

United States Interagency Council on Homelessness Fiscal Year 2014 Congressional Budget Justification

“No one should experience homelessness—no one should be without a safe, stable place to call home.”



UNITED STATES INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS SUMMARY STATEMENT

	<u>Enacted/ Request</u>	<u>Carryover</u>	<u>Supplemental/ Rescission/Sequestration</u>	<u>Total Resources</u>	<u>Obligations</u>	<u>Outlays</u>
<u>2012 Enacted</u>	\$3,300,000	-0-	-0-	\$3,300,000	\$ 3,291,703	\$ 3,266,016
<u>2013 Enacted</u>	\$3,300,000		\$172,610 ¹	\$3,127,390		
<u>2014 Request</u>	\$3,595,000					

¹ FY 2013 Enacted reflects the effects of an across-the-board increase of .0612% to FY 2012 Appropriation, a 5% sequestration reduction of that amount (\$166 010), plus a required .2% rescission (\$6,600) of the FY 2012 Appropriation [\$166,610+\$6,600=\$172,610 total reduction].

USICH BUDGET PLAN COMPARISONS: FY 2012 – FY 2014

	FY 2012 Actuals (\$3.3 mil - Enacted)		FY 2013 Enacted		FY 2013 Request		FY 2014 Request	
OC	Category	Amounts (Actuals)	Category	Amounts (Planned)	Category	Amounts (Planned)	Category	Amounts (Planned)
11.0	Personnel	\$1,424,961	Personnel – 20.5 FTE	\$1,622,413	Personnel – 22 FTE	\$2,004,626	Personnel – 21.5 FTE	\$1,997,361
11.0	Within-Band Increases for Applicable Staff	\$0	Within-Band Increases for Applicable Staff	\$0	Within-Band Increases for Applicable Staff	\$0	Within-Band Increases for Applicable Staff	\$61,347
12.0	Civilian Personnel Benefits	\$427,623	Civilian Personnel Benefits	\$419,978	Civilian Personnel Benefits	\$475,657	Civilian Personnel Benefits	\$519,314
21.0	Travel and Transportation of Persons	\$114,824	Travel and Transportation of Persons	\$81,748	Travel and Transportation of Persons	\$219,000	Travel and Transportation of Persons	\$219,800
22.0	Transportation of Things	\$0	Transportation of Things	\$500	Transportation of Things	\$3,000	Transportation of Things	\$487
23.0	Communications, Utilities, and Miscellaneous Charges	\$522,011	Communications, Utilities, and Miscellaneous Charges	\$525,000	Communications, Utilities, and Miscellaneous Charges	\$500,000	Communications, Utilities, and Miscellaneous Charges	\$383,000
24.0	Printing and Reproduction	\$7,646	Printing and Reproduction	\$8,400	Printing and Reproduction	\$12,000	Printing and Reproduction	\$12,360
25.0	Services	\$745,813	Services	\$435,861	Services	\$345,717	Services	\$360,131
26.0	Supplies and Materials	\$48,825	Supplies and Materials	\$33,490	Supplies and Materials	\$40,000	Supplies and Materials	\$41,200
	Grand Total	\$3,291,703	Grand Total	\$3,127,390	Grand Total	\$3,600,000	Grand Total	\$3,595,000

I. Our Request - a Summary.

For FY 2014, USICH presents its Congressional Budget Justification request in the amount of **\$3,595,000** for planned FY 2014 activities and Agency operations. Please note this is the last budget year to make investments to support *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, as it was created as a five fiscal-year Plan beginning in FY 2010.

- To achieve the goal of ending and preventing Veteran homelessness and finishing to job of ending Chronic homelessness by 2015, USICH will need the modest appropriation requested to drive smart, sustainable solutions across the federal government and through to local communities. We believe as does Congress, that no Veteran who has served to protect our homes should be without a safe and stable home of their own.
- We believe, as did the previous Administration, that chronic homelessness is a solvable problem, and that in a country as great as ours, a problem that can be solved should be solved. The previous Administration put this country on a path to end chronic homelessness; we intend to finish the job and secure that legacy for this nation.

The appropriation requested will enable us to continue our work at the levels necessary to prevent and end homelessness among Veterans and chronic homelessness by 2015, work that has reduced Veteran homelessness by 18 percent over a two year span and has reduced chronic homelessness to numbers lower than they've been since HUD began requiring counts of this subpopulation.

Our FY 2014 Request includes a total of 21.5 FTE and necessary operations costs to support the effectiveness of these staff members. Our staffing structure has been restructured and revised from our FY 2013 Request. In that Request, USICH proposed adding FTE in the form of a half-time Analyst and 1 full-time Regional Coordinator. In this Request, and as a result of our recent staff restructure that better aligns our work with Plan goals and staff expertise, USICH is instead proposing to add 1 full-time Analyst only, resulting in an overall FTE decrease from our FY 2013 Request of 22 FTE, to our FY 2014 Request of 21.5 FTE.

Along with our staffing restructure, other significant changes in this Request include: 1) cost savings, see OC 23.0, by reducing our current office size; and, 2) implementation of a proposed compensation plan that brings USICH's pay structure in line with federal sector pay standards by allowing for merit-based Within-Band increases, see OC 11.0.

Lastly, USICH requests two legislative changes via this Budget Request: 1) a change in the Executive Director's compensation level to be on par with other federal executives who manage federal agencies with like staff size and budget levels as USICH, and 2) deletion of USICH's current sunset date in order for the work of preventing and ending homelessness to continue to be a priority in this country as well as to position the Agency with ability to hire experienced staff without administrative prohibitions caused by our sunset date which disallows benefits for new employees under certain conditions.

We believe your approval of this Request will provide sustained and significant return on investment and look forward to your support of our Request in order to make the kind of progress that is necessary to accomplish the work set before us.

II. Details About Our Budget Request.

Request per Budget Category

OC 11.0 Personnel - \$1,977,361

Despite neither implementing any programs nor having any regulatory enforcement powers, USICH is able to drive federal policy through this very modest number of high performing staff. USICH is successful because we have talented staff that have expertise and who work nimbly and efficiently across the federal government and in partnership with state and local governments as well as the nonprofit and private sectors.

We consistently leverage the work of our national private sector partners to bring collaboration and innovation to scale across the country. We also help our key federal partners at HHS, HUD, and VA leverage their technical assistance investments to be better aligned and more effective.

During FY 2013, USICH reorganized its staffing structure to better integrate field and policy work in order to further support Plan implementation by better aligning our policy work to ensure adequate translation of that work both to and from the field.

For FY 2014, USICH is proposing to add 1 full-time Analyst only, resulting in a request of 21.5 FTE. This decision reflects a value-based assessment of impact versus cost as this small addition will add significant capacity to our program and policy work as well as lift up our engagement in the field, driving collaborative efforts between Federal and local partners. The position would significantly support our Plan implementation momentum and enhance our ability to bring data-driven solutions based on promising and evidence-informed practices to the federal planning and policy work as well when working in local communities and states.

For this Request, USICH proposes the following 21.5 FTEs :

- 1 Executive Director
- 2 Deputy Director
- 3 Director of Finance and Administration
- 4 Director of Communications and External Affairs
- 5 Policy Director
- 6 Policy Director
- 7 Policy Director/Regional Coordinator
- 8 Special Assistant to Executive Director
- 9 Special Assistant to Deputy Director
- 10 Program Assistant
- 11 Management/Program Analyst
- 12 Management/Program Analyst

- 13 Management/Program Analyst
- 14 Management/Program Analyst
- 15 Staff Assistant
- 19 Regional Coordinators (4 - 1 Lead & 3 RCs)
- 21.5 Interns (5 part-time interns)

We remain committed to operating in the most efficient and lean manner to achieve maximum impact for this investment. We believe this modest additional investment in staffing will provide a significant return on investment as we support this work.

OC 11.0 Within-Band Increases for Applicable Staff - \$61,347

USICH became an independent agency in 2002, having previously been a part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Over the years since then, USICH has worked to establish itself in many areas as an individual, federal entity. During FY 2010-13, USICH has been working to comport with federal best practices for strategic human capital management in order to improve and build-out its human resources program. These efforts include the recent adoption of an OPM approved performance management system, as well as a review of position descriptions and organizational structure, resulting in a proposed policy to standardize compensation practices, including categorization of jobs and pay structures. Accordingly, during FY 2013, and pending final OPM approval, USICH has begun initial steps to implement a merit based compensation system to include the availability of Within-Band increases for applicable staff which will increase our ability to recruit and maintain a high functioning, high performing staff to expertly support the Agency’s mission and Plan by making our compensation system comparable to federal sector pay practices.

OC 12.0 Civilian Personnel Benefits - \$519,314

These costs reflect Agency provided and OPM approved benefits for all applicable employees.

OC 21.0 Travel and Transportation of Persons - \$219,800

The costs included in this category will support the ability of national and regional staff to engage directly with local and state stakeholders – providing support and guidance as well as developing cross sector partnerships. Travel costs are necessary to support work in our Priority Communities as well as key states that have the greatest capacity to move the needle on homelessness.

USICH has been heralded as a model for interagency collaboration and that success is predicated on the support we provide our Federal council members and our partners in the field. Our ability to inform Federal policy and implement those policies locally is influenced dramatically by our ability to engage with local stakeholders. While USICH continues to explore and exploit new technologies in order to preserve and maintain our local presence virtually, our most successful relationships are those we are able to advance face to face. Adequate resources for travel are absolutely necessary to drive the momentum we’ve gained from the success of *Opening Doors* deeper into the local systems that will determine much of our nation’s success in preventing and ending homelessness.

Homelessness cannot be solved nationally if it is not solved locally. Inadequate travel support would have a great effect on our ability to translate policy work from the field to the Federal government and vice versa. Additionally, as a matter of practice and prudence, USICH regularly combines several communities' work in each trip, as much as possible, which allows policy and regional staff to cover our most critical regional areas and stakeholders which helps to ensure we utilize travel funds in the most cost effective manner and with the most impact.

FY 2014 costs are projected to be consistent with FY 2013 request. However, FY 2013 actual costs will only be lower as a result of a travel freeze per sequestration and an Agency decision to balance the effects of this in terms of furlough days and Agency mission. For FY 2014, a travel freeze is not sustainable as it would not effectively deploy available regional staff nor make it possible for national staff to effectively interact local communities and states to sustain and further Plan implementation momentum – work which effectively drives overall Plan success as those communities agree with and work toward adopting the tenets, practices, and methods of the Plan.

OC 22.0 Transportation of Things - \$487

Estimated costs based on FY 2012 enacted. No increase.

OC 23.0 Communications, Utilities, and Miscellaneous - \$383,000

These costs cover Agency-leased office space as well as office phone, cellular phone, and internet costs. In FY 2013, USICH is planning to reduce its office space in order to help meet OMB's FY 2014 budget guidance, help cover costs of implementing the Agency's proposed, standardized compensation policy, and to keep the ability to work in local communities an Agency priority.

OC 24.0 Printing and Reproduction - \$12,360

Estimated costs are consistent with FY 2013 request and primarily represent production support for online documents not printing of materials as USICH doesn't offer any printed publications.

OC 25.0 Services - \$360,131

This category includes operations support with GSA for finance, payroll and HR processing support, auditors for ATDA compliance, IT support and other operational support items. This category is reduced from prior years as a result of being fully staffed in FY2014 which will result in a reduction in the use of consultants and IPA-contracted personnel.

OC 26.0 Supplies and Materials - \$41,200

This category covers all necessary supplies and materials to support the work of the Agency and is slightly increased over FY 2013 to account for the Agency being fully staffed in FY 2014.

Legislative Requests

Change in salary level for Executive Director from EX V to EX IV

The requested change will provide a comparable pay level for the Agency's Executive Director that is consistent with other independent federal agencies of like staff size and budget. OMB has consistently approved and proposed this change via the annual appropriations process in the past, and again in this fiscal year. This correction is required to sustain the quality of leadership necessary to ensure effective and accountable collaboration across federal agencies and with national, state, and local leaders. The Executive Director is a highly visible leader who must possess a range of skills, expertise and experience in order to successfully advance the complex change agenda that is required by *Opening Doors*.

Deletion of the Agency's sunset date

The Agency's termination clause has caused tremendous problems for USICH during past years. There is regulation that requires at least a one year appointment to be considered as a regular federal employee and receive health benefits. Consequently, if USICH is less than a year from its termination date and has a staff vacancy, a regular appointment that grants health benefits is unallowable (i.e. it would exceed the sunset date of the Agency, which, in these cases, was less than 1 year). The position would only be filled on a term basis *and* the new employees will be unable to receive benefits. This has caused the Agency issues in the past as highly qualified, potential job candidates declined positions based on our inability to grant them health benefits, in particular.

Currently USICH termination date is September 30, 2015. Thus the problems described above will begin impacting USICH's effectiveness at the end of FY 2014.

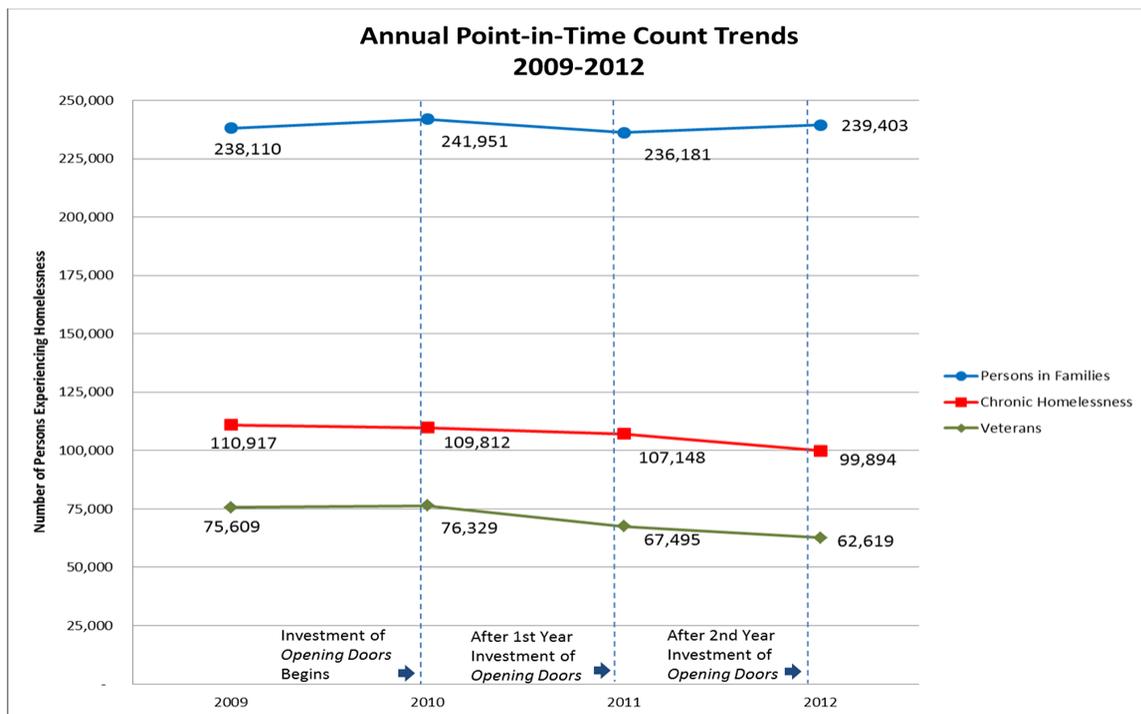
Additionally, *Opening Doors*, calls for Council action beyond the current sunset date, at least through 2020 (end family, youth, and child homelessness), and then beyond to focus efforts on ending homelessness for other than the current focused populations (chronic and Veterans homelessness).

III. Our Story. Preventing and Ending Homelessness.

USICH has been a model of success of interagency collaboration and local engagement, helping to steer \$3.5 billion in targeted homelessness funds (FY 2012 Enacted) into evidence-based solutions that are measurably reducing homelessness in America. This success is predicated on the support we provide our Federal council members and our partners in the field. Our ability to inform Federal policy and implement those policies locally has been and continues to be influenced dramatically by our ability to engage with local stakeholders. Without any programs or regulatory authority, our tools for good governing come in the form of our highly skilled, expert staff members who drive smart, efficient systems change among our partners and stakeholders through innovative collaboration and strategic engagement. Our success in diffusing proven, cost-effective innovations across the homelessness landscape is leading to real, sustainable solutions for ending homelessness in America.

Our modest budget and staff have accomplished a great deal, especially since 2009, and we have proven our value in the efforts to prevent and end homelessness in this country as outlined in the Request.

Since launching *Opening Doors* (the Plan), the Council has made progress toward preventing and ending homelessness despite the economic recession and subsequent recovery. Remarkably, during a time of extreme economic turmoil and instability—a leading cause of homelessness—this nation avoided an overall surge in homelessness due to nimble action of the Council and its Federal partners and Congress’ investment in the Recovery Act program through HUD – the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP).



HUD’s Point-In-Time (PIT) count provides a snapshot of the number of people experiencing homelessness on a given night in America and is the best data we have available for measuring trends and progress against the goals in *Opening Doors*.

The government’s, Congress’, and taxpayers’ return on investment is excellent given what we’ve been able to accomplish since the passage of the HEARTH Act in 2009 and the June 2010 launch of *Opening Doors*. Our aim is to continue our focus and hard work in fulfilling our mission and setting an example for results and effective collaboration for other agencies and organizations.

Even with the progress we’ve made, there is still much work to do. Preventing and ending homelessness is a lofty but achievable goal. It requires equally ambitious **collaboration, focus on data and performance measurement, emphasis on evidence-informed practice and policy, coordination among federal agencies, innovation, disciplined place-based work, and above all, an aggressive commitment to getting to the finish line.** Communities across the country are

providing examples of this commitment every day. USICH and our federal partners are weaving together resources and reforms to ease the journey. Together, we will continue to make the necessary strides toward our goal of preventing and ending homelessness in America.

Collaboration across the nation

“Homelessness cannot be solved by a single agency or organization, by a single level of government, or by a single sector. Everyone should be reminded of the intricacies of homelessness as a policy area, and remember that preventing and ending homelessness will take real coordination, collaboration, and a constant exchange of ideas.” – HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius

Homelessness is a complex problem with a variety of causes and manifestations. It requires comprehensive solutions that cut across systems and sectors; effective collaboration is essential to success. For this reason, collaboration is at the core of the work of USICH and its partners at all levels. Collaboration generates broad support for the strategies to prevent and end homelessness, which is evidenced by the involvement of business and civic leadership, local public officials, the faith-based community, and mainstream systems that provide housing, human services, and health care.

Our value added includes the ability to collaborate in all directions. For instance, our work with state and local governments and the private and nonprofit sectors help ensure that federal funds are used more wisely and in sustainable ways. Collaboration enables a feedback loop to the federal government on what’s working well and where there is opportunity to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Coordination among federal agencies

“This interagency partnership allows us to leverage our resources, programs, talent and experience to create viable solutions that will eliminate homelessness.”

– VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) was established in 1987 by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (later renamed the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act). USICH’s mission, per the HEARTH Act of 2009, is to:

Coordinate the Federal response to homelessness and to create a national partnership at every level of government and with the private sector to reduce and end homelessness in the nation while maximizing the effectiveness of the Federal Government in contributing to the end of homelessness.

USICH is currently comprised of the heads (or the designees) of 19 Federal departments and agencies. The current Chair is VA Secretary Shinseki and Vice Chair, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan.

Additionally, the White House Domestic Policy Council actively participates in Council activities. Special Assistant to the President for Mobility and Opportunity, Raquel Russell, is the primary liaison.

Coordination among federal agencies means avoiding duplicate efforts and smartly using all available federal resources to prevent and end homelessness. Just as no one sector can address homelessness by itself, neither can one federal agency. We must work together to address the multi-faceted issue of homelessness in order to make the most of the individual budget, programs, staff and experiences of each federal agency.

USICH continues to work strategically, coordinating the national effort to end homelessness through activities involving all levels of government, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector. In these efforts, because USICH does not have programmatic or regulatory duties, USICH is seen as an honest broker among federal agencies participating in the Council.

Focus on data and performance measurement

“We have learned that uniform outcome measurement for like-funded initiatives allows grantees, communities, and their funders to measure service interventions effectively and make necessary corrections that are required to target resources most appropriately.” – National Human Services Data Consortium

Progress on reducing homelessness requires that we use data to understand the needs and gaps of our federal, state, and local service systems. Obtaining accurate data on how individuals fare in programs is essential to see a clear picture of an individual’s journey through a system. USICH focuses on data and performance measurement because it allows us to monitor progress and identify which efforts contribute to reducing and ending homelessness.

Emphasis on evidence-informed practice and policy

“It seems that the work being done in Hollywood might be a living example of what USICH has been calling out as the key components of making progress on homelessness.”

– Barbara Poppe, USICH Executive Director

USICH operates from the perspective that the federal government can lead the way by making evidence-based best practices standard operating procedure. Our emphasis on evidence-informed practice and policy builds directly off our focus on data and performance measurement. We are able to promote practices and policies to prevent and end homelessness when we have the evidence to support the success of such practices and policies. We encourage local, state and federal investment in what we know solves homelessness and where success can be measured.

USICH has helped to steer \$3.5 billion in targeted homelessness funds (FY 2012 Enacted) into evidence-based solutions that are measurably reducing homelessness in America. In Los

Angeles, USICH and its Federal partners at VA, HUD, and HHS have been able to generate a culture of collaboration where just three years ago there was none. Now, work among local HUD offices, VA Medical Centers, local government entities, and private and not-for-profit enterprises are approaching the problem of homelessness in smart and sustainable ways. With our continued level of support, the work being done in Los Angeles, especially around solving Veterans homelessness, could be a model of success for the rest of the country. Ending Veteran homelessness in Los Angeles, which represents a large portion of homeless Veterans in the United States, would be an enormous victory for that community and for the nation. We are confident that with our continued engagement combined with increased federal, state, local and private investment, Los Angeles is within reach of the goal of ending Veteran homelessness by 2015.

Innovation

“By working together in new ways, we can—for the first time— set a path to end homelessness.”
– HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan

USICH focuses on innovation, which means we value the adoption of new practices, policies, and technology that more effectively advances our work to prevent and end homelessness. As we make progress toward achieving the goals of The Plan and identify new or evolving needs of the diverse homeless population in this country, it is imperative that our efforts stay nimble and at the forefront of what is necessary to prevent, reduce, and end homelessness. USICH uses its communication and convening tools to encourage and disseminate emerging practices.

Disciplined place-based work

“The federal government stands shoulder to shoulder with local communities—supporting their efforts, learning from their practices, and focusing on their success. We cannot solve the problem of homelessness nationally if we don't solve it locally.”
– Barbara Poppe, USICH Executive Director

One of the primary methods USICH illustrates its disciplined place-based work is direct engagement with states and communities throughout the country. USICH finds its partnerships and work with local communities to be essential, because it allows us to discover when and if federal practice and policies work on the ground. In addition, it allows effective work on the ground to inform federal practice and policy. Through direct interaction in local communities, we can better understand the opportunities that need to be supported and elevated. Strategic travel by our national and regional staff is critical to supporting these efforts. We are optimizing our use of virtual tools but nothing substitutes for the face-to-face engagement of community leaders to improve understanding and increase accountability for tackling the hard issues and complexities required to make progress.

Aggressive commitment to getting to the finish line, ending homelessness

"These are ambitious goals and we have real measures of progress. The results we've seen in the last year challenge us to build on these gains in an aggressive way...This is the right work to be doing. This entire Administration is behind this effort; this work is incredibly important. We've got to get this done." – Cecilia Munoz, Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council

In line with the *Opening Doors*, USICH's implementation work is structured around four goals:

- Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness by 2015
- Prevent and end homelessness among Veterans by 2015
- Prevent and end homelessness for families, youth, and children by 2020
- Set a path to ending all types of homelessness

Since the launch of *Opening Doors* in the summer of 2010, which covers a five fiscal-year implementation period, aggressive goals and implementation work have framed the Council's success. As a result, the Council has witnessed unprecedented collaboration at the federal level and across the nation. Council member agencies, in particular, have individually and collectively advanced the Plan through their mainstream and targeted programs.

Moving forward, the Council will use the following lessons learned thus far, to shape its strategic approaches and actions:

- Effective use of data drives results
- Mainstream systems engagement and integration with targeted homeless programs is critically important to overall success
- Targeting existing and new resources more effectively will lead to better outcomes
- Implementing evidence-informed practices requires the commitment of funders and providers
- New investments, when strategically deployed, lead to reductions in homelessness.

IV. Our Work: FY 2014 Plans and FY 2013 Activities.

Please understand that the planned FY 2014 activities described in this narrative do not, in any way, represent all of the collaborations, day-to-day activities and leg-work necessary to

complete the unprecedented fete we're doing: preventing and ending homelessness in the United States.

In line with the four population groups identified in *Opening Doors*:

FINISH THE JOB OF ENDING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS BY 2015

Work in FY 2013 and 2014 will focus on promoting strategies to provide access to the permanent supportive housing units needed to end chronic homelessness and strategies to achieve these targets. USICH is also developing content to encourage communities to improve targeting and alignment with healthcare and to supportive services. As homeless people with histories of incarceration coupled with substance abuse and/or mental illness are at risk of experiencing chronic homelessness, we will also explore to what extent strategies that encourage preventing people from becoming homeless as they exit institutions such as psychiatric hospitals and correctional facilities.

USICH will continue to work with HHS and in communities across the country to understand ways in which linking Medicaid-eligible services to permanent supportive housing is permissible, and how to take advantage of other new opportunities in the Affordable Care Act to deliver better care to disabled individuals with long histories of homelessness.

PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS BY 2015

USICH is creating new tools to help communities better implement VA and other federal resources to achieve the 2015 goal of ending Veteran homelessness. There will be continued focus on engaging other federal partners, beyond the VA, in providing assistance to our efforts to prevent and end homelessness among Veterans. USICH will also continue pushing out best practices and information to the field that will support action at the local level. Additionally, USICH will continue its work in encouraging federal partners, including VA and HUD, to align mainstream and targeted resources toward the goal ending Veteran homelessness

PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN BY 2020

During FY 2013 and 2014, USICH will support work by its partners to align both homelessness systems and mainstream systems toward preventing and ending Families and Children homeless as they:

- Continue to support communities and federal policy to make rapid re-housing a primary strategy for family homelessness;
- Promote conversion of transitional housing into rapid re-housing, transition-in-place models, and, where needed, permanent supportive housing;
- Improve coordination between schools, their homeless education liaisons, and HUD-funded Continuums of Care; and,

- Identify and promote effective collaborations that include mainstream systems and the child welfare system to reduce family homelessness.

PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS FOR YOUTH BY 2020

To get to a more confident and credible count of the number of homeless youth, USICH and its federal partners developed a pilot youth Point-in-Time (PIT) count in nine communities for the January 2013 count to learn the best strategies for counting unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness. Additionally, USICH is supporting the development of a national survey (dependent on future funding), facilitating negotiations on RHYMIS – HMIS integration, and helping disseminate the intervention model. We will continue to support interagency efforts to build knowledge of effective interventions, including support for the implementation of the any new demonstration projects coming out of HHS.

COMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT, AND RESEARCH

In FY 2013, USICH plans to release a Public Housing Agency Resource Center that highlights the different public housing agency initiatives across the federal government and national nonprofit sector that assist in ending homelessness. This virtual resource center is targeted towards public housing agencies and those who are involved with the program implementation of the specified federal initiatives (such as the HUD-VASH program).

During FY 2013 and 2014, USICH will continue to communicate strategic information to public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders through all of its existing online platforms. USICH looks to improve the usability and navigability of its website by improving the design of toolkits for the field and update all current fact sheets on the website on subpopulations experiencing homelessness. In FY 2013, USICH will launch a searchable Solutions Database through the USICH website. The Solutions Database will provide a simple way to access information about evidence-based practices and promising program models. This work also supports USICH's overall Research efforts and will be expandable and allow us to continue to add solutions in FY 2014.

In FY 2013, USICH will develop a dissemination strategy for the federal research agenda and work with its federal partners to support a national dialogue on research that is needed to advance *Opening Doors*. The implementation of the dissemination strategy and national dialogue will carry over to FY 2014. USICH will also continue to coordinate research efforts across Federal agencies to ensure we are leveraging available opportunities and learning from one another's efforts.

Through FY 2013 and 2014, USICH will continue supporting and encouraging opportunities to expand use of HMIS, a common vocabulary on housing status, and HUD's HMIS data standard across all federal targeted programs. This includes working with HUD and ACYF/HHS to develop key points of agreement regarding process, timeline, and staff responsibilities regarding the integration of RHYMIS with HMIS. USICH will continue upon these efforts in FY 2014.

REPORTS

Alternatives to Criminalization

Pursuant to a Congressional mandate in HEARTH and *Opening Doors*, USICH published *Searching Out Solutions: Constructive Alternatives to the Criminalization of Homelessness* during Fiscal Year 2012. The report was disseminated broadly and USICH hosted a joint webinar with the Department of Justice which provided details ways that communities can utilize Department of Justice resources and programs to help implement the strategies in the report. The webinar focused on effective law enforcement and justice systems strategies that benefit people experiencing homelessness and the community as a whole.

Addressing Rural and Indian Homelessness

USICH surveyed best practices in housing and homelessness in rural and Indian reservation communities. As a result of this research, USICH published a newsletter with information on the topic of rural homelessness. This information relayed the specific challenges faced by communities to implement *Opening Doors* strategies, but also shared successful program models from areas like rural Washington State that have been able to make significant progress in ending chronic homelessness with innovative uses of data management and systems alignment. USICH also led a SAMSHA expert panel on Rural and Frontier Homelessness in April 2012. In addition to the SAMHSA Expert Panel on rural and frontier homelessness, another panel is planned for the fall of 2012 on American Indian, Native Alaskan and Hawaiian Homelessness.

Addressing Homelessness Among Veterans

As requested by the Senate Committee on Appropriations, USICH prepared a report that provides an assessment of the progress of the Department of Housing and Urban Development –Department of Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program and of efforts to address homelessness experienced by Veterans in rural communities and on Native American reservations.

Youth Framework

The Council released its framework for addressing youth homelessness in February 2013. The framework calls on agencies and systems at all levels to work together to get to better youth outcomes in stable housing, permanent connections, education and employment, and well-being. To reach these outcomes, the framework has two prongs: 1)improving data quality and collection on youth experiencing homelessness which will provide a clearer understanding of the prevalence, characteristics, and needs of unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness; and2) building capacity for service delivery.

Using this framework as a guide, stakeholders at the federal, state, and local levels can begin to work collaboratively with agencies that serve youth experiencing homelessness to improve the data available on youth, including an estimate of the size of the problem, build our knowledge of

effective interventions, and target vulnerable subpopulations. Ultimately, ending youth homelessness requires a collaborative, systematic approach—federally and locally—that includes targeted homelessness assistance and mainstream systems. This framework is a positive step forward in our collaborative work to understand the scope and interventions necessary to end youth homelessness by 2020.