



# U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness Fiscal Year 2021 Performance and Accountability Report

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## Message from the Executive Director

Fiscal Year 2021 was a year of challenges as well as opportunities. While remaining focused on responding to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) also welcomed a new Interim Executive Director, established a new Council with representation at the highest levels of government, re-established relationships with key national stakeholders, initiated a process to develop the next iteration of the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, and began to re-build internal capacity through recruitment and hiring initiatives. Despite significant capacity constraints, USICH has made tremendous progress and looks forward to further progress in the fiscal year ahead.

### Signs of Progress

Driven by federal, state, and local actions, and by public and private partnerships, point-in-time data showed an estimated 9% fewer people were experiencing homelessness in 2020 compared to 2010, and there were 4% fewer people who were unsheltered, sleeping on our sidewalks, in our parks, and in other unsafe environments.

For some targeted groups, communities have made even greater progress within their point-in-time data. For example, since 2010, there are approximately 50% fewer Veterans and 29% fewer families with children experiencing homelessness. Additionally, the Department of Education's (ED) data on homeless children and youth reflected an 8% decrease in the number of students who were identified as experiencing homelessness at some point during the 2018-2019 school year, as compared to the prior school year.

### Signs of Challenges

These achievements show that ending homelessness is possible when resources are scaled to necessary levels and deployed strategically. But other data released in FY (FISCAL YEAR) 2021 revealed some troubling trends. For example:

- The Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) point-in-time count indicated a national increase for the fourth consecutive year, including a 2% increase in overall homelessness, a 7% increase among people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, and a 15% increase among individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. In the case of chronic homelessness, this increase was driven by a sizable increase in the number of unsheltered people with chronic patterns of homelessness.
- According to ED's [Federal Data Summary School Years 2016-17 to 2018-19: Education for Homeless Children and Youth](#), released in April 2021, public schools reported that 1,387,573 enrolled students were identified as experiencing homelessness at some point during the 2018-2019 school year. While this reflects an 8% reduction (or 120,692 students) from the previous school year, it also represents an overall increase of 2% (or 29,496 students) since SY 2016-17. During SY 2018-19, 77% of students identified as homeless were sharing housing with others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason. Twelve percent of homeless students

resided in shelters. Seven percent had a primary nighttime residence of hotels or motels, and 4% were identified as unsheltered.

- Racial inequities remained pronounced and stark. According to HUD's 2020 AHAR (Annual Homelessness Assessment Report) Part 1, African Americans and indigenous people (including Native Americans and Pacific Islanders) remained considerably overrepresented among the homeless population compared to the U.S. population. People identifying as Black or African American accounted for 39 percent of all people experiencing homelessness and 53 percent of people experiencing homelessness as members of families with children but are 12 percent of the total U.S. population. Together, American Indian, Alaska Native, Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian populations account for one percent of the U.S. population, but five percent of the homeless population and seven percent of the unsheltered population. In contrast, 48 percent of all people experiencing homelessness were white compared with 74 percent of the U.S. population. People identifying as Hispanic or Latino (who can be of any race) are about 23 percent of the homeless population but only 16 percent of the population overall.
- According to the [State of the Nation's Housing 2021](#), released by the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, even after ten years of economic expansion and the lowest unemployment rate in decades, the share of renter households with cost burdens in 2019 was down just four percentage points from the 2011 high. Some 20.4 million renters (46 percent) paid more than 30 percent of their incomes for housing that year, including 10.5 million (24 percent) severely burdened households that paid more than half of their incomes for rent. HUD's 2021 [Worst Case Housing Needs Report to Congress](#) reflects similar trends. In 2019, only 62 affordable units were available for every 100 very low-income renter households, and only 40 affordable units were available for every 100 extremely low-income renter households.

While we experienced challenges in FY 2021, USICH has also realized opportunities to work even closer with our federal, state, and local partners across the country to meet those challenges. The national pandemic has highlighted, now more than ever, the link between housing and health, and the importance of our collective efforts towards safe and stable housing for our nation's most vulnerable citizens. We look forward to the work ahead, along with our partners across the country, to serve and support those who need our help the most.

### **Annual Performance Measures and Metrics**

Beginning in FY 2018, we have used the following performance metrics to track and measure our activities and impact. Additional information on our activities is provided in the narrative below.

#### **Driving an Efficient and Effective Federal Response to Homelessness**

##### **Performance Measures and Metrics:**

1. Provide expert guidance and input to federal agencies to strengthen the implementation of more than \$6 billion of federal investments into targeted homelessness programs.

**Result:** Fully achieved and exceeded. We provided guidance and input across our Council member agencies on over \$6 billion in FY 2021 targeted resources for homelessness programs from across multiple federal agencies and covering multiple sub-populations and focus areas. We also provided guidance to communities on the more than \$500 billion in funds appropriated through

the CARES Act and American Rescue Plan Act.

2. Coordinate quarterly meetings of the Council Policy Group and Interagency Council on Homelessness annually. Convene at least 30 interagency working group meetings annually.

**Result:** Partially achieved. We convened four quarterly Council meetings in FY 2021 (October of 2020 and January, May, and July of 2021). We also convened two Council Policy Group meetings, and 24 interagency working group meetings, during FY 2021. We will be determining the appropriate target for the number of interagency working group meetings for FY 2022.

3. Manage the development and implementation of action plans for at least four (4) population-specific interagency working groups and ensure that at least 75% of strategies and activities projected within those action plans are implemented or achieved.

**Result:** Partially achieved. During FY 2021, our ability to manage action plans for population-specific interagency working groups was diminished due to numerous staffing vacancies. Nevertheless, we led and contributed to numerous interagency initiatives, including the joint HUD/Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)/USICH strategies to end Veteran homelessness and *House America: An All-Hands-on-Deck Effort to Address the Nation's Homelessness Crisis*. After we develop the next federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, we will evaluate and determine which working groups are needed to successfully implement the strategies and actions identified within the plan and will revisit this metric as needed.

## **Building a National Partnership at Every Level of Government and Among the Private Sector**

### **Performance Measures and Metrics:**

1. Provide expert guidance, convene strategic meetings, and/or host peer-to-peer conversations to educate state officials and leaders in at least 15 states and local officials and leaders in at least 40 communities.

**Result:** Fully achieved and exceeded. We provided guidance and coaching to state leaders in 30 states and territories and community leaders in more than 85 communities across all 50 states.

2. Convene at least one workshop in each of the 10 federal regions each year to provide professional and technical assistance to states, local governments, and other public and private nonprofit organizations.

**Result:** Fully achieved. We convened at least one workshop or presentation in each federal region, ranging from smaller, focused conversations to larger, statewide or regional convenings.

3. Review and confirm at least 15 communities as achieving the goal of ending Veteran homelessness and three communities as achieving the goal of ending chronic homelessness.

**Result:** Not achieved. During FY 2021, we confirmed one community as achieving the goal of ending Veteran homelessness, and zero communities as achieving the goal of ending chronic homelessness. As communities and the federal government continued to focus on the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw a steep decline in the number of community submissions. We will revisit this metric to determine an appropriate target for FY 2022.

## Providing Tools and Resources for Success

### Performance Measures and Metrics:

1. Publish and disseminate bi-monthly educational newsletters providing information on federal programs, resources, and guidance regarding effective strategies and best practices, as well as increase subscribers 20% annually.

**Result:** Partially achieved. USICH was without Communications staff between December 2020 and May 2021. Between May and September 30, we published 9 newsletters. Subscribers grew by 14%.

2. Publish and disseminate at least 50 new or updated tools and publications.

**Result:** Achieved and exceeded. We published or updated 77 tools and publications.

3. Deliver at least 100 presentations, workshops, and speeches via national, regional, and local conferences, webinars, and conference calls.

**Result:** Partially achieved. We delivered at least 60 presentations, workshops, and speeches via national, regional, and local virtual conferences, webinars, and conference calls.

## Management Discussion and Analysis

USICH was established in 1987 by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act and most recently reauthorized by the [Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing \(HEARTH\) Act](#) of 2009.

USICH's mission is two-fold: 1) to drive an efficient and effective federal response to homelessness and 2) to build and foster a national partnership at every level of government and with the private sector to reduce and end homelessness across the nation. We support our interagency and community work by publishing guidance, tools, and resources that we disseminate through a multi-pronged communications strategy.

### Driving an Efficient and Effective Federal Response to Homelessness

USICH focuses on using data and performance measurement to maximize several billions of dollars in targeted federal homelessness funding, and to engage other federal, state, and local non-targeted programs, by providing a foundation for evidence-informed practices. USICH does not administer programs or have regulatory authority, nor do we duplicate the efforts of other agencies; rather, our tools for advancing good governance are through innovative collaborations and strategic engagements that drive smart, efficient changes and progress across our partners and stakeholders.

### Building Consensus at the Highest Levels

Through our efforts, collective action to end homelessness reaches the highest level of the federal government. USICH staff plan and implement quarterly meetings of our Council, which include the Secretaries/Heads of our 19 member agencies. The full Council met four times during FY 2021, in October of 2020, and in January, May, and July of 2021.

We utilize other interagency policy and planning structures to set the strategic direction for the Council and interagency activities. Through our quarterly Council Policy Group (CPG) meetings, USICH provides a forum for senior staff from member agencies to coordinate policies and programs, collect data, develop

special initiatives, and prepare recommendations for consideration by Council members and for Council meeting discussions. This group was temporarily discontinued at the direction of USICH's previous leadership. However, following the installment of USICH's current Interim Executive Director, the group was re-established and met twice during FY 2021, in May and June of 2021.

## Driving Interagency Action

To drive day-to-day progress, we also convene a variety of on-going and ad hoc interagency working groups comprised of high-level agency staff from key partners across our 19-member agencies. As noted above, many of these working groups were on hold for much of FY 2021 due to limited staff capacity and a transition in leadership. FY 2021 working groups included:

- **Solving Veteran Homelessness as One:** We design and prioritize actions to accelerate progress on ending Veteran homelessness, including developing a set of strategies and measures to operationalize the HUD/VA Joint Statement on Ending Veteran Homelessness.
  - **Subgroup on the Joint HUD/VA Statement on Veteran Homelessness:** We led a time-limited working group to develop a set of strategies, milestones, and measures that HUD, VA, and USICH will take to achieve the objectives outlined in the joint HUD/VA statement on ending Veteran homelessness that was issued in April 2021.
  - **HUD-VASH Task Force:** We led a time-limited Task Force to examine HUD-VASH utilization and interview PHAs (Public Housing Authorities) and VAMCs (VA medical centers) to identify barriers to utilization and potential solutions.
- **Interagency Working Group on Ending Chronic and Individual Adult Homelessness:** We determine actions that will support communities as they work toward ending chronic homelessness among people with disabilities, as well as individual adults that do not meet the definition of chronic.
- **Interagency Working Group on Ending Family Homelessness:** We determine priority action areas to support communities as they work toward ending family homelessness, with an emphasis on strategies to strengthen federal and local partnerships across systems and sectors, connections to permanent housing, and ways to tailor housing and services supports based on unique family needs.
- **Interagency Working Group on Ending Youth Homelessness:** We determine priority action areas to support communities as they work toward ending youth homelessness, including building evidence for effective crisis response and housing strategies for youth, among other issues.
- **Interagency Working Group on Preventing Homelessness Among Transitioning Service Members:** We work with our federal partners to ensure that Service members do not separate from the military into homelessness. USICH submitted a report to Congress on work to strengthen these efforts in March 2018 and we continue to partner with VA, Department of Defense, and the Department of Labor to implement the recommendations. Note: This group is led by VA, but USICH participates as a working group member.
- **Interagency Working Group on Employment and Homelessness:** This working group is focused on reviewing the set of federal programs that can serve jobseekers who are at risk of, are experiencing, or have recently exited homelessness. The working group also seeks to identify ways

in which federal agencies can support communities to more closely integrate employment as part of efforts to prevent and end homelessness.

### **Building Common Regional Goals**

We work with Council agencies to strengthen Federal Regional Interagency Councils on Homelessness in all ten federal regions. We provide technical assistance to regional staff from multiple federal agencies, including HUD, HHS (Health & Human Services), VA, Education and DOL, to further develop their collaborative structures and unite behind common regional goals. Some activities in FY 2021 included:

- Distributing a quarterly update that highlights activities and action taken by Federal Regional Interagency Councils.
- Providing presentations, content development, key resources, and tools from USICH and other federal agencies to Federal Regional Interagency Council Agencies.
- Direct guidance and coaching with regional federal colleagues from 19 Council member agencies to identify regional challenges on opportunities to strengthen best practices.

### **Mobilizing Nationwide Actions in Support of a Shared Vision**

As the only agency in the federal government whose sole mission is focused on ending homelessness, our role includes building and sustaining a shared national vision, captured and communicated in the federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, of progress and success in driving federal-state-local partnerships and public and private sector collaboration and coordination. We also work to create a shared vocabulary and understanding of the data regarding homelessness and make sure that federal technical assistance to the field conveys both that shared understanding and the best practices for achieving our goals.

In October 2020, the previous administration released *Expanding the Toolbox: The Whole-of-Government Response to Homelessness* as the new strategic plan. *Expanding the Toolbox* envisioned an approach intended to “move beyond primarily providing subsidized housing assistance... [and to] optimize self-sufficiency in federal homeless assistance programs and reduce reliance on public assistance.”

The plan focused on eight broad solutions:

- The Importance and Power of The Dignity of Work,
- Mental Health and Trauma Informed Care Are Critical
- Affordable Construction Leads to Affordable Housing
- Prevention Will Save Money While Reducing Trauma
- The Need for Population Specific Programming
- Renewed Focus on Racial Disparities
- Promotion of Alternatives to Criminalizing People Experiencing Homelessness; and
- Importance of National Emergency Readiness

Following the transition of Administration in January 2021, USICH determined that *Expanding the Toolbox* does not align with the priorities of the Biden-Harris Administration, and does not support evidence-based practices, including Housing First. This means that USICH is currently operating without a federal strategic plan. As a result, we are working diligently with our federal partners to quickly develop the next iteration of the federal strategic plan, which will be informed by data and evidence, as well as extensive stakeholder

input.

**Developing the Next Federal Strategic Plan:** We kicked off the process of developing the next iteration of the federal strategic plan at our July 2021 Council meeting. Since then, we have conducted more than 70 listening sessions with stakeholders across the country, including people with lived experiences of homelessness. We also received more than 1,000 comments via our online input portal. Additionally, we worked with our member agencies to develop a proposed vision and outline for the plan and began projecting a percentage reduction target that would be measurable and achievable by the end of 2024.

**Encouraging Understanding and Action to Address Racial Inequities:** Racial inequities in experiences of homelessness are clear in the data, driven by a complex array of inequities within our systems and social dynamics—biases and prejudices, overt discrimination, systemic and institutional racism, and many other related and intersectional forces—that impact our responses to homelessness. To develop understanding, promote awareness, and encourage action, we:

- Provided the opportunity for new USICH staff to participate in two intensive trainings by the Racial Equity Institute and continued to convene an internal action team to determine and prioritize USICH’s efforts on these issues.
- Participated in and contributed to the National Working Group on Racial Equity in Homelessness and Housing.
- Elevated the importance of addressing racial disparities at meetings and speaking engagements across the country, including a plenary address at the [National Conference on Ending Homelessness](#), [National Coalition for Homeless Veterans Annual Conference](#), [U.S. Conference of Mayors Summer Meeting](#), and in all [listening sessions for the federal strategic plan](#).
- Responded to the Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the submission of a 200-day report and promising practices survey evaluating current opportunities and gaps internally and externally.
- Responded to the Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships through the development, submission, and publication of a [Tribal Consultation Action Plan](#).
- Gathered input from people with lived experiences of homelessness to inform the next federal strategic plan.

**Ensuring Consistent Federal Technical Assistance on Ending Homelessness:** Communities across the country receive technical assistance from different, and sometimes multiple, federal agencies and programs that guide their strategic planning and implementation of best practices. We work to ensure that that technical assistance is as streamlined and coordinated as possible so that all communities are receiving the same guidance. In FY 2021, we worked closely with HUD to develop and launch the *House America* initiative. We are currently working with HUD to plan weekly onboarding calls for new communities joining the initiative, weekly technical assistance calls, as well as monthly calls for elected officials on various topics. To complement these efforts, we published [10 Strategies to Reduce Homelessness With the American Rescue Plan](#), which is a part of a suite of resources that communities can access as they set local re-housing and housing development goals.

**Providing Technical Assistance to Inform Local Responses to COVID-19 and Homelessness:** In FY 2021,

we provided extensive technical assistance to communities as they continued to face operational impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. This included providing guidance on how to fund and operate COVID-specific non-congregate shelter, strategies to address encampments and unsheltered homelessness, and vaccinating people experiencing homelessness. Where needed, we facilitated connections between communities and federal partners like CDC (Centers for Disease Control) and FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), so that local stakeholders could have their questions and concerns addressed directly. For the duration of the pandemic, we have maintained a [COVID-19 landing page](#) as well as a [directory of homelessness-related events and webinars](#) that is updated on a weekly basis and includes events related to COVID-19. In August of 2021, we released a [Guide to American Rescue Plan Funding That Impacts People Experiencing Homelessness](#), a comprehensive directory of every resource in the American Rescue Plan that could be leveraged in efforts to end homelessness.

## **Building a National Partnership at Every Level of Government and Across the Private Sector**

USICH drives national, regional, state, and local collective action through outcome-oriented partnerships with a wide variety of leaders and decisionmakers:

**State Interagency Councils on Homelessness:** We have 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 2021, we focused on sharing information related to CARES Act and American Rescue Plan resources and strategies to leverage these resources effectively.

We also continued to work closely with the state of California as they transition from the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council to the California Interagency Council on Homelessness and worked local leaders in Illinois, providing guidance on the structuring of Interagency Councils. At the end of FY 2021, an Executive Order was signed to establish the Illinois Interagency Task Force on Homelessness and a new position of State Homelessness Chief. We worked with states to provide guidance, coaching, resources, and peer to peer connections on strengthening State ICHs.

**Governors, Mayors, and other Elected Officials:** Political leadership at the state and local level is critical to advancing progress. Our 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 the governors' offices in California and Hawaii, and the mayors' offices in Sacramento, Long Beach, San Diego, Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Houston, Mesa, Tucson, Kansas City, Boise, Honolulu, and Anchorage, among many others. As part of *House America*, USICH coordinated with an additional 25 local elected officials from city, county, state, and Tribal Nations leadership.

We also worked with associations that support the efforts of a broad array of elected officials, such as the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. For example, we presented on affordable housing and homelessness at the U.S. Conference of Mayors Annual Meeting.

In FY 2021, we also continued to facilitate monthly conference calls with 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. Calls focused on topics such as: COVID-specific non-congregate shelter, leveraging CARES Act and American Rescue Plan Act resources, and responding to encampments and

unsheltered homelessness.

**National Non-Profit Organizations and Associations:** Through our outreach to national stakeholders, we partner with national organizations that drive and influence public agendas on homelessness, housing, and related issues, such as the National Alliance to End Homelessness, National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, National Healthcare for the Homeless Council, National Racial Equity Working Group, and National Low Income Housing Coalition, and many others. We hosted a national stakeholder meeting in FY 2021, which allowed major national non-profit and faith-based organizations to provide input on federal programs and policy development and to identify opportunities for collaboration on important strategic objectives.

**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. We work 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 we have consulted to help inform the next iteration of the federal strategic plan. Additionally, we engage several faith-based groups via our National Stakeholders Group, including Catholic Charities and Salvation Army. plan.

We also routinely meet with the philanthropic and business communities directly. For example, we have met with staff from the Raikes Foundation, the Campion Foundation, and United Way.

**Community Leaders:** We provide a range of targeted community engagement and technical assistance to community leaders, including overall guidance on coordinating federal funding, covid 19 safety protocols including non-congregate shelter, implementing coordinated entry, Housing First, rapid re-housing, and other best practices for ending homelessness. In FY 2021, we provided strategic guidance to stakeholders in all 50 states. We also maintained our focus on several communities facing significant challenges, including communities in California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington. While the COVID-19 pandemic restricted our ability to travel, we maintained regular communication through virtual channels, holding hundreds of meetings with state and local leaders.

## **Providing Tools and Resources for Success**

Through a communications strategy that includes electronic emails and newsletters, speaking engagements, website publications, conference presentations, social media, and media engagement, we disseminate best practices to a wide array of stakeholders across the country.

- Our communication strategy this year focused on increasing awareness and understanding of strategies to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, providing guidance to help communities navigate the array of funding made available by the CARES Act and American Rescue Plan Act, and beginning to generate stakeholder engagement in the next federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness. We published more than 70 tools, articles, and guidance documents in FY 2021.
- We educate national audiences on new tools and resources through semi-monthly newsletters distributed to an audience of more than 45,000 subscribers. The growing impact of our communications is demonstrated by 14% growth in newsletter subscribers, 9% growth in followers on Facebook, and 5% growth in followers on Twitter in FY 2021.

- We deliver keynote addresses and serve on expert panels at national conferences focused on homelessness, housing, and related issues, highlighting best practices in preventing and ending homelessness across the country and supporting peer learning among regions, states, and local jurisdictions. For example, we delivered keynote addresses at the National Alliance to End Homelessness' National Conference on Ending Homelessness, the U.S. Conference of Mayors Annual Meeting, and the annual conference of the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY (National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth)), among others.
- We hosted or co-hosted webinars on: How to Help Stimulus Checks Reach People Experiencing Homelessness and Re-Housing Individuals Experiencing Homelessness From COVID-Specific Non-Congregate Shelter. We also began working with the Department of Education and the Department of the Treasury to plan for a webinar on connecting K-12 students and their families to Emergency Rental Assistance. This webinar was delivered at the beginning of FY 2022.
- We developed and disseminated, among other materials, a "[Guide to American Rescue Plan Funding That Impacts People Experiencing Homelessness](#)," a comprehensive directory of every resource in the American Rescue Plan Act that could be leveraged in state and local efforts to end homelessness; "10 Strategies to Reduce Homelessness with the American Rescue Plan," and "The Delta Variant: 5 Ways Communities Can Help Protect People Experiencing Homelessness."
- We helped frame and clarify homelessness issues in national and local media, appearing on the radio and in print and web publications. For example, our Executive Director submitted comments to NPR and Los Angeles Times and participated in a national media call about *House America*.
- We help educate emerging leaders on issues related to homelessness. For example, we spoke about best practices for addressing homelessness to students at the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School's Public Policy Institute and conducted a continuing education session on the role of law enforcement in addressing homelessness at the Georgia Association of Police Chiefs Summer Conference. We also speak to K-12, undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral students on issues related to ending homelessness.

## **Management Assurances**

Per Circular A-123, USICH management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls and financial management systems that meet the objectives of the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA). With respect to any and all internal and external reviews of the agency, to the best of our knowledge and belief, USICH provides reasonable assurance on the effectiveness of internal controls over operations, management systems, and financial reporting and that its internal controls over the effectiveness and efficiency of operations were in compliance with applicable laws and regulations as of September, 30, 2021, and no material weaknesses were identified in the design or operations of internal controls.

USICH relies on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the General Services Administration (GSA), both shared services providers, for accounting, payroll and financial services, systems and reporting requirements. USICH has no in-house financial systems. USICH, however, considers the USDA's financial system, Pegasys, as well as any other financial systems used by USDA and GSA to support USICH financial operations, to be reliable and effective. USICH reviewed each entity's Statement on Standards for

Attestation Engagements (SSAE) No. 18 audit report, to assist in assessing internal controls over USICH financial reporting. After a review of FY 2021 results, in which both USDA and GSA received favorable opinions on their SSAE No. 18 audits, USICH discovered no significant issues or deviations in its financial reporting during FY 2021, and therefore believes its internal controls over financial reporting are sufficiently strong.

## **Performance Goals and Accomplishments**

As mentioned above, USICH is currently operating without a federal strategic plan. It is also important to note that much of our work in FY 2021 involved supporting communities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and thus was not population-specific.

Nevertheless, we remain committed to ending homelessness for all Americans, including specific subpopulations including Veterans, individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and all other individuals, families with children, and unaccompanied youth. Accomplishing these goals requires leadership at all levels of government and strong partnerships with businesses, researchers, philanthropy, and non-profits. It also demands a commitment to reassessment and the ability to alter course based on changing conditions and lessons learned.

### **Ending Homelessness among Veterans**

Between 2010 and 2020, Veteran homelessness was reduced by 50%, including a 50% drop in unsheltered homelessness among Veterans. Between 2019 and 2020, the number of Veterans experiencing homelessness increased by less than one percent (167 more people). The increase was entirely among Veterans staying in unsheltered places (859 more Veterans), which was offset by a 3% decrease in the number of sheltered Veterans (692 fewer Veterans). At the same time, we confirmed one new community as having achieved the goal of effectively ending Veteran homelessness, as defined by the [criteria and benchmarks](#) we released in FY 2015 and revised in FY 2019, bringing the total to 82 communities and 3 states.

Through USICH's efforts, federal agencies have engaged in unprecedented coordination and shared responsibility, using data-driven decision-making to drive the deployment of resources through the HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, and Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program, which enable communities to provide a range of housing and services interventions.

### **Driving Progress Across Federal Agencies**

USICH and Council agencies are continuing to drive progress through the Solving Veterans Homelessness as One (SVHO) interagency decision-making body, made up of USICH, HUD, and VA officials. SVHO plans and executes strategic actions through goal setting, policy gap identification, communication, and action. Senior leaders at USICH also serve as ex officio members of the VA Secretary's Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans and inform the group on progress and the work ahead for interagency strategies to end Veteran homelessness.

During FY 2021, we focused on:

- **Helping Communities Achieve the Goal of Ending Veteran Homelessness.** We continued the review process for communities seeking federal confirmation of their achievement of the goal of ending Veteran homelessness, although we observed a steep decline in the number of submissions during the COVID-19 pandemic. In FY 2021, one new community was confirmed, bringing the total to 82 communities and 3 states. We also continued to provide guidance and coaching to communities working towards the goal, including Oakland and St. Clair Counties in Michigan, the Central Minnesota Continuum of Care, the Indiana Balance of State Continuum of Care, Fremont, CO, Fargo, ND and the Quad Cities region in Iowa and Illinois, Muskogee, OK, Dallas, TX, Riverside County, CA, Gainesville, FL, and the states of Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Kansas and Wyoming among many other communities.
- **Operationalizing the Joint Statement on Ending Veteran Homelessness.** In April 2021, the Secretaries of HUD and VA issued a joint statement affirming their commitment to accelerate progress on ending Veteran homelessness and charging their staff with developing a set of strategies to achieve the shared priorities outlined in the statement. To meet this task, we convened a sub-working group consisting of partners from HUD, VA, and USICH, and developed a set of strategies, measures, and milestones that were presented to the Secretaries and ultimately to the USICH Council. We also worked with HUD and VA to develop a public-facing fact sheet, which was ultimately published on November 12, 2021. We will use the joint strategies as the basis for our work going forward and will ask our member agencies to commit to specific actions that will support implementation.

### Driving Progress in Communities

Our entire team—and particularly our 5-member National Initiative Team and Executive Director—works directly with elected officials, stakeholders, and community decision-makers to advance progress in communities across America.

- We [testified](#) before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity in a virtual hearing entitled [Veteran Homelessness in the Wake of COVID-19](#).
- We participated in the VA's Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans meetings and presented to the Committee on topics such as USICH priorities related to homelessness among Veterans, and our process for developing the next federal strategic plan, among other topics.
- We helped several communities with their efforts to end Veteran homelessness, including Oakland and St. Clair Counties in Michigan, the Central Minnesota Continuum of Care, the Indiana Balance of State Continuum of Care, Fremont, CO, and the Quad Cities region in Iowa and Illinois, Muskogee, OK, Dallas, TX, and Riverside County, CA, among many other communities.
- We provided technical assistance and training on topics related to ending Veteran homelessness at National League of Cities events. For example, we presented on *Home, Together* and on the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness at the National League of Cities Annual Conference. We also presented on *Home, Together* and federal actions to more closely integrate employment with efforts to prevent and end homelessness as part of the National League of Cities' Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness Forum.
- We provided [remarks](#) at the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans annual conference.

- We facilitated and presented at a Quarterly TA (Technical Assistance) coordination meeting federal and national partners, including an update on the federal strategic plan, *House America*, and the status of communities seeking federal confirmation that they have achieved the goal of effectively ending Veteran homelessness.
- We facilitated a presentation and discussion on SSVF Shallow Subsidies and related funding to an audience of SSVF and CoC (Continuum of Care) providers in the state of California.
- We led a time-limited working group to develop a set of strategies, milestones, and measures that HUD, VA, and USICH will take to achieve the objectives outlined in the joint HUD/VA statement on ending Veteran homelessness that was issued in April 2021.
- We led a time-limited Task Force to examine HUD-VASH utilization and interview PHAs and VAMCs to identify barriers to utilization and potential solutions.

### **Tools and Resources to Strengthen Practices**

We disseminated a diverse array of relevant resources via our website and newsletter, including:

- [HUD Expands Tribal HUD-VASH Program](#)
- [VA Partners With Uber and Lyft to Offer Rides to Veterans Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [VA Awards \\$418M in SSVF Grants](#)
- [Labor Department Awards \\$52M to Help Veterans Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [VA to Award \\$116.4M in GPD Grants](#)
- [Secretaries of HUD, VA Issue Joint Statement on Ending Veteran Homelessness](#)
- [USICH Testifies Before Congress: “It Is Possible to End Veteran Homelessness”](#)

### **Ending Chronic Homelessness Among People with Disabilities and All Other Individuals**

Between 2010 and 2020, chronic homelessness increased by 4%, including a 17% increase in unsheltered chronic homelessness. For the fourth consecutive year, the number of individuals with chronic patterns of homelessness increased – by 15% - between 2019 and 2020. While increases were reported among both sheltered and unsheltered populations, the sizable increase in the number of unsheltered people with chronic patterns of homelessness (21%) was the key driver.

This four-year trend of increases in chronic homelessness means we must redouble our efforts to bring to scale what works to end the recurring or long-term homelessness of people with disabilities: supportive housing implemented through Housing First approaches. By prioritizing people experiencing chronic homelessness for existing supportive housing, creating opportunities to bring new units online, and by pairing housing with health and behavioral health services of individuals’ choice, communities must make many more units available for people experiencing chronic homelessness with the highest needs.

### **Driving Progress Across Federal Agencies**

During FY 2021, we focused on:

- **Responding to Unsheltered Homelessness, Particularly in West Coast Communities.** Individuals experiencing chronic homelessness comprise a significant share of the overall unsheltered population, and unsheltered chronic homelessness is on the rise. During FY 2021, we continued to support efforts to address unsheltered homelessness and encampments, particularly in West Coast communities. We continued to convene a monthly West Coast Cities peer-to-peer call to allow for exchange of information and best practices. We provided direct coaching and technical assistance to dozens of communities to help them address unsheltered homeless and encampments during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also worked with HUD and FEMA to develop a [document and webinar](#) on re-housing people out of COVID-specific non-congregate shelter.
- **Strengthening Collaborations Between Health and Housing Partners.** During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have continued to collaborate closely with CDC, HHS, HRSA, HUD, NHCHC (National Health Care for the Homeless Council), NAEH (National Alliance to End Homelessness) and other homelessness and healthcare partners, including weighing in on CDC guidance and inviting representatives of these agencies to speak on webinars and peer-peer calls. As a result, we have seen unprecedented collaboration between health and housing partners in many communities, particularly as it relates to partnerships with public health. We also continued to serve on the Advisory Committee for the Health and Housing Institute, a technical assistance initiative led by the National Academy for State Health Policy which aims to help states align their health and housing systems to better meet the need of vulnerable populations, including people experiencing homelessness.

### Driving Progress in Communities

Our entire team—and particularly our 5-member National Initiative Team and Executive Director—works directly with elected officials, stakeholders, and community decision makers to advance progress in communities across America.

- We provided technical assistance to communities across the country on covid 19 safety protocols for the most vulnerable, topics like Housing First, the prioritization of people experiencing chronic homelessness in permanent supportive housing, outreach and engagement, working with the criminal justice system, and systems change. As well as promoting the Criteria and Benchmark for Achieving the Goal of Ending Chronic Homelessness and reviewing progress in several communities.
- We convened peer-to-peer calls to facilitate information exchange between cities on topics such as encampment mitigation and resolution.
- We provided coaching and support to numerous communities, including many cities in California, as they considered opportunities to use Project Homekey funds to create new Permanent Supportive Housing and other housing opportunities for people experiencing chronic homelessness.

### Tools and Resources to Strengthen Practices

We developed and disseminated a diverse array of resources to communicate federal guidance and to strengthen states' and communities' activities and support the implementation of best practices.

- [More Than Half of Recent Economic Impact Payments Go to Harder-to-Reach People](#)

- [Webinar Series on Pairing HUD and HHS Resources to Address Homelessness](#)
- [Remarks by USICH Interim Executive Director at the National Alliance to End Homelessness 2021 Virtual Conference](#)
- [HHS Expands COVID Testing and Mitigation for Homeless Shelters and Encampments](#)
- [HUD Reaffirms Commitment to Equal Access to Housing, Shelters, and Other Services Regardless of Gender Identity](#)

## Ending Homelessness among Families with Children

Between 2010 and 2020, homelessness among people in families with children was reduced by 29%, including a 67% drop in unsheltered homelessness, as documented within communities' annual point-in-time counts. That progress has been driven by the vision of a comprehensive community response to family homelessness described within our [criteria and benchmarks for ending family homelessness](#), published in FY 2017, which are helping government, non-profits, and other partners increase their focus on evidence-based solutions and using their time and resources as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The number of people in families experiencing homelessness was reduced by just 0.1% (or 95 people in families) between 2019 and 2020. Of concern, the number of unsheltered people in families with children increased between 2019 and 2020 for the first time since these data were collected (by 1,888 people). To maintain our national progress on family homelessness, it will be essential to continue our focus on cross-system collaboration to identify and engage families as early as possible, and to expand the stock of affordable and available housing options for families.

## Driving Progress Across Federal Agencies

During FY 2021, we focused on:

- **Connecting Families to COVID-specific resources, including Emergency Rental Assistance, Economic Impact Payments, and the Advance Child Tax Credit.** Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have partnered closely with the Department of the Treasury and Internal Revenue Service to disseminate information about Economic Impact Payments, the Advance Child Tax Credit, and Emergency Rental Assistance. In June of 2021, we partnered with IRS (INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE) to deliver a webinar to the field on helping people experiencing homelessness claim their Economic Impact Payments. More than 2,000 people registered for the webinar and received the subsequent recording and materials. We developed and published Economic Impact Payment FAQs (frequently asked questions) and disseminated information about EIPs (Economic Impact Payments), the Advance Child Tax Credit, and Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance. We also began planning for a webinar with the Departments of Education and the Treasury to connect K-12 students and families to Emergency Rental Assistance. That webinar was delivered at the beginning of FY 2022.
- **Coordination with Domestic Violence Services.** In FY 2021, we continued to partner with the federally funded Domestic Violence and Housing Technical Assistance Consortium. We also worked to better understand the VAWA (Violence Against Women Reauthorization) emergency transfer process, including barriers to accessing an emergency transfer, and reforms that might be

needed to the emergency transfer and voucher implementation processes to better serve survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. This work will be summarized in a report to Congress that will be submitted in FY 2022.

### **Driving Progress in Communities**

Our entire team—and particularly our five-member National Initiative Team and Executive Director—works directly with elected officials, stakeholders, and community decision makers to advance progress in communities across America.

- We provided intensive, ongoing technical assistance to, and facilitated peer-to-peer discussions with, communities working to achieve both the family and youth criteria and benchmarks for ending homelessness, including outreach to Day One Fund communities.
- We provided coaching and guidance to communities on the Criteria and Benchmarks for Achieving the Goal of Ending Family Homelessness and strategies to strengthen partnerships in Atlanta, Milwaukee, Los Angeles, Fort Worth, Rockford, Des Moines, and many other communities.

### **Tools and Resources to Strengthen Practices**

We developed and disseminated a diverse array of resources to communicate federal guidance and to strengthen states' and communities' efforts and support the implementation of best practices.

- [Resources for National Domestic Violence Awareness Month](#)
- [June 10 Webinar: How to Help People Experiencing Homelessness Get Economic Impact Payments](#)
- [Webinar: How to Help Stimulus Checks Reach People Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [Tool to Help Families Experiencing Homelessness Claim Child Tax Credits](#)
- [HUD Webinar: The Advance Child Tax Credit: What Families Need to Know When Making Money Plans](#)
- [Economic Impact Payments: Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Biden-Harris Administration Takes Action to Prevent Evictions](#)
- [USICH Chair Issues Statement on Eviction Moratorium](#)
- Treasury Has a Reminder for State and Local Governments: Eliminate Undue ERA (EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE) Documentation
- [Treasury Issues 7 New Policies \(and a Warning\) to Expedite Emergency Rental Assistance](#)

### **Ending Homelessness for Unaccompanied Youth**

Local point-in-time counts estimate that there were 34,210 unaccompanied youth under the age of 25 experiencing homelessness on any given night in 2020. Another 7,335 youth were experiencing homelessness as parents, with at least one child under the age of 18.

Data from the Department of Education and Voices of Youth Count also show that there is still much work to be done to reduce and end youth homelessness in America. According to ED's [Federal Data Summary School Years 2016-17 to 2018-19: Education for Homeless Children and Youth](#), released in April 2021, public schools reported that 1,387,573 enrolled students were identified as experiencing

homelessness at some point during the 2018-2019 school year. While this reflects an 8% reduction (or 120,692 students) from the previous school year, it also represents an overall increase of 2% (or 29,496 students) since SY 2016-17.

Efforts to improve our data on the scale and scope of youth homelessness are helping us to better understand the full range of solutions, collaborations, and investments needed to achieve and sustain an end to homelessness, by any federal definition, for all youth. Through strong collaboration at the national and local level among the public, private, non-profit, and philanthropic sectors, momentum is growing.

### **Driving Progress Across Federal Agencies**

In FY 2021, we focused on:

- **Supporting and Learning from Communities.** Throughout FY 2021, member agencies provided support to the implementation of the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) and 100-Day Challenges across the country. We provided technical assistance to existing YHDP grantees, while also supporting review of grant applications for the third round of YHDP funding. We also supported the 100-day challenge launches, mid-point reviews, and sustainability reviews, learning from communities that have engaged youth with lived experience and offering feedback.

### **Driving Progress in Communities**

Our entire team—and particularly our five-member National Initiative Team and Executive Director—works directly with elected officials, stakeholders, and community decision makers to advance progress in communities across America.

- We provided intensive, ongoing technical assistance to, and facilitated peer-to-peer discussions with, the communities working to achieve both the family and youth criteria and benchmarks for ending homelessness.
- We provided guidance and recommendations to communities participating in the current cohort of 100-day challenge communities.
- We provided support to communities participating in the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) and served as application reviewers.
- We supported HUD's Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Initiative in all 10 federal regions.
- We presented on the role of education in developing a community response to ending youth homelessness and federal priorities and best practices pertaining to homeless children and youth at the annual NAEHCY Conference.
- We conducted a federal strategic plan listening session with youth with lived experiences of homelessness.

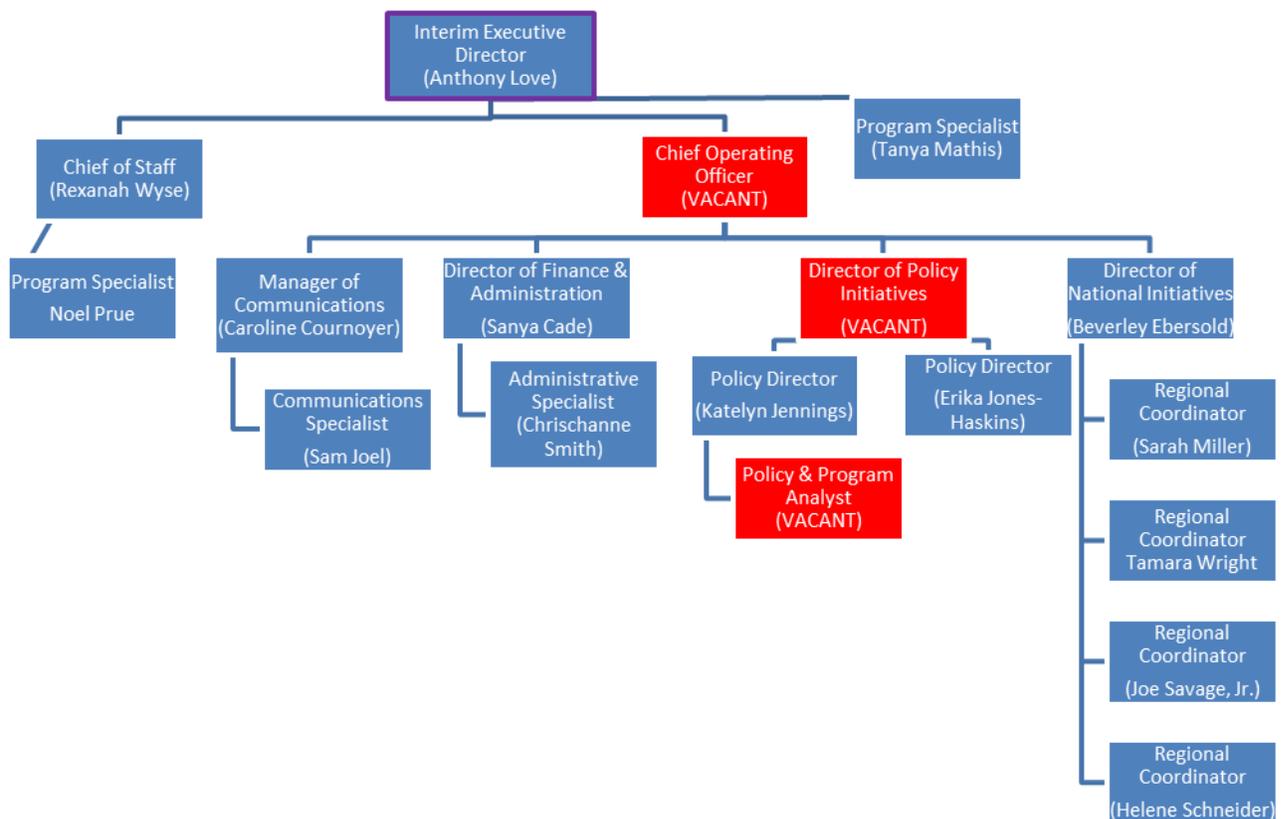
### **Tools and Resources to Strengthen Practices**

We developed and disseminated a diverse array of resources to communicate federal guidance and to strengthen states' and communities' activities and support the implementation of best practices.

- [A New Resource for Making the Most of Pandemic Relief for Foster Youth](#)
- [A New Funding Opportunity to Help Communities Prevent and End Youth Homelessness](#)
- [Education Department Distributes Remainder of ARP-HCY Funds to All 50 States](#)
- [HUD Reaffirms Commitment to Equal Access to Housing, Shelters, and Other Services Regardless of Gender Identity](#)

## Agency Operations

The success of our efforts to prevent and end homelessness in this country is heavily dependent on USICH’s ability to attract, support, and continuously develop highly skilled staff. USICH employee performance is tied directly to the success of the agency's mission, strategies, objectives, and overall performance. The agency's organizational structure, which follows, supports USICH’s success in achieving its mission, goals, and objectives.



## Financial Statements, Auditor’s Reports, and Other Requirements

To keep operational costs at a minimum and focus the bulk of the agency's budgetary resources directly towards accomplishing the agency’s mission, USICH outsources support for several mission support components to other government entities via shared services agreements—the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the General Services Administration (GSA). These support areas include human capital, finance, payroll, legal counsel, and EEO processing, to name a few.

USICH maintains control of the work and approval/authorization processes, and both USDA and GSA execute transactions and perform other operations support work as directed by USICH. USICH also outsources website and network support to private entities. These and other mission support areas fall under the Agency's Director of Finance and Administration's direct responsibility.

USICH utilizes USDA's accounting system to track and report on its finances. No instances of improper payments occurred during FY 2021 or previous years.

As a Federal agency, USICH prepares annual financial statements in conformity with U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and undertakes an independent annual audit to ensure reliability in assessing the Council's financial health and performance. Each year, USICH prepares the following financial statements:

- Balance Sheet
- Statement of Net Cost
- Statement of Changes in Net Position
- Statement of Budgetary Resources

These statements are accompanied by corresponding notes.

For FY 2021, USICH received an unmodified opinion, the highest audit opinion available. Further, independent, certified auditors found: USICH's financial statements as of and for the fiscal years ended September 30, 2019, and 2018, are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles; no material weaknesses in internal control over financial reporting based on the procedures performed; and, no reportable noncompliance for fiscal year 2021 with provisions of applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements that were tested.

USICH processes its payroll transactions through USDA's Pentaho accounting system, and other subsystems and GSA's PAR payroll accounting system. Both offices operate out of Kansas City, MO.

USICH's financial statements and notes are presented in the format required for the current year by OMB (Office of Management and Budget) guidance, such as Circular A-136, *Financial Reporting Requirements*, and other applicable guidance, and are audited via the *Generally Accepted Auditing Standards* issued by the AICPA (American Institute of Certified Public Accountant) and the standards of financial audits contained in the *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, and other applicable guidance.

### **Balance Sheet**

The balance sheet presents the total dollar amounts available for use by USICH (assets) against the amounts owed (liabilities) and amounts that comprise the difference (net position). Total assets for USICH are \$1,673,641. Of those total assets, \$1,672,937 are attributable to the Agency's Fund Balance with the Department of Treasury, \$704 are attributable to Accounts Receivable. Fund Balance with Treasury is funding available for specific fiscal years through the Department of Treasury accounts from which USICH is authorized to make expenditures and pay amounts due.

For depreciation purposes, a threshold of \$5,000 per item is used to determine capitalization. Capitalized property, plants, and equipment is recorded at original acquisition cost. Straight line depreciation and a useful life of five years are used in depreciation calculations. Acquisitions not meeting these criteria are

recorded as expenses.

Total liabilities equal \$366,299, including accounts payable, which consists of liabilities to other government agencies, commercial vendors, contractors, and disbursements in transit. At fiscal year-end, USICH accrues the amount of estimated unpaid expenses. Also, at fiscal year-end, USICH accrues payroll for services rendered by USICH employees and leave accrued, but not yet paid out. To the extent current and prior-year appropriations are not available to fund annual leave earned but not taken, funding is obtained from future appropriations.

### **Statement of Net Cost**

This statement presents the annual cost of operating USICH. The gross cost less any offsetting revenue is used to arrive at the net cost of operations. All USICH's costs incurred were directly related to the support and advancement of its mission and directives per the Administration and Congress. Net Cost of Operations for FY 2021 equals \$2,808,593.

### **Statement of Changes in Net Position**

The Statement of Changes in Net Position presents accounting items that caused the net position section of the balance sheet to change from the beginning to the end of the reporting period. USICH's net position for FY 2021 is \$1,307,342.

### **Statement of Budgetary Resources**

This statement provides information on how budgetary resources were made available to USICH and the status of those budgetary resources at year-end. USICH is funded through congressional appropriation totaling \$3,800,000 for operations attributable to FY 2021. Unobligated balances from prior fiscal years totaled \$547,745, giving USICH total budgetary resources of \$4,347,745. Net outlays for activity during FY 2021 totaled \$2,998,485 for all funds, including new obligations as well as upward adjustments of past obligations.

### **Limitations of the Financial Statements**

As required by OMB Circular A-136, *Financial Reporting Requirements*, USICH discloses the following limitations on USICH's FY 2021 financial statements, which are contained in this Report. The financial statements are prepared to report the financial position and results of operations of USICH, pursuant to the requirements of 31 U.S.C. § 3515 (b). The statements are prepared from the books and records of USICH in accordance with GAAP for federal entities and the formats prescribed by OMB.

These statements are in addition to the financial reports used to monitor and control budgetary resources, which are prepared from the same books and records. The statements should be read with the realization that they are for a component of the U.S. Government, a sovereign entity.

### **Fraud Reduction**

OMB Circular A-136 requires agencies to report on its fraud reduction efforts. USICH reports the following actions:

USICH has taken measures to reduce fraud opportunities and incidents. We have in place controls that keep the likelihood of these events to a minimum, including the following:

New employees are required to attend ethics training upon hire with HUD ethics attorneys.

The Handbook details certain actions that are taken seriously, including fraud, waste, and abuse, and associated actions that will be taken by management if these actions occur, including an Ethics/Code of Conduct Policy. Each employee is required to sign an acknowledgement of/and agreement to adhere to this and other applicable policies upon receipt and review of the Handbook.

A periodic review, update, and physical count of USICH inventory and property.

Management sets the ethical tone at the Council through its own actions and through its dialogue with Council staff.

USICH contracts with the General Services Administration to post and process all financial transactions, generation of vendor payments, generation of financial reports and financial statements, and processing of payroll and benefits payments and withholding for USICH employees. GSA employees review each transaction for accuracy, as well as validity.

### **Biennial Review of User Fees**

OMB Circular A-136 requires agencies to review, on a biennial basis, fees, rents, royalties, and other charges imposed by the agency for services and things of value. For FY 2021 USICH had no items applicable to this review requirement.