U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2023

Report to the President of the United States

January 2024

COVER LETTER

January 31, 2024

Dear President Biden:

I am pleased to present the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) *Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2023*. This report provides a snapshot of homelessness in the United States, highlights of USICH actions, accomplishments of our 19 member agencies, and policy recommendations for the year ahead.

Homelessness continues to be an urgent, life-and-death public health crisis across the nation. Between January 2022 and January 2023, homelessness rose 12% nationally. The rise was seen across all subgroups—families, individuals, older Americans, youth/young adults, and Veterans—and was driven by:

- Rising housing costs and a dire shortage of deeply affordable units

- End of pandemic-era resources and protections

- Lack of Congressional support for adequate funding to address the crisis

- Large numbers of recently arrived asylum seekers and other immigrants living in shelters and on the street

To address the crisis, USICH and our member agencies have taken aggressive action to increase housing supply, support communities in responding to unsheltered homelessness, and provide greater access to health, mental health, and substance use treatment services.

In the year ahead, we will continue to deploy strategies laid out in *All In,* the administration's federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness and to do everything in our power to ensure that every American has a place to call home.

Sincerely,

J. oliet

Jeff Olivet, Executive Director, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness

TABLE OF CONTENTS
Click on a section to jump to it.

BACKGROUND

The mission of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) 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 agency's authorizing legislation, The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11313. Section 203[c]), directs USICH to create a report of programs to assist people experiencing homelessness that addresses the following:

(1) Within 90 days after July 22, 1987, and annually thereafter, the head of each Federal agency that is a member of the Council shall prepare and transmit to the Congress and the Council a report that describes

   a) each program to assist homeless individuals administered by each agency and the number of homeless individuals served by each program,

   b) impediments, including any statutory and regulatory restrictions, to the use by homeless individuals of each such program and to obtaining services or benefits under each such program; and

   c) efforts made by such agency to increase the opportunities for homeless individuals to obtain shelter, food, and supportive services.

(2) The Council shall prepare and transmit to the President and the Congress[†] an annual report that –

   a) assesses the nature and extent of the problems in relation to homelessness and the needs of homeless individuals;

   b) provides a comprehensive and detailed description of the activities and accomplishments of the Federal Government in resolving the problems and meeting the needs of assessed pursuant to subparagraph;

---

[*] 42 U.S.C. § 11313. Section 203[c]
[†] The transmittal of this report to Congress was terminated, effective May 15, 2000, by section 3003 of Pub. L. 104–66, set out as a note under section 1113 of Title 31, Money and Finance, and the 5th item on page 175 of House Document No. 103–7.

c)   describes the accomplishment and activities of the Council, in working with Federal, State, and local agencies and public and private organizations in order to provide assistance to homeless individuals;

d)   assesses the level of Federal assistance necessary to adequately resolve the problems and meet the needs assessed pursuant to subparagraph (a); and

e)   specifies any recommendations of the Council for appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative actions to resolve such problems and meet such needs.[‡]

To fulfill these requirements, this report outlines USICH accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2023, a summary of the collective progress made by our 19 member agencies towards goals established in *All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness,* and recommendations for federal action.

USICH issues a separate annual *Report on Targeted Programs That Help People Experiencing or At Risk of Homelessness,* which describes the impact of specific federal programs that support the housing and basic needs of people experiencing or at-risk of experiencing homelessness. Together, the two reports fulfill the statutory requirements and provide an annual snapshot of the collective federal efforts to address homelessness through the goals of the Federal Strategic Plan.

STATE OF HOMELESSNESS

The Biden Administration has dedicated more resources to addressing homelessness than any other administration. At the height of the pandemic, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) laid the foundations for a new homelessness prevention system. Because of rental assistance, child tax credits, and other ARPA programs, between 2020 and 2022, when over 8.5 million renter households faced their worse-case scenarios, homelessness was flat, stopping a surge that started in 2016.

In 2023, the federal government is on track to help build more apartments than any other year on record, while half a billion dollars in special funding from HUD is hitting the streets, focused on addressing unsheltered and rural homelessness. The VA housed 38,000 veterans without a home, and HUD helped connect more than 424,000 households to homeless support services that helped them exit or avoid homelessness.

Also in 2023, more flexible [Medicaid](#) funding is playing a growing role in getting people housed, as more states receive waivers from the administration. At 1,373 health centers spread across the country, over 1,357,683 people experiencing homelessness got care. Of those individuals, 940,499 accessed critical services through Health Care for the Homeless.

Regardless of this massive work, now that many of those ARPA programs have expired, the plateau from 2020-2022 has given way to a 2023 homelessness spike. Data from the [2023 HUD *Annual Homeless Assessment Report* (AHAR)](#), also known as the Point In Time count (PIT), reveals the depth of the homelessness crisis.

Even though the number of people in 2023 who exited homelessness into permanent housing increased by [8%](#) due in part to the [82% increase](#) in total temporary and permanent beds available since 2007. There was a [25% increase](#) in first-time homelessness. The result, on any given night, ~653,100 people – 20 of every 10,000 people – were experiencing homelessness. Roughly 70,650 more people were counted as homeless in 2023 vs 2022, representing a 12% increase.

This is the highest number of people reported as experiencing homelessness on a single night since 2007, the baseline year for the PIT count data. It is up across every geography (urban/suburban+/rural), group (youth, families, veterans, chronically homeless), and every race/ethnicity.

The core cause is that affordable homes are not available. Wages have not grown fast enough to keep up with housing costs, resulting in so many people needing help.

USICH has sought to harness the collective power of our 19 council members, along with local leaders, advocates, mayors, governors, and philanthropy to find more ways to cut red tape and better connect more resources to rising need.

USICH is realistic about the challenges. Without a doubt, progress is possible on these tough issues. Look no further than the over 50% cut in Veteran homelessness since 2010, which was the result of a significant increase in funding and political focus on the issue.

However, the nation clearly must dig deeper to specifically address the racial inequities that can be clearly seen in the homelessness data. In early 2023 when the PIT was conducted, people who identify as Black made up just 12% of the total U.S. population but comprised 37% of all people experiencing homelessness and 50% of people experiencing homelessness in families with children.

Together, American Indian, Alaska Native, Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian populations account for ~1% of the U.S. population but 5% of the homeless population and 7% of the unsheltered population. Until

something happens with these disproportionate effects based on race or ethnicity, there will only be limited progress.

Changes in People Experiencing Homelessness: Point-in-Time Counts[1]

	2007 to 2023		2010 to 2023		2020 to 2023		2022 to 2023	
Total Population Experiencing Homelessness	+5,846	0.9%	+16,027	2.5%	+72,638	12.5%	+70,642	12.1%
Sheltered Individuals	+14,722	6.9%	+15,577	7.3%	+28,317	14.2%	+22,898	11.2%
Unsheltered Individuals	+39,598	19.8%	+56,303	30.8%	+29,812	14.2%	+22,730	10.5%
Sheltered People in Families with Children	-9,629	-5.4%	-22,626	-11.8%	+13,791	8.9%	+24,966	17.4%
Unsheltered People in Families with Children	-38,845	-69.1%	-33,227	-65.7%	+718	4.3%	+48	0.3%

Why Homelessness Is Increasing

Communities face many **challenges in the work to prevent and end homelessness, including:**

- **Lack of housing supply:** Housing is the fundamental solution to homelessness, yet prior to the pandemic, the U.S. had a shortage of more than 7 million[2] affordable and available homes for renters with the lowest incomes, disproportionately impacting people of color—especially Black/African Americans and Native Americans.

- **Rise of rent amid slow wage growth:** Wages continue to fail to keep up with rising rents. According to a 2023 report, in no state[3] can a person working full-time at the federal minimum wage afford a modest two-bedroom apartment at the fair market rent. As a result, 73% of extremely low-income renters routinely spend more than half of their income on rent, placing them at risk of homelessness if any unexpected expenses or emergencies arise. Housing unaffordability and discriminatory housing and employment practices disproportionately impacts people with disabilities

LGBTQ+, and people of color, especially Black/African American and Latino/a workers who are more likely to work in low-paying sectors.

- **Limited alternatives to unsheltered homelessness:** The number of people living in tents and vehicles continues to rise, as current interim housing and shelter options are often at capacity or present barriers to people—including those with HIV, a substance use disorder, a criminal record, chronic medical condition(s), or who identify as LGBTQ+ (particularly transgender people). In many communities, a rise in encampments has resulted in the criminalization of homelessness through encampment closures, public camping bans, and other harmful policies. These "out of sight, out of mind" policies can lead to lost belongings and identification; trauma and distrust; breakdowns in connection with outreach teams, health care facilities, and housing providers; and overall disruption to the work of ending homelessness.

- **Lack of access to health, behavioral health, and other supportive services:** A 2023 [statewide study of homelessness in California](#) showed high rates of substance use, mental health issues, and suicidality among people experiencing homelessness. While it is not clear whether these issues are worse than they have been in the past, the needs are acute and a lack of access to adequate housing and health, behavioral health, and other supportive services prolongs homelessness for many.

- **Increased service needs of people entering homelessness:** Older adults are now the [fastest growing age group](#) of people experiencing homelessness posing additional challenges with addressing increasingly complex medical, social and support needs. Additionally, housing options for this group are limited because of the physical and behavioral health needs—especially for individuals who are not old enough to qualify for social security and Medicare. Also, many older adults may not be able to find or maintain employment with wages high enough to pay for high rental costs.

- **Immigration and asylum seekers:** Many communities have experienced an influx of immigrants over the past year, and tens of thousands have ended up in city shelter systems in New York City, Chicago, Boston, Washington, DC, Portland, ME, and others. The Governor of Massachusetts declared a [state of emergency](#), and [New York City alone](#) has received more than 100,000 immigrants, [doubling the city's shelter census](#). This issue contributed to the overall increase in the 2023 PIT numbers and appears to be a driver of the increase in family homelessness, with New York City accounting for 70% of the nationwide increase for this subpopulation.

- **New inflow into homelessness:** The overall number of people experiencing homelessness will only go down if the number of people who exit homelessness is greater than the number of people who

become newly homeless or who return to homelessness from a housed situation. Yet according to HUD data, between 2017 and 2020, an average of 908,530 people entered homelessness each year, while an average of 900,895 exited to permanent housing. The inflow into homelessness includes a troubling increase in the number of older adults becoming homeless for the first time after age 50.

- **Difficulty finding apartments and receptive landlords:** Most people who receive housing assistance are placed into units leased on the private market using rental assistance (rapid rehousing or vouchers). Communities are reporting significant challenges with finding available units and landlords willing to rent to people transitioning from homelessness.

- **Workforce challenges:** The homelessness services workforce is overworked and under-resourced. According to a recent survey of more than 5,000 homelessness services workers conducted by the National Alliance to End Homelessness[4], three out of every four workers indicated that their organizations were understaffed, with too few employees to meet important goals such as serving every person in need of help. Further, 71 % of respondents said that high rates of employee turnover were an issue. Of those respondents who provided salary information and who were working at least 35 hours per week, 55 % were making under $50,000 per year. One in three said that their salaries were not enough to meet their basic needs. Only 14 % said that they earned enough to live well (having basic needs and many wants met).

Reasons for Hope

While homelessness is rising nationally, there are bright spots. Some areas are still seeing significant decreases, and even in communities where homelessness is increasing, thousands of people successfully leave homelessness every day.

 The problem is that when one person exits, another enters homelessness—that's why lessons from the pandemic are so important. In the most challenging circumstances, fewer people end up homeless when there are more robust safety nets in the form of emergency rental assistance and child tax credits.

Among the notable bright spots in the 2023 Point-in-Time Count:

- 28% of CoCs experienced reductions in overall homelessness between the 2022 and 2023 PIT counts.

- Newark and Essex County, NJ saw a 16.7% decrease in overall homelessness, as well as decreases in unsheltered homelessness, family homelessness, and chronic homelessness. Leaders and partners in Newark attribute this decrease to implementation of their comprehensive plan to end homelessness,

The Path Home: Collaborating Across Our Community, which was launched in 2022.

- The state of Delaware reduced homelessness by 47% between 2022 and 2023.

- After experiencing a significant rise in homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic of over 400% from 2020 to 2022, the City of Chattanooga and its surrounding region achieved a 49% reduction in overall homelessness from 2022 to 2023. This includes a nearly 88% reduction in the number of families with children experiencing homelessness and a 54% reduction in people in unsheltered settings.

- Dallas City and County saw a small decrease of 3.8% in overall homelessness as well as a 14% decrease in unsheltered homelessness and 32% decrease in chronic homelessness between 2022 and 2023. This decrease is attributed to a set of system improvements that Dallas' Continuum of Care lead organization, Housing Forward, made to increase their housing placement rate of people experiencing homelessness.

- The City of Tucson has continued to make progress in the implementation of its five-year strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, including expanding its supply of housing interventions, improving its coordinated entry system, and accelerating the pace of housing placements. From 2022 to 2023, Tucson saw a 9% reduction in unsheltered homelessness, as well as slight 1% decrease in overall homelessness.

- The Santa Cruz/Watsonville CoC 2023 PIT count saw a 21.5% decline in the number of people experiencing homelessness, yielding the lowest count of unhoused individuals since 2011.

Assessing the Level of Need

Nationally, there are only 36 affordable and available rental homes for every 100 extremely low-income renter households.[5] In no state can a person working full-time earning the federal or prevailing state or local minimum wage afford a modest two-bedroom apartment at the fair market rent.[6] While some federal housing programs are targeted to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, most are offered more broadly to low-income people. The number of people eligible for federal housing assistance far exceeds supply, and many people in need of such assistance wait years,[7] often falling into or struggling to get out of homelessness in the meantime. To get the greatest impact from all the resources currently available to end homelessness, communities should use each resource for its best purpose while utilizing all the resources together in a coordinated and strategic fashion.

All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness,[8] released in December 2022, includes a detailed discussion of needs that serves as the basis for specific strategies and actions to address the needs. Additionally, in November 2023, USICH published a multi-year federal homelessness research agenda, which is intended to shape federal investments in homelessness research and offer a roadmap for academic researchers, philanthropy, students, and others committed to advancing the most effective responses to homelessness in the United States. The research agenda is framed around the two key questions 1) What would it take to prevent homelessness? and 2) What would it take to end homelessness? The hope is that this research agenda will yield additional knowledge about the scale and scope of the issue, as well as the solutions.

USICH ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

To respond to the urgent challenges many communities across the nation are facing, USICH and our member agencies took concrete, aggressive action in 2023 to address the homelessness crisis. Member agency accomplishments are included in the appendix. The following are accomplishments and activities of USICH in working with Federal, State, and local agencies and public and private organizations to provide assistance to homeless individuals:

Drive Interagency Action

To drive day-to-day progress, USICH convened a variety of ongoing and ad-hoc interagency workgroups (WGs) comprised of high- and mid-level agency staff from all 19 member agencies. In FY 2023, USICH focused its efforts on the strategies and activities of the Federal Strategic Plan with an emphasis on implementing efforts targeting unsheltered homelessness through the _ALL INside_ initiative. Additionally, USICH staff managed multiple interagency workgroups and collaborations that further the goals of the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. Specific activities included:

- **Monthly Federal and National Partners Public Health and Homelessness Coordination Call:** USICH convenes a monthly WG with key Federal partners, including HUD and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and key national partners, including the National Alliance to End Homelessness and the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, to coordinate efforts related to homelessness and public health. This body collaborates on guidance, discusses joint messaging, and fosters coordination.

- **Encampment Workgroup:** USICH continued to convene an ad-hoc group of Federal and national partners to add to further the agency's work on providing guidance on unsheltered homelessness and encampments. The work group has supported the update of the previously released guidance titled "7 Principles for Addressing Encampments" and plans to develop into a more comprehensive encampments toolkit in FY 2024. Additionally, USICH provided direct support and guidance to discourage Federal agencies whose duties have a touchpoint with people experiencing homelessness to avoid criminalizing homelessness in their enforcement activities. Specific efforts included advising the National Park Service on responding to encampments on Federal land in the Capitol regional and issuing a "Dear Colleague" letter to USICH member Federal agencies to discourage carceral response to unhoused people on Federal property.

- **Unsheltered Homelessness Workgroup/Launch of the *ALL INside* Initiative:** Working with the White House Domestic Policy Council, USICH supported interagency coordination on unsheltered homelessness through the Homelessness Interagency Policy Committee which has become known as *ALL INside*. The initiative involves a place-based approach focused on addressing unsheltered homelessness in communities where success would have a high impact on addressing the overall number of people experiencing homelessness. *ALL INside* was launched in May of 2023, establishing a collaborative partnership between the Federal government and selected communities to:

  o Build capacity of local governments and organizations to respond to, reduce, and prevent unsheltered homelessness with a consistent and coordinated strategy

  o Create and strengthen alignment of local partners around shared goals and priorities

  o Expand targeted funding opportunities, when possible, to address unsheltered homelessness and leverage and align local state, city, Federal and philanthropic funding

  o Respond to barriers to accessing housing and service resources by identifying needed flexibilities from Federal agencies and encouraging grantees/jurisdictions to maximize existing discretion in their implementation of Federal programs

  USICH onboarded full-time embedded staff known as Federal Team Leads (FTLs) to ensure the success of the Initiative in Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Los Angeles, Phoenix Metro, Seattle and the State of California collaborating with senior Federal agency leaders, agency experts, local government officials, community leaders, and local stakeholders—including people with lived experience of homelessness—to

support the implementation of person-centered and evidence-informed solutions to respond to unsheltered homelessness more effective.

- **Solving Veterans' Homelessness as One:** During FY 2023, USICH convened a subgroup of the Solving Veterans Homelessness as One working group with a focus on implementing and tracking a set of joint strategies stemming from the HUD/VA Joint Statement on Ending Veteran Homelessness. Accomplishments included the planning and implementation of a series of "HUD-VASH Boot Camps" for staff from PHAs and their partnering VA medical centers and the opening of 120 units of permanent supportive housing on the VA's West Los Angeles Campus in April 2023.

- **Targeted Policy Sprints to Identify Opportunities for Innovation:** USICH supported three additional policy sprints from July to October 2023 as a directive given by Council during its July 2023 meeting. The sprints addressed the following topics:

  - Promote better local monitoring, data collection, and process improvements to accelerate progress
  - Reduce burden and maximize uptake of benefits and supports targeting homeless populations
  - Accelerate efforts to support homelessness prevention

Each work stream resulted in a slate of short-term actions that will be implemented in FY 2024.

Develop Shared Regional Goals

USICH works with Council agencies to strengthen Federal Regional Interagency Councils on Homelessness (FRICHs) or Federal Executive Boards (FEBs) in all 10 Federal regions. We provide technical assistance to regional staff from multiple Federal agencies—including HUD, HHS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Department of Education (ED), and the Department of Labor (DOL)—to further develop their collaborative structures and unite behind common regional goals. Activities in FY 2023 included:

- Distributed a quarterly update that highlights activities and action taken by FRICHs

- Provided presentations, content development, key resources and tools from USICH and other Federal agencies to FRICHs and FEBs. Additionally, provided coaching and guidance to Federal partners on the promotion of *All In*, the Federal strategic plan.

Encourage Understanding & Action to Address Racial Inequities

The Federal Strategic Plan also included a call for the creation of a research agenda which was designed to encourage evidence solutions to addressing homelessness. The creation of the research agenda relied heavily on the input of experts with lived experience to shape the agenda's goals and priorities. USICH included experts with lived experience in a July convening that brought together researchers and experts with lived experience. The purpose of the convening was to develop a research agenda that was both grounded in data and the voices of those who have lived experience. USICH expects to continue this work in FY 2024 as it moves towards implementation of the research agenda.

Ensure Consistent Federal Technical Assistance (TA) on Ending Homelessness

During FY 2023, USICH was involved in several TA coordination efforts focused on various subpopulations and issues. USICH participated in the development of a new Medicaid Innovation Accelerator Technical Assistance initiative spearheaded by HHS and HUD, which will provide intensive TA to states with 1115 or 1915(i) waivers. USICH was also involved in the development and implementation of a series of "HUD-VASH Boot Camps" in the ten HUD regions, which brought together staff from Public Housing Authorities and their partnering VA Medical Centers for two days of onsite learning and problem-solving. Finally, USICH participates in regular conversations with HUD, VA, HHS SAMHSA, HHS/ASPE, and other Federal agencies regarding TA coordination to ensure that TA efforts are as streamlined as possible.

Inform Local Responses to COVID-19 and Homelessness

In early 2023, USICH worked with its member agencies to update the document, "Expiring Federal Provisions That May Impact Homelessness," to include additional funding sources and flexibilities whose expiration were tied to the end of the public health emergency on May 11, 2023. This included the end of the FEMA incident period for COVID-19 Public Assistance Category B declarations, certain provisions related to SNAP, and provisions related to the ESG-CV and CDBG-CV programs, among others.

State Interagency Councils on Homelessness

USICH has encouraged every state to develop a State Interagency Council on Homelessness to align public resources, build on innovations and best practices across the country, and promote cost-effective strategies to strengthen coordination within state departments. In FY 2023, USICH facilitated State ICH Peer-to-Peer

exchanges and created feedback loop to ensure State ICH calls are meeting the needs of states and addressing topics they deem a priority. USICH also made direct peer to peer connections with individual leaders to strengthen their peer network and through partnership to implement best practices and review policies. USICH supported the launch of state ICHs in Arizona, Connecticut, and New Jersey, while serving as the lead TA for Arizona state ICH and the informal state ICH in Oklahoma.

Governors, Mayors, and Other Elected Officials

Political leadership at the state and local level is critical to advancing progress. USICH's executive director and national initiatives team met regularly with governors, mayors, and other elected officials and local leaders to provide individualized guidance to address the unique needs of their jurisdiction, including governors' offices in 22 states and mayors' offices in 90 cities.

In FY 2023, USICH continued to facilitate monthly conference calls with the West Coast Alliance of Mayors, which represents mayors' offices in 17 western cities to share strategies to address common challenges in their efforts to end homelessness. The calls focused on topics such as: encampments and in the meantime solutions.

National Nonprofit Organizations and Associations

USICH presented on *All In* at over 20 national conferences and organizations. In addition to regular check-ins with national organizations, USICH holds quarterly stakeholder meetings with over 100 partners and Council member agencies.

Private Sector, Faith-Based, and Philanthropic Partners

The private sector and faith-based and philanthropic organizations dedicated to serving populations at risk of or experiencing homelessness play critical leadership roles, in partnership with public agencies and programs. USICH works with a variety of stakeholders across those sectors, including a partnership with Funders Together to End Homelessness, which represents more than 220 national and local philanthropic organizations. Funders Together is one of the many organizations USICH has consulted to help inform the plan. Additionally, USICH engages faith-based groups and other national partners via the National Stakeholders Groups, including Catholic Charities, City Gate, and Salvation Army.

Community Leaders

USICH provides a range of targeted community engagement and technical assistance to community leaders, including guidance on coordinating Federal funding and best practices to end homelessness. The USICH

National Initiatives Team focused on the *All In* plan through regular communication with local leaders across the 50 states and territories, with more than 52 site visits conducted and over 100 presentations.

Increase Awareness & Influence Public Opinion

USICH's communications strategy in FY 2023 focused on helping communities maximize their use of Federal funding and technical assistance, highlighting the positive impact of the American Rescue Plan and other pandemic resources, and bringing awareness to USICH's work, including the *ALL INside* initiative and *All In*: *The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*. Specific accomplishments include:

- USICH published 25 newsletters and disseminated 173 news items and 103 guidance/resources (5 from USICH; 97 from member agencies). The newsletter is delivered to the inboxes of more than 47,400 people, which includes people experiencing homelessness as well as Federal, national, regional, state, and local stakeholders in the public and private sectors. It shares information about Federal funding and best practices.

- USICH's audience on social media continues to grow, consisting of more than 33,000 social media followers.

- USICH staff served as presenters for more than 100 homelessness and housing related events that included conferences, meetings, webinars, and congressional briefings for audiences that included Federal, national, regional, state, and local stakeholders.

- USICH provided interviews/information and received coverage from numerous print, television, radio, and internet outlets.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & ACTIVITIES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Progress Made Toward the Goals of the Federal Strategic Plan

Agencies have made considerable progress towards the implementation of the goals in *All In* since the plan's release in December 2022. Appendix A includes a summary of key agency achievements during FY 2023 as

they relate to the associated pillar in the plan. The highlighted achievements reflect agency-self reported outcomes. While the listed accomplishments are not exhaustive, USICH intends to collaborate with our federal partners to continue to find opportunities to capture and report on key activities and achievements towards implementing the Federal Strategic Plan, with the goal of the annual report serving as one component of a larger outcome reporting process.

Recommendations for Federal Action

The following strategies for federal action are included in *All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness,* released in December 2022. The strategies are a subset of all the plan strategies that would require strong federal coordination or action to advance. The strategies are listed by corresponding pillar from the Federal Strategic plan, and USICH notes that that these recommendations may require additional resources to ensure successful implementation.

Lead With Equity:

- Review policies and regulations associated with federal programs and initiatives to assess whether and how current policies and programs may perpetuate racial disparities or create barriers for marginalized groups and people of color and identify achievable policy and program changes to advance equity.
- Highlight communities that achieve reductions in racial and other disparities, and create tools, products, and guidance based on their strategies.
- Provide messaging and guidance to state and local stakeholders about promising practices that are having a measurable impact on disparities.
- Establish tools and processes for identifying, analyzing, and updating agency-specific policies, practices, and procedures for programs and agencies responsible for carrying out strategies and actions included in this plan that may inhibit opportunity to advance and promote equity.

Use Data and Evidence to Make Decisions:

- Collaborate to strengthen existing and identify new ways to formally share and use data across all partner agencies, particularly HUD, DOJ, SSA, DOL, Education, HHS, USDA and VA.
- Engage in efforts to identify more effective ways of collecting data on subpopulations that are historically undercounted, including older adults; people with disabilities; LGBTQI+ people; homeless youth; Latinos; people living with HIV; and individuals and families residing in rural areas or tribal lands.

- Expand community capacity to integrate HMIS data with other federal data sources (i.e., VA HOMES data) as well as state and local administrative data (i.e., Medicaid, corrections, child welfare) to inform planning and decision-making. Support this by developing standards to permit data interoperability between data systems while protecting the confidentiality of all individuals.
- Review all COVID-19 flexibilities for equity and effectiveness and determine the feasibility of extending or making them permanent, based on input from recipients of federal funding.

Collaborate at All Levels:

- Authentically engage people with lived experience and people from historically marginalized groups in all aspects of planning and implementation.
- Engage state and local leaders in a renewed commitment to prevent and end homelessness and provide TA and guidance on how to create local action plans that are aligned with the federal strategic plan but reflective of local conditions and resources.
- Identify opportunities to engage businesses, philanthropy, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations on relevant issues related to ending and preventing homelessness.
- Make information more readily available and accessible on best practices and strategies to finance them at scale as well as tailored guidance and tools for key populations and geographic areas.
- Launch a coordinated messaging campaign to challenge public narratives that stigmatize, blame, and dehumanize people experiencing homelessness and to combat local opposition to new affordable housing development and local laws which criminalize homelessness.

Scale Housing and Supports That Meet Demand:

- Identify and enact the full range of options to reduce documentation as a barrier to housing entry, including regulatory flexibility for federal housing programs; improving access to identification, medical, and benefits documentation needed to determine eligibility; and strengthening collaboration between federal, state, and local agencies.
- Expand availability and supply of accessible and integrated housing opportunities that meet needs of older adults and people with disabilities.
- Identify opportunities to implement "categorical eligibility" so that people can qualify for multiple programs at once without duplicative processes. Explore ways to allow for "conditional eligibility," or immediate entry into housing with a grace period to gather required documentation.
- Identify mechanisms to expand access to all voucher programs administered by HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing by streamlining processes and removing programmatic barriers.

- Encourage states to consider Medicaid-financed service approaches and models.
- Invest in accessible programs grounded in evidence and expand the pipeline of providers to address mental health conditions and/or substance use disorders and improve their geographic distribution to target areas with the greatest unmet need.

Improve Effectiveness of Homelessness Response Systems:

- Provide guidance and technical assistance on promising and best practices related to encampments, effective street outreach, and harm reduction approaches.
- Examine ways to ease eligibility and documentation requirements for specific subpopulations, such as people who are chronically homeless.
- Deploy targeted funding and technical assistance that fosters collaboration between entities including outreach, housing navigation, public health, emergency response, law enforcement, health centers and hospitals, and mental health crisis intervention teams.
- Provide guidance, technical assistance, and training for emergency shelter operators, including faith-based; family-focused; youth-focused; and domestic violence shelters on (1) evaluating and updating shelter rules, structure, and operations to a low-barrier model that is more accessible and supportive of the needs of people and (2) providing housing-focused services and integrating health care and supportive services into the provision of non-congregate shelter. For families with children, this should also include resources to address the health and developmental needs of children and to improve the environmental conditions while children are living at a shelter.

Prevent Homelessness:

- Encourage state and local governments, and territories to implement a flexible array of supports that impact housing stability, including quality case management and care coordination, peer supports and navigation services, intensive in-home services, mobile crisis and stabilization services, transportation services, and other home- and community-based services.
- Expand programs that are focused on preventing evictions, including legal services; protection and advocacy services; independent living services; elder rights; and housing counseling services.
- Increase on-the-job training and apprenticeship opportunities and supported employment for low-income households most at risk of becoming homeless to ensure access to jobs that pay a living wage.
- Review federal program policies, procedures, regulations, and administrative barriers to improve access to employment opportunities and income support for households experiencing housing instability—particularly for historically marginalized groups, including Black; trans; and non-binary people.

- Increase intergovernmental collaboration on existing programs that serve youth, individuals and families who have prior involvement with a publicly funded institutional system including older adults and adults with disabilities who have been in contact with protective services.

CONCLUSION

As the agency that coordinates and catalyzes the federal response to homelessness, USICH is pleased to submit this summary of its work and the efforts of its 19 federal member agencies. Moving forward, USICH looks forward to driving action to ensure that homelessness in America is ended once and for all.

APPENDIX: AGENCY ACTIONS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The following is a summary of key agency actions and milestones that support the implementation and furtherance of the goals of *All In*: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness.

The included accomplishments represent the actions of the Council's nineteen member agencies, and they are presented in the document by agency and are grouped based on the pillar of the Federal Strategic Plan that the accomplishment supports. While this list is not exhaustive, USICH is pleased to include these summaries as key evidence of the progress made at the agency level towards preventing and ending homelessness since the release of *All In* in 2023.

The agency will continue to provide agency level updates on an annual basis as a part USICH's Annual Report which highlights USICH progress on an annual basis in addition to the collective efforts of its nineteen member agencies.

Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Lead With Equity

- USDA launched the [Tribal Property Valuation Pilot Program and the Tribal Rehabilitation Pilot Program](#) and partnered with eight Native Community Development Financial Institutions to increase affordable homeownership opportunities for people on tribal lands.

Scale Housing and Supports That Meet Demand

- On June 3, 2023, the President signed into law the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 (FRA). The FRA gradually increases the age of those subject to the able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) time limit under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The FRA adds new groups of individuals who are excepted from the ABAWD time limit including homeless individuals, veterans, and individuals aged twenty-four or younger and in foster care.

Prevent Homelessness

- USDA [announced $18.5 million](#) for grants to help repair or rehabilitate homes occupied by low- and very-low-income rural residents and [announced $7.9 million](#) for technical assistance grants to preserve rental housing and expand access to safe, affordable, and equitable housing for people in rural America.

Department of Education (ED)

Lead With Equity

- September 12, 2023, NCHE released *[Advancing Equity in Homeless Education: Serving Students in Historically Underserved Populations](#)* as a brief that includes publicly available data on the seven historically underserved populations and a list of resources and organizations to support educators.

- On September 12, 2023, NCHE issued *[Supporting LGBTQI+ Students Experiencing Homelessness: Spotlight on ARP-HCY Funding for Implementation](#)* to spotlight the efforts of local educational agency (LEA) is using ARP-HCY funding to support LGBTQI+ students at risk of or experiencing homelessness and explores promising practices for expanding LEA capacity to meet the needs of LGBTQI+ students at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

- NCHE hosted various webinars in September 2023 that promote equity by fostering [leadership of students with lived experience](#), services for [children with disabilities](#), and [supporting English learners](#).

Use Data and Evidence to Make Decisions

The following reports, which add to body of data on homeless children, were released in December 2022:

- *[Student Homelessness in America, School Year (SY) 20-21](#)* report of demographic information on preK-12 students enrolled in public school districts and identified as homeless. It includes a three-year comparison with SY 2018-19 and SY 2019-20 State totals and trends.

- *[Chronic Absenteeism Among Students Experiencing Homelessness, SY 2016-17 to SY 2020-21](#)*, that covers State totals and percentages for all five years of the data collection and includes an analysis by school district locale type (city, suburban, town and rural).

- *[Addressing Student Homelessness in America: Serving Students with McKinney-Vento Funding, SY 2017-18 to SY 2019-20](#)*. *T*his report includes data on students experiencing homelessness enrolled in

public school districts receiving McKinney-Vento subgrants, including young children from Age Birth to Two and Age Three to Five but not in kindergarten.

- *Graduation Rates of Students Who Experienced Homelessness in America: School Years 2017-18 to 2018-19* This report discusses the four-, five-, and six-year adjusted cohort graduation rates of students who experienced homelessness using state-level data from school years 2017-18 and 2018-19. Data for the 2019-20 school year is provided in an appendix, along with a discussion of school district data that highlights differences in the rates of students who were homeless in rural, suburban, town, and urban school districts.

Collaborate at All Levels

- NCHE held a webinar on September 19, 2023 in collaboration with the National Youth Employment Coalition featuring recommendations and examples on how to collaborate with Job Corps, Youth Build and Workforce Investment Opportunity Act funds for disconnected youth.

- In early October 2023, NCHE released *A Guide to Effective Collaborations with Community-Based Organizations to Support Students Experiencing Homelessness*, which shows how State and local educational agencies collaborating informally or formally (through contracts or other agreements) with community-based organizations can be an effective strategy for program implementation.

- In July 2023, NCHE held a webinar on *Systems Navigators: Promising Practices* that follows up on a the related report that was released on in April 2023.

- In April 2023, NCHE released *Partnerships with School Social Workers* on supporting local liaisons to serve students experiencing homelessness.

Scale Housing and Supports that Meet Demand

- On September 12, 2023, Department of Education Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education issued a new guidance letter on American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief – Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) that was sent to chief state school officers to share recommendations for maximizing the use of the resources to help students experiencing homelessness and improve outcomes to levels that meet or exceed pre-pandemic achievement.

- On September 6, 2023, Secretary Miguel Cardona issued a guidance letter regarding students who are immigrants that details the McKinney-Vento rights and services and ARP-HCY resources that are available to support them.

- To help increase identification of children and youth experiencing homelessness and connect them to support services, National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)§ released in September 2023 a *Social Media and Outreach Strategies Tipsheet (Part 1).*

- In September 2023, NCHE updated and reissued a streamlined *State Coordinators' Handbook* and *State Educational Agency Program Review and Planning Guide*. The guide provides state coordinators overseeing their state Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program with a step-by-step process to review program requirements, examine data, assess, and prioritize needs, set annual goals, and develop an action plan to achieve the goals.

- In May 2023, NCHE released a *Summary of Research 2015-2022* on a dozen major homeless education research articles published in peer-reviewed journals with shorter summaries of several policy analyses on homeless education.

Prevent Homelessness (Among Children and Youth)

- Three Federal policy fellows joined the Department serving in the Offices of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development and Elementary and Secondary Education (Teachers, Leaders, and Special Populations group) to focus on cross-systems issues affecting children and youth experiencing homelessness, foster care and/or juvenile justice.

- In September 2023, NCHE and the Department's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) technical assistance center jointly issued a training on how to incorporate the needs of students experiencing homelessness in School Safety Efforts, which include security, emergency management, and preparedness activities.

---

§ NCHE operates the U.S. Department of Education's technical assistance and information center for the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

Lead with Equity

- In response to Executive Order (EO) 14075 on Advancing Equality for LGBTQI Individuals, Family and Youth Service Bureau (FYSB) developed an [Information Memorandum (IM)](#) to provide policy and program guidance, and T/TA to RHY grant recipients for engaging in a variety of methods which effectively advance equity for LGBTQ youth experiencing housing instability.

- The Office of Family Violence Prevention and Services (OFVPS) continued to work with 2 National Tribal Resource Centers, NIWRC and AKNWRC, and conducts monthly meetings including FVPSA tribal recipients share TA needs with their federal project officers. STTARS-NIWRC the FVPSA Tribal Safe Housing Capacity Center supports this activity. Currently STTARS-NIWRC works with 4 Key MOU Partners (NRCDV, StrongHearts, AKNWRC, and Cardozo Human Rights Clinic).

- FYSB's Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Program participated in multiple quarterly Youth Advisory Board Meetings hosted by the RHY's National Communication System provider: National Runaway Safeline. During each meeting, FYSB updated the YAB about actions taken to address the YAB feedback and recommendations as well as continues to seek input on emerging issues impacting youth and young adults experiencing homelessness.

- Between April-September 2023, the Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) convened its eighth cohort of the Human Trafficking Leadership Academy (HTLA). Individuals with lived experience and allied professionals from the Great Lakes Region (HHS Region 10) participated in this six-month program to develop their personal and professional leadership skills while providing their perspectives to inform the anti-trafficking movement around a particular area of interest. Their project question was "What outreach and engagement strategies should communities, schools, and organizations implement to increase youth awareness and promote their resilience against online harassment and abuse related to human trafficking?"

- On October 11, 2023, OTIP hosted a Fireside Chat with two fellows who graduated from HTLA Class 8 on addressing trafficking and protecting youth from online harassment and abuse to [discuss perspectives, programs, and policies that local organizations have implemented](#).

- OTIP, in coordination with DOJ's Office for Justice Programs' Office for Victims of Crime's (OVC) Human Trafficking Division, convenes all federally funded anti-trafficking training and technical assistance providers on a biannual basis (both virtually and in-person) in order to identify emerging trends, coordinate and align efforts to better support underserved communities, and identify efficiencies across programs. OTIP meets on a quarterly basis with its T/TA counterparts with OVC.

- OTIP participates in the intra-agency HHS Training and Technical (T/TA) Assistance Working Group, where federal project managers identify emerging trends, solutions to persistent challenges, and efficiencies across T/TA efforts for diverse stakeholders. OTIP participates in bi-monthly coordinating group meetings with our T/TA program level staff across both ACF and HHS. These coordination calls are led by IAOS (ACF) and ASPE (HHS). This effort is ongoing.

- Through OTIP's National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center (NHTTAC), specialized and on-demand, short-term training and technical assistance are provided on a range of topics to build the capacity of practitioners, organizations, and communities to prevent, identify, and respond to human trafficking from a public health approach. During FY 2023, OTIP expanded its SOAR Online training module offerings to include Responding to Human Trafficking Through the Child Welfare System and SOAR for Procurement Professionals in Healthcare Systems.

- The Safe House Capacity Center serves FVPSA as the National TA provider for survivors of domestic violence and their independent in providing TA and capacity building efforts focus on building capacity to serve people of color, while considering intersectionality of race, disability, class, and gender. The Safe Housing Partnership continues to provide training and technical assistance nationally to local community-based programs upon request. The NRCDV has conducted and fulfilled 413 TA request from October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023. The NRCDV meets with the other TA providers bi-weekly regarding housing. The frequency of the meetings is to increase working collaborations for Training and Technical Assistance engagements amongst the Safe Housing Partnerships Members.

Collaborate at All Levels

- The Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response (OHSEPR) developed a Dear Colleague Letter and factsheets on ACF programs to help address post-disaster homelessness and post-disaster housing resources

- ACF hosted a National Briefing Call in January 2023 after publishing the [information memorandum](#), Responding to Human Trafficking among Children and Youth in Foster Care and Missing from Foster Care (ACF-IM-22-01) in November 2022.

Scale Housing and Supports that Meet Demand

- The Affordable Housing and Support Services Demonstration (AHSSD) is a new demonstration project that launched in early October 2023 and provides funds to Community Action Agencies that own and operate affordable housing units to expand and enhance holistic, wraparound, supportive services to residents of their affordable units. These services are meant to help residents improve their well-being and remain in affordable housing, decreasing their housing insecurity and risk of being homeless. AHSSD will support nine grant recipients in eight states and one tribal community. Grant recipients will serve individuals and families in Alaska, Arizona, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Virginia.

- In May 2023, OTIP trained all grant recipients on how to help clients clear adverse credit history resulting from their trafficking, which can be a barrier to accessing housing, under the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's final rule: Prohibition on Inclusion of Adverse Information in Consumer Reporting in Cases of Human Trafficking (12 CFR § 1022.142). OTIP brought representatives from the CFPB to present and because of the questions received from the audience, developed a recipient working group to clarify recipient implementation questions. OTIP published a revised program instruction to its website on 8/9/23.

Improve Effectiveness of Homelessness Response Systems

- OTIP continues to require culturally responsive services for its grant recipients and provides on-demand, short-term, and specialized TA through SOAR Online and upon request on the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards. In August 2023, HHS convened the National Human Trafficking Prevention Summit with diverse cross-sector partners to identify new and emerging efforts to prevent human trafficking. One of the plenary sessions featured subject matter experts with professional and lived experience on "Identifying and Eliminating Ableism in Human Trafficking Frameworks" and built on prior TA efforts to examine the unique risks of individuals with disabilities have for being targeted, how to work with clients in a trauma-informed and culturally responsive way and applying a disabilities justice framework to prevent human trafficking within this population.

Prevent Homelessness

- In October 2022, OTIP awarded $1.5 million to one recipient for the Aspire program. In its first year, the recipient hired regional coordinators across the ACF regions, hired full-time case managers, and developed MOUs with various community service providers across the United States. As of September 29, 2023, in addition to regional coordination support and advocacy, the recipient enrolled and provided comprehensive, culturally, and linguistically appropriate, time-limited, case management services to 458 survivors total, across twenty-six states and the District of Columbia. Aspire case managers worked to help participants achieve HHS eligibility and timely access to benefits and services (including access to housing), to the same extent as refugees.

- In October 2023, FYSB awarded eleven cooperative agreements up to $350,000 each under the RHY-Prevention Demonstration Program (RHY-PDP). The eleven selected award recipients are required to design and deliver a prevention plan that must include providing flexible cash assistance and case management services for youth identified as being at risk for homelessness.

- FYSB hosted a National Grantee Training November 29-December 1st in Seattle, WA. During the training, FYSB hosted a youth-led plenary session focused supporting youth and young adult leadership and partnerships in the field.

Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC)

Use Data and Evidence to Make Decisions

- United States Core Data for Interoperability (USCDI) is a standardized set of health data classes and constituent data elements for nationwide, interoperable health information exchange. Beginning with version 2, SDOH Problems and Health Concerns, including homelessness, have been included. USCDI v4 was published in July 2023. Housing-related information can be included under SDOH Goals, SDOH Assessment (under Health Status Assessments); Current/Previous Address (Demographics class); SDOH Problems/Health Concerns (Problems class); SDOH interventions (Procedures class).

Administration for Community Living (ACL)

Lead With Equity

- On March 23, 2023, HSRC representatives joined the ACL Title VI program for a stakeholder discussion of the Federal Report to end Homelessness and to discuss technical assistance opportunities and other resources.

Collaborate at all Levels

- The Housing and Services Resource Center (HSRC) developed a Housing and Services Partnership Accelerator learning collaborative to support states in developing or expanding innovative housing-related supports and services for Medicaid-eligible people with disabilities and older adults who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The Accelerator accepted applications through December 2023 and launched in January 2024.

- The HSRC provided a webinar in April 2023 to showcase CoC and aging and disability partnerships.

Scale Housing and Supports That Meet Demand

- In March 2023, the HSRC provided a 3-part webinar series on Improving and Expanding Community Living Options for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) that included landlord tenant engagement.

Improve Effectiveness of Homelessness Response Systems

- ACL convenes a monthly HHS-HUD-USDA meeting with staff leads to identify and share federal assistance opportunities across agencies that assist people experiencing homelessness or who may be at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Lead With Equity

- In November 2023, the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center completed the addition of demographic questions to the SOAR Online Application Tracking (OAT) system so that outcomes can be filtered by race, ethnicity, gender, and living arrangement.

Scale Housing and Supports That Meet Demand

- In March 2023, the toolkit for [Helping Individuals Experiencing Homelessness Obtain Identification Documents](#) was completed and posted on the Homelessness and Housing Resource Center (HHRC) Technical Assistance Center Website.

- The SOAR TA Center hosted a [Learning Community](#) in summer 2023 focused on integrating SOAR with peer certification programs and released a conversation guide for SOAR community partners to start discussions about integrating peer services in their programs.

- SAMHSA HHRC developed the [Expanding Peer Support Roles in Homeless Services Delivery: A Toolkit for Service Providers](#) resource in August 2023 and facilitated two accompanying webinars.

- SAMHSA announced the [Integrated Behavioral Health and HIV Care for Unsheltered Populations Pilot Project.](#)

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

Use Data and Evidence to Make Decisions

- The 2022 Health Center Patient Survey (HCPS) has been completed and an interactive Patient Survey Dashboard has been posted, along with the Public Use Files (PUF).

- The development of patient-level data collection and reporting system continues. Health Centers will have the option to provide de-identified patient-level data to HRSA for UDS 2023 in addition to the standard reporting method.

Scale Housing and Supports That Meet Demand

- Through a national cooperative agreement, HRSA supported 1) a Health and Housing Institute that supported cross-agency teams of state officials in their efforts to increase access to safe, affordable housing with integrated health and support services, 2) A state-federal roundtable discussion (with representatives from HRSA, HUD, CMS, ACL, SAMHSA, and others) to highlight insights from states on opportunities and challenges to building health and housing solutions, and 3) A preconference session (with 400 attendees) focused on health and housing and housing partnerships, financing, and data strategies. As part of this session, a separate peer-to-peer exchange was held with states advanced

in health and housing work. Work plans for the four national technical assistance organizations have been finalized and activities are commencing.

Prevent Homelessness

- A funding opportunity announcement for the new, next 5-year cohort of Healthy Start grantees was posted in September 2023 which requires applicants to submit a plan for addressing at least one social determinant of health in their communities, such as access to stable housing.

- In FY23, HRSA awarded the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Base Grant Awards to fifty-six states, territories, and nonprofit organizations. Awardees are in the processing of submitting their annual performance reports including information on housing status.

- Several meetings have occurred between the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) MIECHV and HUD Continuum of Care program staff and opportunities for collaboration have been identified.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Scale Housing and Supports That Meet Demand

- In October 2023 CDC's Division of HIV Prevention published an Executive Summary of a co-sponsored HRSA, HUD, CDC Technical Expert Panel titled *Optimizing HUD-Assisted Housing Among People in Need of HIV Care and Prevention Services*.

Improve Effectiveness of Homelessness Response Systems

- CDC's Division of HIV Prevention provides funding to the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) for Housing Learning Collaboratives that provide Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) planning and implementation Technical Assistance to 32 EHE jurisdictions.
  - The third Housing Learning Collaborative TA cohort kicked off with an in-person 2-day meeting in Louisville, KY September 12-13, 2023. There are six jurisdictions participating this year. Virtual meetings began October and will go through March 2024. NASTAD is working with National HIV/AIDS Housing Coalition (NHAHC) again as the SME consultant. Along with monthly virtual meetings, there are TA opportunities for jurisdictions to meet one-one-one with NHAHC. Of the six jurisdictions, three have already reached out for individualized support and TA. The TA requests span the following content areas: additional support on coordination with

their HOPWA grantees to leverage unspent HOPWA funds, identifying how best to utilize funds to expand existing housing services or develop new services, and increased communication and collaboration with neighboring EHE jurisdictions (same state, different jurisdictions). NASTAD will continue to work with jurisdictions to address current and future TA needs.

- In April 2023, CDC's Division of HIV Prevention partnered with HRSA and HUD to collaborate on a Dear Colleague Letter regarding HIV Outbreaks among People Experiencing Homelessness and Housing Instability.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Improve Effectiveness of Homelessness Response Systems

- In May 2023, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and HUD commenced a Pre-Disaster Housing Initiative (PDHI), which involves working with the emergency management and housing agencies of four selected states – Louisiana, New Jersey, Washington, and Montana. The purpose of this initiative is to assist states to:

  o (1) ensure that there is collaboration on housing operations between the state's emergency management (EM) agency and its housing agencies in steady-state as well as in the event of a disaster and

  o (2) develop or mature a pre-disaster housing strategy or plan that will identify the existing housing stock in the state and localities; document current and potential strategies for temporary/permanent housing options to be pursued after an event; and create implementable strategies to provide resilient, affordable housing to survivors as soon as possible.

  o Each state began the Initiative by discussing the issues they faced related to housing and housing recovery. Following these conversations, the state working groups identified a deliverable that would assist them in addressing their housing challenges, to include homelessness, and developed a work plan to develop their chosen deliverable over the course of the Initiative. The state working groups met virtually with their PDHI subject matter experts (SME) and facilitators over the course of seven months, May to November 2023, and all states met with FEMA, HUD, and their PDHI SMEs in person at the mid-point and end of the Initiative.

- FEMA invited USICH to present on *All In* to FEMA's Recovery Support Function Leadership Group (RSFLG) in August 2023. The RSFLG includes the senior leadership from each Recovery Support Function (RSF). The RSFs bring together the core recovery capabilities of federal departments and agencies and other supporting organizations — including those not active in emergency response — to focus on community recovery needs. Following the USICH presentation, participating federal agencies discussed how each agency can support the goals of *All In* during recovery from disasters.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Lead With Equity

- In September 2023, HUD awarded $8.5 million to provide rental assistance and supportive services to more than 1,000 Native Americans experiencing or at risk of homelessness through the Tribal HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program.

- HUD announced an initiative to address homelessness among youth who identify as LGBTQI+--a population that is disproportionately Black and brown. HUD will encourage communities to develop collaborative solutions to address the specific needs of LGBTQI+ youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability. With this new initiative, HUD will provide technical assistance and regular training for shelter and service providers, new informational resources highlighting innovative methods for supporting LGBTQI+ youth and 'Know Your Rights' tools for directly-affected youth. This work will be informed by listening sessions the Department will hold with LGBTQI+ youth across the country.

- In May 2023, HUD released a suite of resources called *Homecoming: Life After Incarceration*. *Homecoming* is a multimedia project that is designed to highlight the challenges and struggles people experience as they try to re-enter society and showcases examples of organizations and people who are leading the way in supporting the reentry population. It also lifts up the often-marginalized voices of the population themselves. *Homecoming* has a secondary focus on the connection between HIV and incarceration and highlights the challenges and opportunities that exist in addressing the housing and health needs of people with HIV exiting jails and prisons.

Use Data and Evidence to Make Decisions

- HUD awarded $2 million to three university-based institutions to support research to address homelessness that engages affected communities and elevates the perspectives and insights of people

who have experienced homelessness, especially on the topics of encampments, senior homelessness, and unconditional cash.

Collaborate at All Levels

- In September 2023, HUD awarded a total of $60 million in Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program grants to 16 communities to implement coordinated systems to prevent and end homelessness among youth. Communities receiving these awards are required to support youth to serve as leaders in the design and implementation of a range of housing and supportive services interventions to help youth achieve housing stability, educational and economic opportunity, health and well-being, and permanent connections.

- Committed to preventing youth homelessness, HUD introduced a $50 million Youth Homelessness System Improvement grant program in November 2023. The grants will focus on systemic change to either improve or create response systems for youth homelessness by funding projects that create and build capacity for Youth Action Boards; collect and use data on at-risk youth and youth experiencing homelessness; develop strong leaders within a community; and improve the coordination, communication, operation, and administration of homeless assistance projects to better serve youth, including prevention and diversion strategies.

Scale Housing and Supports that Meet Demand

- An important priority for HUD is putting in the work to provide increased affordable housing for all Americans and making strong investments in existing public housing agencies and communities to assist households.
  - Through the Administration's American Rescue Plan of 2021 (ARP) which provides funding to assist people who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless and other vulnerable populations, HUD has approved nearly all community allocation plans submitted by the 643 jurisdictions that received a total of $5 billion in HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)-ARP funds. These community grants work to prevent and address homelessness by building more deeply affordable and supportive housing, and funding supportive services, tenant-based rental assistance, and expanding non-congregate shelter. The 619 jurisdictions whose plans have approved to date report that they will use HOME-ARP funds to create over 21,000 units of new housing to address homelessness, and assist an additional 23,800 households through rental assistance, services, and non-congregate shelter.

- o Over the last three years, HUD has issued 120,000 Housing Choice Vouchers, more vouchers than have been provided in a similar timeframe in nearly two decades. HUD awards Housing Choice Vouchers to public housing along with incentives fees to assist households experiencing homelessness and provides messaging to public housing agencies that outline the resources and flexibilities available to help people experiencing homelessness quickly exit homelessness and obtain housing.

- In June 2023, HUD issued updated [guidance](#) to more than 3,000 public housing agencies (PHAs) outlining the resources and programmatic flexibilities available to help them assist people experiencing homelessness. The guidance encourages PHAs to expand their partnerships with Continuums of Care and victim services providers to prioritize admission for people experiencing homelessness including survivors of domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking; reduce barriers to housing by modifying applicant screening practices; and coordinate public housing and Housing Choice Vouchers with supportive services. Leadership at HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing lifted up this guidance in a [November 2023 letter](#) to PHAs encouraging them to address homelessness.

- In working with our federal partners, HUD is also taking action to support those who proudly served in the U.S. military and protect their basic rights to sustainable housing. HUD and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launched a set of intensive workshops across the country, known as 'HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Bootcamps,' to assist hundreds of local VA medical centers and public housing agencies to fully utilize HUD-VASH vouchers to re-house veterans experiencing homelessness.

- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and HUD [launched the Housing and Services Partnership Accelerator](#) to help states use Medicaid to provide innovative housing-related support and services to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. In particular, the Accelerator will bring together interdisciplinary teams from four states to tackle common issues, such as navigating payment models and rates, data integration and sharing, and more. The Accelerator will also offer participating states an opportunity to share lessons learned and promising practices for improving collaboration and coordination to optimize resources, cover resource gaps, align state and local policies, and to deliver more integrated and seamless services.

- HUD created the Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing [(PRO Housing)—a first-of-its-kind program](#) to help communities identify and remove barriers to affordable housing production and preservation. Through this $85 million funding opportunity, HUD will help communities further

develop, evaluate, and implement housing policy plans; address restrictive zoning, land use, or regulatory policies; improve housing strategies; and facilitate affordable housing production and preservation. Grants to local governments, states, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and multijurisdictional entities will range from $1 million to $10 million.

- In September 2023, HUD announced the availability of $50 million in competitive funding for Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA). The funding will be available to local governments, states, and nonprofit organizations via the HOPWA: Housing Interventions (HINT) to End the HIV Epidemic program. Achieving and maintaining stable housing can be a powerful structural intervention in ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Through this NOFO, HUD seeks projects with exemplary and innovative qualities, including the incorporation of Housing First principles, community-level coordination, data collection with an emphasis on stable housing and positive health outcomes, the use of cultural humility in providing housing and services, and a systemic approach to advance equity in underserved communities that can serve as a national place-based model.

Improve Effectiveness of Homelessness Response Systems

- HUD's Continuum of Care Program is the "backbone" federal program supporting community homelessness response systems across the country, providing grants to non-profit providers, States, Indian Tribes, and local governments for permanent and short-term housing assistance, supportive services, planning, data, and other costs. In March 2023, HUD announced an additional $2.8 billion in FY 2021 Continuum of Care CoC (Program) awards, further fortifying support for a multitude of local homeless service and housing programs throughout the United States. In July 2023, HUD released its Notice of Funding Opportunities for a historic expansion of these CoC Program grants, announcing a record-breaking $3.1 billion in CoC grants.

- In April 2023, HUD provided communities with a first-of-its-kind package of resources to address homelessness among people in unsheltered settings (streets, encampments, vehicles) and in rural communities. The agency awarded 62 communities $486 million in grants, approximately 3,300 Stability Vouchers, and technical assistance to help communities improve outreach services and quickly transition people from homelessness into permanent housing with supportive services.

Prevent Homelessness

- With over 44 million households, or roughly 35 percent of the U.S. population living in rental housing, one major goal to preventing unhoused families is making sure tenants are informed and understand their rights. In July 2023, HUD announced $10 million in new funding for tenant education and outreach to empower residents around their rights and protections and help sustain safe, decent, and affordable housing. HUD also proposed a new rule, affecting an estimated 3.9 million people that will require providers of HUD-assisted housing to give tenants at least 30-days written notice prior to lease termination for non-payment of rent and include instructions for tenants on how they can catch up if they fall behind on their rent.

- HUD is working in lockstep with partners across the federal government to implement a Housing Supply Action Plan, through new actions to incentivize communities to build more affordable housing. In proof of that work, more apartments are on track to be built in 2023 than any year on record.

Department of Justice (DOJ)

Scale Housing and Supports That Meet Demand

- The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) created a new purpose area under its FY 2023 Anti-Trafficking Housing Assistance Program in order to support organizations that have experience providing housing services but have limited or no prior experience in serving victims of human trafficking, anti-trafficking organizations that have limited or no prior experience in providing housing services to victims of human trafficking, or organizations that have no prior experience in receiving direct federal funding to serve victims of human trafficking.

Improve Effectiveness of Homelessness Response Systems

- Under OVC's anti-trafficking housing training and technical assistance program, OVC grantee Freedom Network USA created a toolkit, "Building Trauma-informed Practices for Anti-Trafficking Housing Programs." This toolkit aims to provide a framework that anti-human trafficking providers offering housing services can utilize to build trauma-informed, person-centered, and voluntary housing programs for trafficking survivors.

Prevent Homelessness

- In June 2023, DOJ and HUD hosted a Zero Returns to Homelessness Symposium. This symposium was co-presented by DOJ's Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the Council of State Governments' (CSG) Justice Center with the goal of bringing together federal officials, state and local leaders, and reentry housing practitioners to align around the bold goal of zero returns to homelessness from incarceration. The symposium issued a call to action for state and local jurisdictions to equip participants with the best practice tools, planning processes, and partnership strategies needed to take the first important steps toward the realization of this goal in their communities.

- As a follow-up action, DOJ launched a Community of Practice in June 2023 with self-selected state correctional agencies seeking intensive technical assistance to retool discharge planning to ensure zero returns to homelessness after incarceration.

- The National Housing Law Project (NHLP), a DOJ Technical Assistance provider, worked with DOJ and HUD to convene a webinar in November 2023 on the VAWA Complaint Process, which provides protections for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking who seek to access and maintain federally-assisted housing.

Department of Labor (DOL)

Lead with Equity

- In November 2023 DOL-ETA released guidance to states on how to promote equitable access for all workers and jobseekers to unemployment insurance programs. The new guidance includes technical assistance and tools drawn from various department initiatives and state-based partnerships, including those funded by the American Rescue Plan. It also provides an overview of how states can remove barriers related to race, age, ethnicity, language proficiency, disability status, geographic location or other systemic issues that can create obstacles for people seeking to access unemployment benefits.

- In August 2023 DOL-ETA announced the award of more than $3 million to the state of Georgia to help identify and address barriers workers face when accessing state unemployment insurance benefits. Equity grants support states' efforts to remove barriers related to race, age, ethnicity, language proficiency, disability status, geographic location or other issues that make it hard for people to access unemployment insurance benefits. Funded by the American Rescue Plan Act, the equity grant will

enable Georgia to rewrite in plain language its unemployment claim application and related documents in English and other preferred languages. Funds will also be used by the state to establish a mobile unit to reach residents in Georgia in need of unemployment insurance services who have limited or no internet access. To date, the department has announced more than $219 million in grant awards to forty-five states and the District of Columbia.

Scale Housing and Supports That Meet Demand

- In FY 2023, DOL awarded more than $59 million in Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) funding to 159 grantees, including seventy-two new grantees and eighty-seven grantees continuing into their 2nd or 3rd program year. HVRP grantees work closely with housing and other service providers such as Department of Housing and Urban Development Continuum of Care grantees, and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), Grant and Per Diem (GPD), and Housing and Urban Development - Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Programs.

  - These grantees will serve nearly 17,400 veterans experiencing homelessness. In FY 2022, more than 61% of the over 16,900 HVRP veterans served were employed when they completed the program with an average hourly wage of over $17.45 at placement.

  - Additionally, many HVRP grantees use the resources available through the newly piloted Off-Base Transition Training (OBTT) to provide employment training opportunities through workshops to help veterans and their spouses meet their employment goals.

Improve the Effectiveness of Homelessness Response Systems

- In September 2023 DOL-ETA announced the award of $800,000 in funding to the Washington State Department of Employment Security to provide for disaster-relief employment and training services for people in southwest Washington communities affected significantly by the health and economic effects of widespread opioid use, addiction, and overdose. The National Health Emergency Dislocated Worker Grant – with an approved threshold of more than $1.4 million – will support a project serving Clark and Cowlitz counties. Funding will create disaster-relief positions in Washington's southwest regional workforce area. The grant will also enable the provision of employment and training services to dislocated workers in these counties experiencing long-term unemployment and facing homelessness related to the opioid crisis.

Prevent Homelessness

- In September 2023 DOL-ETA, in partnership with the Department of Justice, announced the award of more than $63 million in funding to enhance the Bureau of Prisons' existing rehabilitation and reentry efforts by partnering with workforce agencies in eleven additional states. The grants will expand access to mentoring, coaching, employment and training programs and other support services to people in federal custody before and after their release. Grant recipients will leverage state-tested, evidence-based strategies for coordination among federal, state, and local public safety and workforce agencies. Since its inaugural round in 2022, the program has supported workforce agencies in Arizona, California, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. The September 2023 awards expand the program to fund the delivery of services in Alabama, Colorado, Kansas, Mississippi, Montana, New York, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

- In July 2023, the departments of Labor and Health and Human Services announced successful collaboration on cross-training initiatives for over 780 Office of Refugee Resettlement staff and over 250 Wage and Hour Division managers related to the eradication of illegal child labor in a four-month period. Building on the success of these trainings, the departments broadened their scope to provide trainings in July and August for other programs and HHS' national network where there may be overlapping interest between labor exploitation and the populations that HHS serves daily, including homeless and runaway youth programs and state child welfare agencies.

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

Use Data and Evidence to Make Decisions

- Generated over forty peer-reviewed research publications on homelessness among Veterans and five research briefs that enhance evidence-based knowledge of effective programs and services to address Veteran homelessness.

Scale Housing and Supports That Meet Demand

- Housed more than 74,878 Veterans and their families or prevented them from becoming homeless.

- Housed 35,148 Veterans as part of VA's Calendar Year (CY) 2023 Homelessness Goals (January 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023).

- Allocated nearly $13.1 million in funding to over 69,300 Veterans through the expanded flexibilities authorized by the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 (PL 116-315) from May 2021 through the end of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) on May 11, 2023.

- Awarded more than $1 billion in grants to help homeless and at-risk veterans through the Supportive Services for Veteran Families and Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem programs.

Improve the Effectiveness of Homelessness Response Systems

- Engaged more than 31,400 unsheltered Veterans (current as of September 30, 2023).

- Deployed ten mobile medical units (MMUs) to HPACTs to provide health care and supportive services in the community to Veterans experiencing homelessness.

Prevent Homelessness

- Provided nearly 494,000 rides to over 44,000 Veterans by the end of the COVID-19 PHE through VA's National Rideshare Program at a value of over $16 million.

- Awarded $11 million in its first-ever Legal Services for Veterans grants to help tackle the legal barriers to stable housing.

Department of the Interior (DOI)

Scale Housing and Supports That Meet Demand

- Bureau of Indian Affairs OIS Social Service Program are tribal and federally operated social services programs provide welfare assistance programs that offer financial assistance for eligible recipients including individuals who are unhoused/unsheltered. Social worker staff provide case management and supportive services to individuals that could include working toward achieving housing or other resources for unhoused/unsheltered individuals. In FY 2023, $75,834,694.00 was provided to Tribal/Federal social service programs for welfare assistance.

- The Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) grants the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) the authority to sell public lands within the SNPLMA disposal boundary in the Las

Vegas Valley to local or state governments for a nominal cost to support affordable housing. In August, the Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Interior entered a Memorandum of Understanding establishing an agreed-upon process to allow these sales of public lands at $100 per acre (far below fair market value) in Southern Nevada for affordable housing projects.

Prevent Homelessness

- In FY 2023, the Housing Improvement Program assisted more than 116 families/provided $8,000,000 in assistance to address substandard housing and help people obtain decent, safe, and sanitary housing for themselves and their families. While not targeted to families meeting the federal definitions of homelessness, this program has the potential to prevent and end homelessness by increasing access to safe and sanitary housing for members of federally recognized tribes and their families.

- The National Parks Service's Housing Tax Credit Program (HTC) supports many communities by providing tools for sustainable economic development, affordable housing, and job creation. Through rehabilitation of historic buildings, the program promotes both historic preservation and community revitalization while promoting private investment. In 2023 the program supported 6,824 new and rehabilitated existing low- and moderate-income rental housing units. Affordable housing projects in the program range from single-family houses to small and large apartment buildings to entire public housing complexes.

Department of Defense (DOD)

Prevent Homelessness

- The DoD in partnership with DOL, VA, and other Transition Assistance Program Executive Committee (TAP-EC) member agencies are currently piloting the following tools:

  - **Baseline Wellbeing Assessment:** The TAP-EC is currently piloting a tool called the Enterprise Individual Self-Assessment (EISA) to standardize an enterprise-wide non-clinical self-assessment of the social risks of transition including housing instability. The Joint Executive Council will determine an EISA-wide implementation date based on the results of the pilot, required adjustments, and lessons learned.

  - **Transitioning Service Member Resource Connection (TSMRC) Pilot:** The TSMRC launched in May 2022, providing a single point of entry for DoD TAP Managers who initiate

warm handovers to VA during Capstone (90-days prior to separation). It allows for near to real-time tracking and validation of warm handover connections and supports warm handovers to VA benefits in areas: Education, Compensation, Medical/Healthcare, Housing, Benefits, "Other" types of VA services and Mental Health Resource Awareness (Phase III [EISA pilot sites] only). The TSMRC is being piloted at 30 DoD installations to include the 17 DoD installations that are also piloting the EISA through February 2024.

Social Security Administration (SSA)

Lead with Equity

- Social Security (SSA) conducted outreach to national organizations who work with those experiencing housing insecurity, and in August 2023, the agency held a listening session with advocates to learn about their experiences assisting their clients to secure SSA benefits.

- September 2023, SSA released a *Dear Colleague Letter* to a targeted list of advocates including those working with individuals experiencing housing insecurity with an emphasis on accessing online services

Use Data and Evidence to Make Decisions

- Since January 2023, SSA, under a contract with Westat, the agency is supporting a randomized controlled trial to assess the impact of combining supportive housing with Individual Placement and Support (IPS) supported employment services for recently homeless people experiencing a range of disabilities and mental health conditions.

- SSA has an existing Data Exchange Community of Practice (DXCOP) that meets quarterly to exchange ideas to strengthen federal data sharing efforts.

Scale Housing and Supports That Meet Demand

- SSA continues to provide support for the Rural Partners Network (RPN) Community Forums that collaborate with communities to improve access to government resources and tools, educate rural communities, and improve their access to government benefits.

- In partnership with USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), SSA is working with the state of Connecticut to develop an electronic SNAP portal for SSA technicians.

- SSA conducted a Disability Customer Burden Survey which provided estimates of the time and money a claimant, a claimant's family or relatives, friends, advocates or third-party representatives spend when completing an application for disability benefits. A question on the survey asked about housing status. The research team also held interviews with disability applicants and worked with advocates to recruit unhoused customers to participate in interviews.

REFERENCES

[1] "2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report - Key Findings from the Point-in-Time Counts." *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*, 2023, https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PA/documents/HUD_No_23_278_4.pdf

[2] "No State Has an Adequate Supply of Affordable Rental Housing for the Lowest Income Renters." *National Low Income Housing Coalition*, 2023, https://nlihc.org/gap.

[3] "Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing." *National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2023*, https://nlihc.org/oor.

[4] "Working in Homeless Services: A Survey of the Field." *National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2023,* https://endhomelessness.org/resource/working-in-homeless-services-a-survey-of-the-field/

[5] "Worst Case Housing Needs 2023 Report to Congress." *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2023,* https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/Worst-Case-Housing-Needs-2023.html

[6] "Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing." *National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2023*, https://nlihc.org/oor.

[7] Acosta, S., & Gartland, E. "Families Wait Years for Housing Vouchers Due to Inadequate Funding." *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, 20https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/families-wait-years-for-housing-vouchers-due-to-inadequate-fundin21, g

[8] "ALL IN: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness." *United States Interagency Council on Homelessness*, 2022, https://www.usich.gov/All_In_The_Federal_Strategic_Plan_to_Prevent_and_End_Homelessness.pdf.