (i.e. foster care) c) child welfare system and housing coordination	Investment target – housing
Long-term rental assistance (vouchers) – more money dollars (more local determinations of eligibility)	Investment target – housing
Develop strategy and find resources to prevent homelessness – to discuss shelter and housing options before homelessness	Investment target – prevention & RR
Focus on foster youth and students. Foster youth signed up for housing vouchers before emancipation. Housing sooner in the process. Preventing homelessness through education in classes in school – bring conscious awareness to all ages and not afraid to discuss and educate	Investment target – prevention & RR
Each community develop shelter and housing plans for post disaster that all sectors of society engages	Investment target - regional coord/plng
Provide long term recovery guide service to all communities, agencies (fed, state, local, community-based organizations)	Investment target – services
Implement long-term recovery guide services at one place – CA model plan for nationwide implementation	Investment target – services
Life skills training: school curriculum	Investment target – services
Re-grow our mental health system to assure care for all acute and chronically mentally ill	Investment target – services
Every homeless person has access to integrated services and housing specific to their individual needs. Funding based on issue	Investment target – services
Long term commitments for services	Investment target – services
Enriched supportive services with housing options	Investment target – services
Target chronic homelessness – address policy, such as one definition across the nation. Address mental health issues. Address the policies in the system: CW, prison, military – homes to go, better transition etc...	Investment targets – general
Addressing the fiscal needs; private – public – faith- not for profit	Investment targets – general
Disaster response sites nationwide	Investment targets – general
Revamp housing/banking/rental laws past credit history is heavily weighted in their decisions	Mainstream system accountability
Focus on foster youth and students. Foster youth signed up for housing vouchers before emancipation. Housing sooner in the process. Preventing homelessness through education in classes in school – bring conscious awareness to all ages and not afraid to discuss and educate	Mainstream system accountability
Reduce barriers to housing - Eliminate why you must be clean and sober before you get housing	Mainstream system accountability
Add “past criminal record” under scope of EEO	Misc
Shift systemic federal attitude from control of details to outcome attainment. Allow fundability of resource allocation according to greatest need ability to achieve results at local level	Performance-based funding
Funding: a) federal dollars (resources)leveraging private dollars (foundations b) feasible use of federal resources – currently slow piped (i.e. Snohomish county \$20 fee for homeless. Every home closing pays fee	Potential revenue
One stop shops for outreach and discharge – help to teach life skills and other issues that need to be addressed in one place – with supports for the people (how to get jobs and keep them, financial management, taxes, housing and knowledge etc...)	System Design
Improved tracking of individual resources	System Design
Put a system in place that will serve the prison...not try to fit the person into the system...	Vision of Success/Indicators of Success

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

51%	Coordinated Interagency Strategy	Comments that suggest a need for holistic and coordinated planning across Federal agencies and mainstream systems to better address homelessness.
10%	Flexibility	Comments suggesting a need to maintain or enhance the flexibility and versatility of funding and programming for homeless services.
8%	Miscellaneous	A comment that does not fit it any of the thematic codes.
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%	Definitions	Comments requesting consistent definitions and common requirements to document homelessness and other related terms.
5%	Research	Comments suggesting areas where we need more research to inform strategy development of homeless assistance.
3%	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.
3%	Consumer/stakeholder participation	Comments encouraging input from consumers and other front-line and local stakeholders in the planning and decision-making processes.
3%	Data Collection and Reporting	Comments advocating for consistent and streamlined data collection and reporting requirements across agencies, including issues with HMIS.
3%	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.
3%	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.
3%	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?

Educate public on the face of homeless – it’s not just the people on the street corner	Communication
As long as some populations didn’t get lost, don’t have as much of a voice	Consumer/stakeholder participation
Alignment/coordination of funding cycles between federal agencies	Coordinated Federal Grants
Create a simpler grant application	Coordinated Federal Grants
Again – start at higher level (like this meeting) to get the groups together	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Changing policies’ core mission of federal programs	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Child services and HUD (one example: can add in medical care, etc...) coordination	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Comprehensive care planning – gaps addressed include all feds in comprehensive approach	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Disconnect at local child services and housing authority: a) some funds being sat on b) lack of education at 2 systems c) strengthen at federal level = trickle down d) build bridges e) agencies not understanding what is available (grants not being requested, applications not being sent in)	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Engaged enough in state and local community? Collaborating enough? Awareness?	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Fed employee goals and programs need to be aligned – employee are evaluated on what is important	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Feds vs. them mentality – need synergy; not seamless right now; depends on the department sometimes	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Foster agency collaboration not individual	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Four fed agencies – pool money through USICH	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Have broader goals – overarching	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
How can we change the structure of fed programs – need the TOP leadership	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Issue driven vs. silos within agencies and across departments	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Making sure education is t the table – engaged	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Not flowing up or sideways about activities, information, more interactive collaboration	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Not sure how to align HHS, Medicaid, housing (like vouchers)	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Programs need to be integrated throughout a federal agency – not just the “homeless coordinator”	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Results are at community level – but who coordinates 10 year plan overall?	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Too many silos – no real good intersections	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
We have plans/goals, now we need specific action plans	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Single information tracking system – making information person based (horizontal) not program based (vertical)	Data Collection and Reporting
Common types of homeless	Definitions
One-grass root definition	Definitions
Flexibility	Flexibility
Flexibility in federal budgets to spend dollars where most needed	Flexibility
Local flexibility for people with mental health problems – no direct path to subsidized housing	Flexibility
Re-designate without taking all the strings away	Flexibility
Can scramble to notch HA and Medicaid but not coherent entitlement	Mainstream system accountability
Grass roots – i.e. doing good but limited awareness of what’s available; small group many not	Misc
Sometimes community is focused on broad needs vs. individuals	Misc
Time is ripe with the government leadership we have currently	Misc
Delegate authority and responsibility funding to state/local, flexibility – (official at local levels, fund at local levels)	Performance-based funding
Analysis of existing data – determine where the dollar is being used effectively and build on them – see where the gaps are	Research
Data indicating unmet needs-housing in system because of neglect - just now coming out with more information	Research
Communication and cross training and understanding – i.e. hold separate conferences design, design educational events that are to bring these different agencies together	Technical Assistance (TA)