



Process for Developing the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

The President and Congress charged the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) with developing a “national strategic plan” to end homelessness through the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009. As a result, USICH developed *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*. The plan reflects agreement by Council agencies on a set of priorities and strategies, including activities initiated by the President in the budget for fiscal years 2010 and 2011.

The Council affirmed six core values to be reflected in the plan:

- Homelessness is unacceptable.
- There are no “homeless people,” but rather people who have lost their homes who deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Homelessness is expensive; it is better to invest in solutions.
- Homelessness is solvable; we have learned a lot about what works.
- Homelessness can be prevented.
- There is strength in collaboration, and USICH can make a difference.

The Council decided the plan’s development should be **guided by key principles**. It should be:

- Collaborative
- Solutions-driven and evidence-based
- Cost-effective
- Implementable and user-friendly
- Lasting and scalable
- Measurable, with clear outcomes and accountability

AN OPEN AND COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

We stressed the importance of transparency in informing the Plan’s priorities and strategies. We encouraged multiple opportunities for input, feedback, and collaboration from researchers, practitioners, state and local government leaders, advocates, people who have experienced homelessness, and federal agency staff.

FEDERAL AGENCY WORKGROUPS AND EXPERTS PANEL

Five workgroups were convened to analyze specific populations:

- **The Chronically Homeless Workgroup** focused its work on the prevention and elimination of homelessness among individual adults with chronic health conditions experiencing long-term or recurrent homelessness.

- **The Veterans Workgroup** focused its work on the prevention and elimination of homelessness among adults who have served in the armed forces and their families.
- **The Families Workgroup** focused its work on the prevention and elimination of homelessness among families with children. “Families” are broadly defined and inclusive of a range of family structures.
- **The Youth Workgroup** made a special inquiry into the needs of youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, covering both those who are with their families and youth who are unaccompanied.
- **The Community Workgroup** examined states’ practices in mobilizing community participation, forging partnerships and aligning resources that have been effective in addressing homelessness. It looked across all populations.

Members of the workgroups were selected by members of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness’ Policy Group from within their respective agencies. Experts on the panel included people with personal experience of homelessness, researchers, state and local government leaders, practitioners, and advocates. These expert panel meetings were held in February 2010. Workgroup members reviewed the expert’s literature and talked with experts for additional insights.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER INPUT

We highly value the experience and expertise of those who have first-hand experience with homelessness, professionals and volunteers who work daily on this issue, and local and state policy makers. We obtained input from more than 650 leaders of regional and state interagency councils and stakeholders from across the country during regional meetings held in February and early March 2010. Regional stakeholder dialogues were held in:

Regional Forums	Date	City
Region 1 Regional ICH	2/9/2010	Boston
Region 1 Community	2/9/2010	Boston
Region 2 Regional ICH	2/9/2010	New York
Region 2 Community	3/5/2010	New York
Region 5 Regional ICH	2/22/2010	Chicago
Region 5 Community	2/22/2010	Chicago
Region 6 Regional ICH	2/23/2010	Dallas
Region 6 Community	2/23/2010	Dallas
Region 9 Regional ICH	3/2/2010	San Francisco
Region 9 Community	3/2/2010	San Francisco
Region 10 Regional ICH	3/3/2010	Seattle
Region 10 Community	3/3/2010	Seattle
Total	652 participants	

These one-day events were a great opportunity for USICH to hear directly from external and federal government stakeholders regarding challenges, priorities, and different perspectives on how to prevent and end homelessness in the United States. The meetings were divided into two sessions:

- 1) Regional Federal Interagency Council Members, together with USICH, hosting a meeting with the Chair of each State Interagency Council on Homelessness within the region and each State Homeless Education Coordinator
- 2) A broad range of community stakeholders were invited to a meeting facilitated by USICH

Other Stakeholder Forums

NAEH Leadership	2/10/2010	Los Angeles
Focus Group	2/11/2010	Los Angeles
Open Meeting at NAEH	2/12/2010	Los Angeles
Congressional staff	3/12/2010	Washington, DC
Total	125 participants	

Stakeholder Conference Calls

Mayors Conference Call	3/9/2010	
National Health Care for the Homeless Council Consumer Advisory Board	3/10/2010	
Total	83 participants	

Listening Sessions with Workgroups

Chronic Homeless Workgroup	2/18/2010	
Community Workgroup Families with Children Workgroup	2/19/2010	
Veterans Workgroup	2/17/2010	
Youth Workgroup	2/25/2010	
Total	59 participants	

Written Comments

Organizations/individuals/community experts

Total	16 participants
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GRAND TOTAL **935 participants**

Online Comment Forum

USICH created an interactive website for the public to comment on the different themes of the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. The website was publicized in the following ways:

Newsletter Announcements: Three separate electronic newsletters were sent to a distribution list of over *19,000* advocates, consumers, experts, and local/state/federal government officials announcing the stakeholders' meetings and online comment forum.

Speeches/Presentations: Executive Director Barbara Poppe invited conference participants to the stakeholder meetings and online comment forum in two keynote speeches at the National Alliance to End Homelessness' Annual Conference (February 12, 2010) and the HUD-VASH Case Management Models Conference (February 24, 2010). Deputy Director Sharon Price invited conference attendees to visit the online comment website at the annual United Way Conference on March 20, 2010.

Advertisements: An advertisement was placed in eight of the North American Street Newspaper Association newspapers inviting comments via the online input forum, with an estimated circulation of *154,600*.

The resulting online comments surpassed our expectations:

- The site attracted 7,734 visits
- 2,318 individual comments were recorded

THE FEDERAL STRATEGIC PLAN TO PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS

In the plan, USICH jointly created:

- A set of targeted, solutions-driven goals and collaborative strategies
- A roadmap for joint action to guide the development of programs and budget proposals toward a set of measurable targets
- A set of priorities for agencies to pursue over a five-year period from FY 2010 through FY 2014

USICH centered its plan on the belief that “no one should experience homelessness – no one should be without a safe, stable place to call home.”

The plan focused on four key goals: 1) Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness in five years; 2) Prevent and end homelessness among Veterans in five years; 3) Prevent and end homelessness for families, youth, and children in ten years; and 4) Set a path to ending all types of homelessness.

We look forward to working with federal, private, and non-profit organization to work together to make that belief a reality for each person experiencing homelessness in our nation.

[Read *Opening Doors: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*.](#)