

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

**External Stakeholder Input Report: Region 6 Regional Interagency Council on  
Homelessness (ICH) Stakeholder Input**  
February 23, 2010 **Dallas, Texas**

**Attending:**

C. Donald Babers, HUD  
John Bartlett, DOL  
Bob Cook, HUD  
Peggy Crist, DOT  
Mary Dodson, Texas ICH  
Mike Doyle, Cornerstone  
Martha Fleming, CNCS  
Rita Gonzalez, Texas ICH  
David Hirschman, Treasury  
Stephen L. Holliday, HUD

Gary A. Holtberg, HUD  
Barbara James, Texas Homeless Education Office  
Rebecca Lucero, USDA  
Shirley Nunn, IRS  
Nicolas Ramon, HUD  
Joseph Sanchez, New Mexico  
Darby R. Washeck, HUD  
Donald Watson, VETS  
Katie S. Worsham, HUD

*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**

Anthony Love and Michael German

**Meeting Summary**

Anthony Love welcomed the group and facilitated introductions. He 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, Anthony 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?**

12%	Investment Targets – General	General comments advocating more funding/resources for programs, communities, or subpopulations.
9%	Coordinated Interagency Strategy	Comments that suggest a need for holistic and coordinated planning across Federal agencies and mainstream systems to better address homelessness.
9%	Research	Comments suggesting areas where we need more research to inform strategy development of homeless assistance.
7%	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.
7%	Impressions of Homelessness	Comments about the experience of homelessness itself.
7%	Innovation	
7%	System Design	Comments relating to the promotion of effective system practices or recommended ways of designing homeless systems or delivering homeless assistance.
5%	Causes – Economic	Comments stating that homelessness is caused by faltering local economies, a disconnect between income and housing costs, or lack of employment opportunities.
5%	Causes – Myriad of Factors	Comments indicating there are numerous causes of homelessness, as opposed to one specific cause.
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 – Housing	Comments suggesting increased funding for housing solutions, including more affordable housing, housing vouchers, PSH, and other specialized housing models.
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%	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%	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 Target – Regional Coordination/Planning	Comments pertaining to support or increased funding for regional coordination efforts and planning at the regional/local level.
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 1: What do we need to understand about the scope and causes of homelessness?**

Economy: How has it affected the scope? Unemployment, mortgage crisis, lack of donations to non-profits	Causes – economic
There are so many homeless people and the number is increasing due to current economy	Causes – economic
20% of homeless with mental disease are veterans. Largest provider is Bexan city Jail for mental disorders. Jail diversion and reentry for veterans in Texas. It’s cheaper to treat mental health in MHMR/VA facility rather than jail.	Causes – mental health/SA
Homeless people with serious mental illness have difficulty caring for themselves and need more support	Causes – mental health/SA
Many people have experienced physical and sexual abuse and have not addressed those issues and continue to be affected by them	Causes – mental health/SA
Causes of homelessness: economy, mental illness, bad choices, substance abuse	Causes - myriad
Transportation and health care	Causes - myriad
DOJ, HUD, DOL—funding one grantee	Coordinated Federal Grants
Linked grants, i.e., health, transportation. Central mechanism be established.	Coordinated Federal Grants
Better coordination among federal agencies	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Concentrate and coordinate among federal among one community at a time	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Enhance coordination through and among federal, state, and local provers. Example: re-engaging the regional Interagency Council on homelessness, Texas Homeless Coalition, etc.	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Homelessness covers all services (holistic approach)	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Tax consequences low priority but is still a valid concern. People miss out on family-friendly credits/benefits. Could be a lot of money. Potential resource.	Costs of homelessness
It happens before they meet the definition.	Definitions

*Supplemental Document to Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness :: 2010*  
**Region 6 Dallas Regional ICH Stakeholder Input**

Childhood homeless begets adult homelessness	Impressions of homelessness
It's amazing and sad that homelessness still exists in the U.S., land of wealth and opportunity	Impressions of homelessness
The concept of homeless people needs to change. The "traditional" homeless man is no longer accurate or comprehensive. Accordingly, traditional models like shelters is no longer suitable for the entire population.	Impressions of homelessness
Incentivize by doing things such as providing tax breaks for housing people	Innovation
What we have learned through disasters. How to capture successful responses into concrete "real world situation"	Innovation
Why aren't there more successful programs? Are we not marketing what works? There are successful programs, but we need more of them.	Innovation
Access to mainstream benefits is critical. Build more housing for public housing and section 8, etc. to avoid waiting lists that are long and help people get SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, SNAPs	Investment target – housing
Provide housing including supportive services	Investment target – housing
Need funding targeted to support coordination/coalitions and regional and state interagency councils	Investment target - regional coord/plng
Lack of comprehensive service providers	Investment target – services
Provide housing including supportive services	Investment target – services
Growing populations: youth and elderly	Investment targets – general
People need PO Box, some type of address to receive mail, i.e., tax refund checks and other important correspondence	Investment targets – general
Underserved population: homeless single adult women	Investment targets – general
We need permanent fixes, not band-aids.	Investment targets – general
We should focus resources on the family and the support system they should be providing.	Investment targets – general
Access to mainstream benefits is critical. Build more housing for public housing and section 8, etc. to avoid waiting lists that are long and help people get SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, SNAPs	Mainstream system accountability
We have limited resources that are directed where you can get the biggest bang for your buck, and hard-to-serve people are not their target population	Mainstream system accountability
It matters that our funding and programs are focused on the result, not the cause.	Performance-based funding
Incentivize owners of vacant properties to use their properties for housing our target population.	Potential revenue
Caring for homeless families, what is needed to strengthen the agencies providing support to the homeless	Research
Families and children experiencing homelessness is destabilizing. What are the long-term psychological impacts on the children?	Research
Identify where the homeless are. They are in urban and rural areas. Count?	Research
Understand the causes and scope of homelessness and how that knowledge impacts solution	Research
Every jail has VA representative to assist veterans getting out of jail to find housing—emergency, transitional, permanent housing (given by VA). Help vets file for service affected injuries.	System Design
Lack of coordination between service providers	System Design
People need a home/shelter first before other priorities can be addressed. Health (physical/mental); parenting skills; build stability; employment	System Design
We must eliminate homelessness	Vision of Success/Indicators of Success

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

18%	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.
18%	System Design	Comments relating to the promotion of effective system practices or recommended ways of designing homeless systems or delivering homeless assistance.
11%	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 – Regional Coordination/Planning	Comments pertaining to support or increased funding for regional coordination efforts and planning at the regional/local level.
7%	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.
4%	Coordinated Federal Grants	Comments suggesting the need to pool funding, better coordinate funding applications and grant program regulations, or align grant restrictions across agencies.
4%	Definitions	Comments requesting consistent definitions and common requirements to document homelessness and other related terms.
4%	Flexibility	Comments suggesting a need to maintain or enhance the flexibility and versatility of funding and programming for homeless services.
4%	Innovation	
4%	Investment Target – Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing	Comments advocating for increased funding for prevention and rapid re-housing models.
4%	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.
4%	Investment Targets – General	General comments advocating more funding/resources for programs, communities, or subpopulations.
4%	Miscellaneous	A comment that does not fit it any of the thematic codes.
4%	Research	Comments suggesting areas where we need more research to inform strategy development of homeless assistance.

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

Create a new, correct, face to homelessness	Communication
Develop an effective and comprehensive public education initiative	Communication
Educate all federal and state agencies of the funding and resources available and then they could leverage resources for homeless	Communication
Educational process to general public: make aware of causes, results, homelessness impacts of everybody	Communication
Inform policy makers	Communication
Coordinated or linked funding sources	Coordinated Federal Grants
Coordination of federal and local resources	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Improved coordination between community, local, state, federal	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Identify and legalize one definition of homelessness	Definitions
Make all federal funds designated for the homeless to be truly flexible so they can address multiple needs.	Flexibility
Create an intentional focus on children and youth	Innovation
Concentrating on and emphasizing homelessness prevention	Investment target – prevention & RR
Encourage and reward local planning to prevent and end homelessness and provide funding for interagency collaboration (local and state) and coalition/CoC development	Investment target - regional coord/plng
Use all community stakeholders to create collaborations	Investment target - regional coord/plng
School-based clinics-accessible: fee or low charge for minor medical	Investment target – services
Provide funding that is targeted to sub-populations like those that are homeless or that you have prevented homelessness	Investment targets – general
Change all partner behavior to improve the approach to address homelessness	Mainstream system accountability
Community: everyone takes ownership for the problem of homelessness	Mainstream system accountability
Identify all resources and what is preventing them from working together	Mainstream system accountability
Change of behavior	Misc
Identify and research measure's success various agencies use to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs	Performance-based funding
Require federal grantees to support homeless programs-tie the dollars to the result	Performance-based funding
Research and understand the 'root causes' of homelessness	Research
Central point of entry would serve as case management provision point to help homeless set goals and a plan of action and connect them to services and follow-up until they achieve self-sufficiency and have the life skills, education, employment skills to remain stable.	System Design
Central point of entry would serve as case management provision point to help homeless set goals and a plan of action and connect them to services and follow-up until they achieve self-sufficiency and have the life skills, education, employment skills to remain stable.	System Design
Leverage coordination between local/non-profits to address the multiple needs of homeless persons. A comprehensive collaboration with a central point of entry	System Design
The "front door" to a service continuum should be in the local community, i.e., congregations, hot lines.	System Design

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

22%	Flexibility	Comments suggesting a need to maintain or enhance the flexibility and versatility of funding and programming for homeless services.
16%	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.
13%	Coordinated Federal Grants	Comments suggesting the need to pool funding, better coordinate funding applications and grant program regulations, or align grant restrictions across agencies.
13%	Coordinated Interagency Strategy	Comments that suggest a need for holistic and coordinated planning across Federal agencies and mainstream systems to better address homelessness.
6%	Potential Revenue	Comments presenting ideas on new revenue sources that could be used to fund proposed interventions.
6%	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.
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%	Data Collection and Reporting	Comments advocating for consistent and streamlined data collection and reporting requirements across agencies, including issues with HMIS.
3%	Definitions	Comments requesting consistent definitions and common requirements to document homelessness and other related terms.
3%	Investment Target – Education/ Employment	Comments suggesting a need for increased funding and resources for education and employment strategies for homeless people.
3%	Investment Target – Housing	Comments suggesting increased funding for housing solutions, including more affordable housing, housing vouchers, PSH, and other specialized housing models.
3%	Investment Target – Regional Coordination/Planning	Comments pertaining to support or increased funding for regional coordination efforts and planning at the regional/local level.
3%	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.
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.

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

Feedback as a vehicle to impact on local initiatives as best practices	Communication
Cannot mix federal funds: mechanism to be flexible	Coordinated Federal Grants
Emphasis on flexibility—matching use of federal dollars for other programs	Coordinated Federal Grants
Local match of funds	Coordinated Federal Grants
We’d like to see all federal funding compiled into one pot, not fragmented that provides flexibility to service	Coordinated Federal Grants
Better align regional geographically	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Collaboration with local and federal offices; community level efforts	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Have national Interagency Homeless Council put pressure on regional and state ICH to effectively address homelessness and accurately report outputs and outcomes.	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Require all federal agencies to address homeless populations and prevention of homelessness in their annual plan and in grant applications.	Coordinated Interagency Strategy
Reporting requirements should be streamlined at a minimum	Data Collection and Reporting
Allow local communities to define “homeless” for their own community and spend federal funds accordingly	Definitions
Appropriate funding connected to need and not geography	Flexibility
Be more flexible in the federal dollars so jobs from department of Labor can be used not only for employment but can help with say transportation	Flexibility
Cannot mix federal funds: mechanism to be flexible	Flexibility
Emphasis on flexibility—matching use of federal dollars for other programs	Flexibility
Incentivize geographic communities to work together by awarding “block grant” funds for community-wide improvements in homeless metrics	Flexibility
More flexible funding cycles	Flexibility
Providers to be able to address clients’ unique situations and to be tailored to local communities need	Flexibility
Leverage new dollars to incentivize hiring of homeless	Investment target – ed/emp
Regulatory change on TBLA	Investment target – housing
Require states to do a homeless plan for federal funds and all state agencies serving homeless would develop a plan and prioritize services/programs to be funded. Similar to local Continuum of Care.	Investment target - regional coord/plng
Provide more funding for case management staff that will help households achieve outcomes. Do not put caps on essential service costs (staff that provide direct service to clients).	Investment target – services
Shorten lag time for benefits and services	Mainstream system accountability
Become results-oriented but have technical assistance available	Performance-based funding
Define outcomes more stringently and set timelines.	Performance-based funding
Have outcome based grants but be reasonable on percentage to achieve outcomes.	Performance-based funding
Incentivize geographic communities to work together by awarding “block grant” funds for community-wide improvements in homeless metrics	Performance-based funding
Review measurements of success and more funding from those not working so well to those that are	Performance-based funding
Move more federal staff from fund management into program management	Potential revenue
Understand that private funding is more available than federal. Federal should be an add on.	Potential revenue
Become results-oriented but have technical assistance available	Technical Assistance (TA)
Create organizational capacity at local and federal government agencies to allow timely monitoring	Technical Assistance (TA)