



**United States  
Interagency Council on  
Homelessness**

*Preventing and Ending Homelessness in the United States*

# **Developing a State Interagency Council on Homelessness**

**A Step-by-Step Guide**

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# WHY A STATE COUNCIL MAKES SENSE

State Interagency Councils best assert the needs, resources, and best practices of service providers in each state, serving as a pivotal partner to achieving the goals outlined in *Opening Doors*.

A successful State Interagency Council:

- Creates a statewide partnership to prevent and end homelessness in the State
- Provides for a coordinated State, Federal, and Local response
- Fosters a research-driven, performance-based, results-oriented plan and implementation strategy
- Supports a non-partisan approach to address homelessness

# ESTABLISHING A STATE COUNCIL

State Interagency Councils on Homelessness have been established through several initiatives including:

- Executive Order of the Governor
- Executive Order and Legislative Action
- Legislative Action

The most common vehicle of creation is the Executive Order which identifies membership, meeting frequency, functions, and timeframe.

# An Example Establishing a State Interagency Council

*Executive Order Number 2004-13*

*The Honorable Janet Napolitano, Former Governor of Arizona\**

**WHEREAS**, multiple state agencies bear the responsibility of serving the homeless and those who are at risk of homelessness; and  
**WHEREAS**, ending homelessness requires collaboration among state agencies, local governments, the private sector and service provider networks to coordinate program development, deliver essential services and provide housing; and  
**WHEREAS**, ending or reducing homelessness contributes to economic development and improves the overall quality of life within our communities;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Janet Napolitano, Governor of the State of Arizona, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of this State, hereby order and direct as follows:

1. The Governor's Interagency and Community Council on Homelessness (the "Council") is created to develop and implement a plan to prevent and end homelessness in the State of Arizona.
2. The Council shall be chaired by the Governor of the State of Arizona, and in his/her absence, co-chaired by the Directors of the Department of Economic Security and the Department of Housing, each of whom shall have the power to convene the Council.
3. The Council shall be comprised of the following eighteen (18) members, each of whom shall be appointed by the Governor, and serve, without compensation, at the pleasure of the Governor:

- Director, Department of Economic Security; Director, Department of Housing;
- Director, Governor's Office for Children, Youth and Families; Director, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System;
- Director, Department of Health Services; Director, Arizona Department of Corrections;
- Director, Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections; Director, Arizona Department of Commerce;
- Director, Arizona Department of Veterans' Services; Director, the Office of the Courts;
- Director, Government Information Technology Agency; The Arizona School Superintendent (or his/her designee); and
- Six members of the public.

*\*Abbreviated Order. Full document can be viewed- [http://www.ich.gov/slocal/exec-orders/eo\\_arizon.pdf](http://www.ich.gov/slocal/exec-orders/eo_arizon.pdf)*

# STATE COUNCIL FUNCTIONS

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) coordinates the Federal response to homelessness and creates a national partnership at every level of government and with the private sector in order to reduce and end homelessness in the nation while maximizing the effectiveness of the Federal Government in contributing to the end of homelessness.

## A State Interagency Council should:

- Replicate the functions of the U.S. Interagency Council in all areas that can be carried out at the state level
- Report to the Governor on progress in creating and implementing strategy

# STATE COUNCIL FUNCTIONS

- **Serve** as the single statewide homelessness planning and policy development resource.
- **Develop** a state plan to prevent and end homelessness that is aligned with *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*.
- **Implement** and coordinate activities described in the state plan to prevent and end homelessness.
- **Recommend** policy, regulatory, and resource changes needed to accomplish the objectives outlined in the state plan
- **Ensure** accountability and results in implementation strategies

# ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL

## ■ Create a Statewide Plan

- Develop measurable goals to end homelessness
- Create and operate statewide data collection and reporting system
- Establish short and long-term statewide strategies and plans to prevent and end homelessness
- Identify resources to support strategies, including alignment of existing resources to be more efficient and effective
- Partner with cities and counties to identify resources and common strategies
- Partner with local Continuums of Care and Ten Year Planning Councils.
- Assemble accurate fiscal and demographic information and research/data to support policy development and track outcomes
- Create plan to issue annual progress reports on goals and strategies

# ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL

- **Establish priorities (action steps) based on the plan, including:**
  - Recommend interagency strategies (e.g. funding, homelessness prevention, discharge planning)
  - Review all state activities and programs assisting homeless persons
  - Support and replicate collaborative state homelessness initiatives that demonstrate positive measurable outcomes
  - Promote systems integration (e.g. health services and housing supports) to increase effectiveness and efficiency
  - Coordinate existing federal funding and coordinate applications for competitive funding

# ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL

## ■ **Priorities, continued:**

- Identify mainstream resources, benefits, and services that can be accessed to prevent and end homelessness
- Involve non-traditional stakeholders; including representatives from corporations, business, philanthropy, civic organizations, faith-based organizations, and other community institutions
- Recommend statutory and regulatory changes to enhance strategies
- Bring problems and concerns relating to homeless people to the attention of appropriate local, state and federal agencies

# ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL

- **Promotion of the Plan and Evaluation of the Progress**
  - Report to the Governor, Cabinet Secretaries, and the Legislature
  - Provide an Annual Progress Report on the Plan
  - Educate the Public
  - Disseminate information (e.g. data and best practices) to educate state officials and the public regarding issues related to homelessness
  - Host an Annual Conference on Homelessness

# COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP & ADVISORY\*

- Governor's Representatives
- Key State Agency Representatives and Legislators who have decision-making or legislative power
- Local Federal Officials
- United Way and Philanthropic Groups\*
- Business and Corporate Representatives\*
- People with first hand experience of homelessness (currently or formerly)\*
- Local Continuum of Care Representatives\*
- Providers of Homeless Services, including Veteran - serving Groups\*
- State Advocacy Group Members\*
- Faith-Based Representatives\*
- Community Leaders\*

***\*Can be members of full council or part of an advisory.***

# COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

## State Agency Officials

Representatives from the following Elected and Appointed  
Statewide Offices:

Governor's Office • Lieutenant Governor's Office • Judicial Offices  
Attorney General's Office • State Fiscal or Comptroller's Office

**And**

Secretaries & Commissioners (or their Representatives) from the  
following Departments, Agencies, and Resources:

Housing & Housing Finance • Substance Abuse & Mental Health • Veterans Affairs  
Office of Management & Budget • Social Security/Disability Determinations  
Managed Care Entity • Temporary Assistance for Needy Families  
State and County Corrections/ Public Safety/Juvenile Justice  
Education • Labor/Employment Services • Welfare • Medicaid • Transportation  
Children & Families/Youth Services • Health & Human Services/Homeless Services

# **COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

## **Federal Agency Representative**

- Housing and Urban Development (HUD) – Field Office Director, CPD Director or Regional Administrator
- Veterans Affairs (VA) – VISN Director or VISN Network Homeless Coordinator
- Labor (DOL) – Regional Liaison to state or WIA Directors/Administrators
- Health and Human Services (HHS) – Regional Liaison to state
- Social Security Administration – Field office director
- Agriculture (USDA) – State director
- USICH – Regional Coordinator

# **COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

## **Chair, Terms, Meetings**

- A Chair and Vice Chair are appointed by the Governor or selected by election from within to provide direction and focus and to address benchmarks established for State Council activities.
- Terms of the Chair and Vice Chair are set by Executive or Legislative Order or may be determined by the Council.
- Terms for members are also set by Executive or Legislative Order or determined by the Council and are generally between 1 and 5 years, with many Councils offering up to 3 consecutive terms.
- Meeting frequency can vary from quarterly to monthly.

# CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL COUNCIL

- Governor- Initiated (by Executive Order)
- Active participation of Governor's Office
- Chaired by Lt. Governor or Governor's Appointees (Secretaries, Commissioners or Directors)
- Council representation maintained at the State Secretary or Deputy Secretary level
- Senior Staff dedicated to overseeing and implementing Council activities
- Membership is represented by the core State Agencies: Housing, Welfare, Human Services, Corrections, Labor/Economic Development, Education and Finance.
- Federal Partners are included as active members and participants within the Council
- Membership or an Advisory Board to the State ICH includes community stakeholders and interested parties
- Council activities are performance-based and results-oriented with measurable outcomes that are periodically reviewed and documented in written reports

# BENEFITS OF A COUNCIL

## **States with an existing Council find the following benefits:**

- All stakeholders have a say in the process of creating a statewide plan and the accompanied action steps
- Member Legislators are champions of the plan, strategy, and resources needed for homelessness initiatives in the Legislature
- Enhanced coordination with local community planning processes
- Promotion of fiscal responsibility and enhanced efficiency with identification and elimination of duplicative programs and costs
- Credible documentation of research-driven, measurable outcomes is available for future funding requests
- Greater buy-in for elements of the strategy through expansive stakeholder involvement, including supported housing, discharge planning, and assertive engagement initiatives

# ASSISTANCE FROM USICH

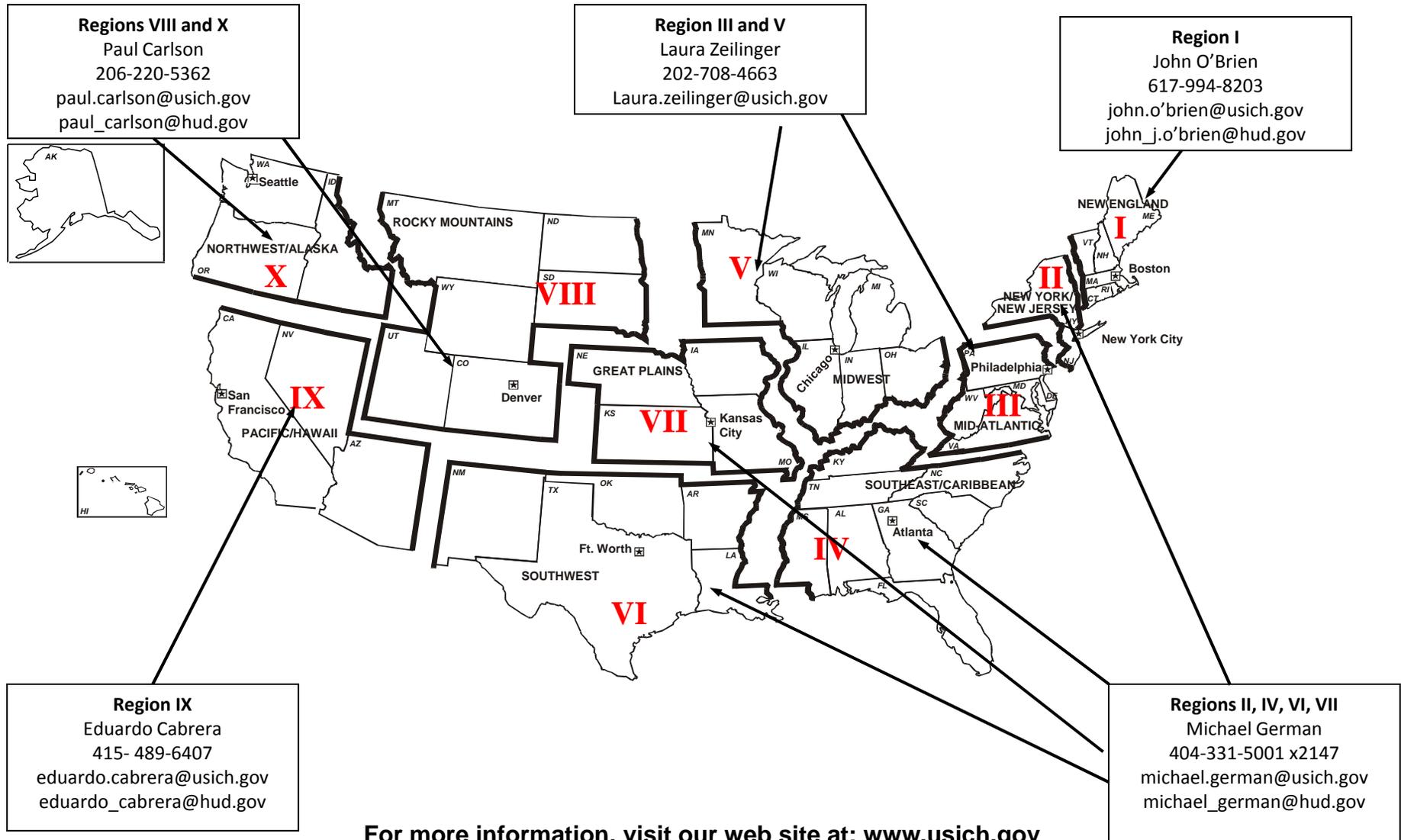
- **Regional USICH Coordinators** throughout the country are available to provide on-site technical assistance in the development and operation of your Council.
- **Existing State Council documents** are available to assist in the design of the mission and making of your State Council.
- **Clearinghouse of best practices and state contacts** is maintained by USICH to support the implementation of State Council strategies.
- **Connection/Introduction** to Technical Assistance by Council Member Agencies.

# WHERE CAN YOU FIND ADDITIONAL STATE INTERAGENCY COUNCIL RESOURCES?

## United States Interagency Council on Homelessness

- USICH Regional Coordinators have specific local expertise and are based in ten regions nationwide (see map on next page)
- USICH Website ([www.usich.gov](http://www.usich.gov)) has examples of Executive Orders creating State Interagency Councils
- USICH's bi-weekly e-newsletter highlights new developments, updates on *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, innovations, partnerships, and resources for state and local providers. Subscribe at [www.usich.gov](http://www.usich.gov).

# USICH REGIONAL COORDINATORS



The mission of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness 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."

Information on current State Interagency Councils on Homelessness  
can be found on the USICH web site:

[www.usich.gov](http://www.usich.gov)