



**United States Interagency Council on Homelessness**  
**Fiscal Year 2011 Congressional Budget Justification**

Federal Center SW ♦ 409 Third Street SW, Suite 310 ♦ Washington, DC 20024  
202-708-4663 PH ♦ 202-708-1216 FAX ♦ [www.usich.gov](http://www.usich.gov)  
Barbara Poppe, Executive Director

**UNITED STATES INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS**  
**FISCAL YEAR 2011 SUMMARY STATEMENT**

	<u>Enacted/ Request</u>	<u>Carryover</u>	<u>Supplemental/ Rescission</u>	<u>Total Resources</u>	<u>Obligations</u>	<u>Outlays</u>
<u>2009 Enacted</u>	<u>\$2,333,000</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>\$2,333,000</u>	<u>\$2,301,644</u>	<u>\$2,233,759</u>
<u>2010 Enacted</u>	<u>\$2,450,000</u> <sup>1</sup>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>\$2,450,000</u>	<u>\$361,987</u> <sup>2</sup>	<u>315,936</u> <sup>3</sup>
<u>2011 Request</u>	<u>\$2,680,000</u>					

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<sup>1</sup> House Appropriations Committee reduced from \$2,680,000 because of an unavoidable delaying in hiring of executive director and other staff in FY '10. The Council will be fully staffed for the entire duration of FY '11.

<sup>2</sup> As of 12/31/09.

<sup>3</sup> As of 12/31/09.

# UNITED STATES INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS

## I. 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). The Council'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."

The Council is currently comprised of the heads (or the designees) of nineteen 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)

## II. Organization

### a. Chair

At its initial meeting under the Obama Administration on June 18, 2009, the Council elected HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan as chairperson and Labor Secretary Hilda Solis as vice chairperson. Currently, chair rotation is on an annual basis.

b. Headquarters Staff

The daily activities of the Council are managed by Executive Director, Barbara Poppe, who was unanimously elected by the Council, and came aboard effective, November 16, 2009. Executive Director Poppe reports directly to the Council Chair, and is supported by policy and administrative staff and the work of the Regional Coordinators. Staff has been augmented most recently by three Deputy Directors, all with significant expertise in homelessness/housing-related work.

c. Regional Coordinators

The Council currently has four regional coordinators, provided by HUD, who serve as principal representatives and points of contact for the Council in the field. Plans are underway with HUD to expand the number of coordinators to ensure proper coverage across the country. These coordinators have served instrumental roles in encouraging State and local coordination through such vehicles as 10-year plans and State interagency councils, and have provided technical assistance in these and other areas as required by the Council's statute.

d. Senior Policy Group

The Council's Senior Policy Group provides a regular forum for coordinating policies and programs, collecting data, developing special initiatives, and preparing recommendations for consideration by Council members. Additionally, the Council's Executive Director regularly meets with the managers of Federal targeted and mainstream homeless assistance programs to coordinate program information and identify opportunities for collaboration.

Most recently the Senior Policy Group met in December 2009 and January 2010. The focus of both meetings was to develop the process to create a national strategic plan to end homelessness (see below) and to agree on the structure and timeline for the 2009 Annual Report to the President and Congress. Nearly all members of the Council were represented at both meetings.

### **III. Current and Planned Council Goals**

Consistent with its mission, the Council 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 end homelessness, as required by the HEARTH Act of 2009.

a. National Strategic Plan to End Homelessness

Congress charged the Council with new responsibility of developing and submitting to President and Congress a strategic plan to end homelessness by May 20, 2010. The statute further requires that this plan be updated annually. Implementation of the plan will be ongoing through FY 10, FY 11 and beyond. The Council envisions that the initial timeframe for the plan will be FYs 10-14.

The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness (FSP) will fulfill this requirement and serve as a roadmap for joint action by USICH agencies to guide the development of programs and budget proposals toward a set of measurable targets. Goals established through the FSP will be used by OMB to measure agency performance.

The FSP will reflect interagency agreement on a set of priorities and strategies the agencies will pursue over a five year period. Progress toward the FSP targets will be monitored annually, and the plan itself will be updated each year as required under the HEARTH Act.

The Council is coordinating the preparation of this Plan with input from its member agencies, other governmental and private entities and consumers as outlined below:

i. Development

*Federal Agency Collaborative Planning*

USICH has formed five interagency workgroups to serve a vehicle for cooperative development of the Plan's goals and strategies. Four of the workgroups are focused on the prevention and elimination of homelessness among specific population groups: Families with children; Youth; people experiencing Chronic Homelessness; and Veterans. A fifth workgroup, "Community," will look at homelessness within the context of states and localities, examining issues such as mobilizing community participation, forging partnerships, and aligning resources.

Through a series of workgroup sessions held from January through March 2010, each workgroup will address a set of overarching questions such as:

- What is the scope of the problem? What are its costs and consequences?
- What strategies are effective?
- What should be the key goals and strategies in the plan?
- What is the appropriate role of the federal government?
- How should federal resources and practices be wisely aligned, cost-effectively applied?

Drawing from background research, stakeholder input, and the agencies' own experience, the workgroups will examine best practices and define strategies, with a focus on such items as:

- Identifying and targeting to match people with appropriate interventions;
- Ensuring access by people to needed programs, housing, and services;
- Retooling crisis response to avert and shorten entry into homelessness;
- Providing housing and supports;
- Building opportunity (jobs, education, transportation, support networks, etc.);
- Enhancing capacity in the service system to deliver quality; and
- Documenting results.

Recommendations from the workgroups will be made to the member agencies and, subsequently the full Council for adoption and forwarding to the President and Congress, as mandated by the HEARTH Act.

*Input from the Field*

The process for developing the plan is also designed to ensure a high degree of stakeholder input. This includes:

- Regional stakeholder meetings will be held in Boston, New York, Chicago, Dallas, San Francisco, and Seattle during February and early March, 2010. These one-day events will engage leaders of regional and state interagency councils, as well as a broad range of stakeholders from throughout the multi-state regions. The Council’s Deputy Directors and Regional Coordinators are the point persons for providing support to these stakeholder meetings.
- Broad-based electronic input through a web-based open survey, which will be posted in late February 2010.
- Stakeholder meetings at the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) Family Homelessness Conference February 10-12, 2010.
- Special focus groups with national partnerships, including the NAEH Leadership Council (15 large urban area leaders), Funders Together, and U.S. Conference of Mayors.
- Individual engagement of national advocacy, research, consumer, and trade organizations that are leading efforts to prevent and end homelessness, including their participation in a set of workgroup “listening sessions” in February, 2010.

ii. Timeline

Planning by federal interagency workgroups.....	January – April 2010
Input from regions and external stakeholders .....	February – March 2010
Individual agency reviews .....	April 2010
Full Council approval and Forwarding to President and Congress .....	May 2010
Implementation.....	Ongoing
Update .....	Annually

- b. Work collaboratively with HUD and VA to develop and publish a technical assistance guide for local communities, public housing authorities, and VA medical centers to improve performance of the HUD VASH program. Publish the availability of the guide at [www.usich.gov](http://www.usich.gov) and disseminate through Regional Coordinators and the USICH newsletter. Through Regional Coordinators and in partnership with HUD and VA, assist local communities to fully utilize HUD VASH vouchers for homeless Veterans.
- c. Construct a USICH Technical Assistance system (plan and process) to assist states and local communities prevent and end homelessness. This will include hiring and training Regional Coordinators to provide technical assistance to support implementation of the Federal Strategic Plan. Expansion from four (4) to eight (8) Regional Coordinators is pending decision by HUD (as of February 1, 2010).
- d. With HUD and DOE, conduct joint training on how to effectively deliver housing, education, and related services to children that experience homelessness or at risk of homelessness.
- e. Re-vamp the USICH website and newsletter to provide user-friendly information about federal programs and initiatives, promote best practices and innovations, and share results of progress to prevent and end homelessness. The Council plans to utilize its website as a primary portal on the issues, topics and research regarding homelessness at all levels. We intend for our 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.

- f. Aggregate recent, significant research and evaluation reports on federal, state, and local initiatives to reduce homelessness then publish the summaries to the USICH website and promote through the USICH newsletter and also disseminate through the USICH Regional Coordinators.
- g. Develop a framework to review the outcome measures of federal program investments.
- h. Convene a workgroup with DOJ to consider the extent of the problem of criminalizing homelessness and local alternatives to criminalization.
- i. The Council is required to submit an annual report to the President and Congress that assesses the nature and extent of homelessness and describes the Council's activities and accomplishments. The FY 09 Annual Report is underway and will be complete and submitted by March 2010. The Council will continue to coordinate the preparation and submission of this report in conjunction with similar reports required of each of its member agencies.

#### **IV. Key Agency Management Areas**

- a. Strategic Management of Human Capital

The Council has chosen a new, state of the art Performance Management System for its employees that will allow fair and objective measurement of job performance and regularly scheduled employee reviews, thus enabling the Council to ensure it employs and maintains a high level staff. Employees' performance goals will be tied directly to the mission, strategies and objectives of the Council. This system will be implemented in FY 10.

- b. Contracting

The Council contracts several major components of its operations to outside sources after cost-effectiveness determinations. Via the Economy Act, the Council 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 the Council's budget request.

- c. Financial Management

The Council has received consecutively clean audit opinions since its initial FY 05 audit by an independent, outside CPA firm. Most recently the Council received its fifth clean audit opinion for FY 09.

#### **V. Requested Resources.**

To achieve its mission and its proposed activities, USICH requests \$2,680,000 in the FY 11 budget year, the same amount requested in FY 10. Requested resources will support the Council's expenses of a

fully staffed, operational and independent federal entity. Due to the delay in appointment of Executive Director Poppe and her subsequent hiring of the remainder of staff, the House Appropriations Committee reduced FY 10 funding from \$2,680,000 to \$2,450,000. The Council will be fully staffed in FY 11 and requests the full amount necessary to maintain staffing levels to support the mission and work of the Council and directives as set by the Administration and Congress.



## **VI. FY 11 Budget Request by Object Classification**

*OC 11, Personnel: \$1,094,700*

The amount requested is based on a staff of 10. The Council, fully staffed and engaged, will ensure active and complete coverage for all Council activities and will help achieve its performance goals.

*OC 12, Benefits: \$328,410*

This amount represents the Council's contributions for employee benefits.

*OC 21, Travel: \$ 110,000*

This category includes all travel costs for all Council activities, such as supporting the travel necessary to manage implementation of the Federal Strategic Plan and provide technical assistance to jurisdictions.

*OC 22, Transportation of Things: \$15,000*

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: \$367,500*

This estimate represents the Council's cost for rental of office space from GSA as well as communications services such as broad band internet and phone services.

*Object Class 24, Printing and Reproduction: \$35,000*

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

*Object Class 25, Services: \$679,390*

The Council's statute gives authority to hire experts and consultants as necessary for its work. The costs for this category include the services of these individuals and experts of housing subjects, issues, and industry. Additionally, this category includes the costs for its national conference, any regional meetings and/or workshops, and other 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: \$50,000*

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