

Partnership Summit Top Ideas

On October 16, 2014, a national summit on integrating employment and housing strategies to prevent and end homelessness — Partnerships for Opening Doors — was convened by the [US Department of Labor \(DOL\)](#), the [US Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#), the [US Interagency Council on Homelessness \(USICH\)](#) and the [Butler Family Fund](#).

Focused on addressing the employment needs of adults in families and single adults, including individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, the Partnerships Summit builds upon employment and income related objectives detailed in [Opening Doors: the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#) and the President’s Job-Driven Training initiative that calls for better alignment across the Federal government to connect individuals to in-demand jobs. Labor Secretary Perez, who is also the current chair of USICH, is an active leader in this work. The passage and signing of the 2014 [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\)](#)¹ presents new opportunities to better meet the employment, training, and career needs of persons experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

More than 100 people participated in the Partnerships Summit, including teams from eleven (11) communities, Federal government agencies, and national organizations. The purpose was to identify key activities that DOL, HUD, USICH and other Federal agencies could undertake in the near term as well as the longer-term efforts that will sustain the partnership between homeless assistance and employment programs going forward to improve access to quality jobs, skills training, and supportive services in the context of employment, training, and career pathways for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

The highly interactive Summit engaged participants in discussions to generate a range of “ideas” across four (4) distinct categories (Busting Through Silos, Promising Practices, Engaging the Private Sector and Employers, and Harnessing Federal Resources) that could be considered for implementation by government at the local, state, and Federal level and in partnership with the private sector, philanthropy and nonprofit organizations. The table below captures the “ideas” prioritized by participants for consideration by Federal agencies.

¹ WIOA reauthorized WIA, the Workforce Investment Act

Busting Through Silos

Opportunity: In general, there are silos at every level - Federal, state, and local - that need to be broken down in order to address joblessness and homelessness.

Question: What is one (1) idea that could be implemented that would have the greatest impact on busting through silos at every level?

Title	Summary of Idea	Brief description of the problem and how the Idea solves the problem	What Federal agencies (if any) would need to be involved with this Idea in order for it to be successful?
National Demonstration on Navigators	Fund Navigators embedded in workforce systems to translate homeless and workforce systems.	Rapid Rehousing (RRH) clients need access to employment resources in order to increase income to support cost of housing once RRH program ends. RRH services are time-limited and figuring out workforce programs is difficult for RRH case managers and clients.	HUD, DOL
Blended Funding Project	Solicit projects that address homelessness and employment through a coordinated funding application with one combined set of outcomes and definitions.	Funding sources are too disparate and require different things. Incorporate feedback into funding processes.	HUD, DOL
More Flexible Performance Negotiation and Guidance on Doing So	Detailed DOL guidance on how the “degree of difficulty” of the population served can be incorporated during performance measure negotiation.	No one knows how to negotiate performance measures or “calculate” degree of difficulty as method to adjust expected outcomes for some populations. Detailed “How-To” info developed by DOL and shared with other Federal agencies to incorporate into their guidance for agencies is needed.	DOL, HUD, USICH, VA ² , HHS ³

² U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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Alignment of HUD and DOL Requirements for Eligibility and Performance Measures	DOL should be able to use presumptive eligibility requirements (i.e. if you are homeless by HUD standards then that is all that should be required by WIB 's ⁴ —no other documentation needed). Take away WIA ⁵ disincentives based on barriers (harder to employ individuals).	Performance measures reduce the desire of the workforce system to work with people who are experiencing homelessness. Many are excluded because of lack of documentation. If DOL measurements and eligibility matched HUD for homelessness, the workforce system would be more likely to serve this population.	HUD, DOL
Just Do It	Pilot and share best practices in aligning HMIS ⁶ and workforce system data to achieve better results in employment of people experiencing homeless. Use data to drive systems improvements and raise more money!	HMIS and workforce system data are not aligned. Different definitions, different outcomes, etc. This makes it very difficult to do cross-system planning between the workforce and homelessness assistance systems.	HUD, DOL

⁴ Workforce Investment Board

⁵ Workforce Investment Act

⁶ Homelessness Management Information System

Promising Practices

Opportunity: The most effective program practices to integrate employment and housing strategies to prevent and end homelessness aren't widely known.

Question: What is one (1) idea that could be implemented that would have the greatest impact on promoting the implementation of effective program practices?

Title	Summary of Idea	Brief description of the problem and how the Idea solves the problem	What Federal agencies (if any) would need to be involved with this Idea in order for it to be successful?
<p>Jobs First as Part of Career Pathways</p>	<p>Provide access to entry-level jobs so people experiencing homelessness can earn money and afford to pay for basic needs. Support to enter a career pathway with training that's available in evenings or alternate schedules would allow pursuit of better paying employment in long term while meeting immediate needs.</p>	<p>Many homeless/low income clients want jobs now and don't want to or can't spend nine plus months in training. Brain science has proven that people who are hungry and experiencing "scarcity" cannot function at their fullest potential. People who express desire for "jobs, not training" are expressing a desire to meet their basic needs now. They need to be allowed to do that and then participate in career pathways training to start on the path to a living wage job.</p>	<p>DOL, ED⁷</p>
<p>Fund the Case Management</p>	<p>DOL, HUD, HHS, etc. need to work together and figure out which programs can fund case management at low caseload ratios to truly support clients who are experiencing homelessness.</p>	<p>Many of the promising practices work best with small caseloads and require offering support to people in the workplace. Either each Federal agency needs to fund some case management or they need to align funding and offer one (1) "service" per agency. HUD: housing, DOL: employment/training, HHS: case management/cash and childcare, ED: education.</p>	<p>HUD, DOL, HHS, ED</p>

⁷ U.S. Department of Education

Title	Summary of Idea	Brief description of the problem and how the Idea solves the problem	What Federal agencies (if any) would need to be involved with this Idea in order for it to be successful?
<p>Awareness, Understanding, and Outplacement</p>	<p>Cross-train/shadowing for workforce staff to first understand environment and then establish off-site satellites in homeless organizations. More exposure with population to gain comfort and likewise assist people experiencing homelessness to better understand what it means to get into and stay in work world. Guidance on flexibility that exists to get the job done.</p>	<p>One Stops tend to “fit a person” to the form instead of viewing the person from where they are and what they need. As far as outplacement, many people experiencing homelessness will not seek help in places where they are not comfortable.</p>	<p>DOL, HUD</p>

Harnessing Federal Resources

Opportunity: WIA and CoC programs can provide critically needed funding as part of a community strategy to prevent and end homelessness. Other Federal resources can also be harnessed.

Question: What is one (1) idea that could be implemented that would have the greatest impact on harnessing Federal resources?

Title	Summary of Idea	Brief description of the problem and how the Idea solves the problem	What Federal agencies (if any) would need to be involved with this Idea in order for it to be successful?
<p>Governors Homeless Challenge Initiative</p>	<p>Issue national challenge (like Mayor’s challenge to end Veteran’s homelessness). Challenge governors to use portion of 15% set-aside to fund targeted services to homeless populations with barriers through a competitive process. DOL could strongly advise states to make this part of their allocation process—suggest best practices—issue a directive regarding what has been done successfully. Highlight ways to leverage additional funds—private sources.</p>	<p>Chronically homeless populations require more intensive services so additional funds are needed. Governors’ set-asides have often been used for administrative purposes—not serving homeless population. A portion of the set-aside could be available to serve the chronically homeless population.</p>	<p>DOL, USICH, HUD</p>
<p>Safety Net Cliff Demonstration</p>	<p>Give states funds and/or flexibility to be innovative with households who are reaching “cliff” (i.e. losing public benefits as income increases).</p>	<p>TANF caseloads have declined for cash assistance but these households are too often at risk of homelessness and not stable. Federal programs have varying ways to phase out benefits; therefore, there are disincentives to seek employment and increase earnings.</p>	<p>DOL, HUD, HHS</p>

Title	Summary of Idea	Brief description of the problem and how the Idea solves the problem	What Federal agencies (if any) would need to be involved with this Idea in order for it to be successful?
Getting It Done Together	Create collaborative, integrated inter-agency (Federal/state/local/community based organizations) partnerships to leverage each Federal agency's role and strengths to shared customers and create shared outcome metrics.	Duplication of services, and in some cases siloed services, lead to a lack of capitalization on multi-agency strength. Create a common strategy to serve homeless population in connection to employment outcomes—integrated metrics based on agency role/mission. Success is dependent on all agencies meeting their specific metrics.	DOL, HUD, HHS
SNAP E&T Funds	Ensure that all states are aware of Federal matching funds and pursue the maximum possible (all sheltered homeless are SNAP ⁸ eligible despite some myths).	There are not enough training dollars, and those available could be more easily targeted to homeless adults.	USDA ⁹ , HUD

⁸ U.S. Department of Education

⁹ U.S. Department of Agriculture

Engaging Private Sector and Employers

Opportunity: Supportive work environments and engaged employers are essential when working with people who are experiencing homelessness. More employers willing to hire people with histories of homelessness are needed to prevent and end homelessness.

Question: What is one (1) idea that could be implemented that would have the greatest impact on engaging the private sector and employers?

Title	Summary of Idea	Brief description of the problem and how the Idea solves the problem	What Federal agencies (if any) would need to be involved with this Idea in order for it to be successful?
<p>Home Work</p>	<p>Require a set-aside in government contracting that requires businesses to hire a percentage of workers through the public work force system, allowing the system to target homeless job-seekers without “outing” them as homeless.</p>	<p>People with histories of homelessness need better access to publicly funded jobs. Clients will enhance their chances of finding jobs by avoiding the stigma of being labeled “homeless” by employers. Public contracts (state, municipal, Federal) even our own hire from within.</p>	<p>All Federal agencies</p>
<p>Social Enterprise Continuum + SBA “Set Aside” + Public Acknowledgement</p>	<p>Incentives for employers to hire people who have been homeless and buy from social enterprises that provide them with transitional jobs and job prep.</p>	<p>People who have been homeless are more likely to be hired if they can demonstrate recent work experience and that they have the essential/basic skills employers seek—deeper connection between social enterprises and private employers.</p>	<p>Small Business Administration (SBA) Tax Agency</p>