



Partnerships for Opening Doors

A summit on integrating employment and housing strategies to prevent and end homelessness



JULY 2015

Acknowledgements

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ON THE COVER *Photo credit: Ziba* The photo was used in Portland's conference poster, which was voted best community poster by Summit participants.

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	
<i>Joint Letter</i>	2
<i>Preface</i>	3
<i>Executive Summary</i>	4
<i>Goals of the Partnerships for Opening Doors Summit</i>	7
<i>Employment, Training and Career Development Needs of People Experiencing Homelessness</i>	9
<i>Overview of Promising Strategies and Available Federal Resources</i>	13
<i>Community Practices</i>	16
<i>Output from the Partnerships Summit</i>	22
<i>Ideas</i>	22
<i>Recommendations</i>	24
<i>Barriers</i>	25
<i>Presentations to Federal Leadership</i>	27
<i>Moving Forward</i>	27
<i>Appendix</i>	28
<i>Description of the Partnerships Summit and Agenda</i>	28
<i>Key Informant Interviews</i>	30
<i>Partnerships Summit Participants</i>	31

Joint Letter from Secretary Perez and Secretary Castro

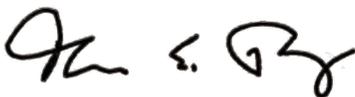
Since the release of *Opening Doors: the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* in 2010, the federal government, with states and communities, advocates, and private and non-profit partners, has launched an unprecedented collaborative effort to end homelessness. In four years, we have reduced overall homelessness by nearly 10 percent, including a 25 percent reduction in unsheltered homelessness.

One of the most effective strategies to support individuals to move out of homelessness and into permanent housing is increasing access to meaningful and sustainable job-training and employment. Like most Americans, people experiencing homelessness want to work -- in fact many are employed, but often precariously due to significant barriers to employment. By better aligning our workforce and homeless assistance systems now, we can connect individuals to rewarding employment with sustainable wages and permanent housing, achieving long-term and positive outcomes for both individuals and their communities.

On October 16, 2014, representatives from workforce and housing agencies in 11 communities, national organizations, officials from the Federal government, and dignitaries from Canada joined us for the Partnerships for Opening Doors Summit, a day devoted to taking bolder steps towards integrating employment and housing strategies to prevent and end homelessness. Participating in fast-paced and high-impact presentations and active group discussions, Summit participants generated a series of recommendations and ideas that they presented directly to us, including joint agency guidance and planning activities, innovative approaches for breaking down silos across workforce and homeless services systems, and strategies for leveraging a range of Federal resources to support employment services for homeless populations.

This report serves as a roadmap to guide Federal partners as we work together to increase opportunities for people who are at risk or have fallen into homelessness to reach career ladders and increase their economic security. The proposed actions are ones that will help inform our planning going forward. For a comprehensive list of ideas, barriers, and recommendations generated during the Summit, we invite you to visit the Partnerships Summit web page at <http://usich.gov/partnerships-for-opening-doors-summit>.

We look forward to working with you to break down the barriers to employment and housing and to prevent and end homelessness. Together we will make progress on ensuring that all Americans – including those experiencing homelessness – have access to the resources they need to access meaningful employment, feel secure in their communities, and have a safe and stable place that is home.



Thomas E. Perez
U.S. Secretary of Labor



Julián Castro
U.S. Housing and Urban
Development Secretary



U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez opens the Summit, calling for closer coordination between the workforce system and housing services agencies at the local level. “We know that one of the best ways to prevent homelessness is to have a good job.”



“HUD is committed to working with the Department of Labor and other Federal agencies to strengthen the connection between housing and employment services,” said U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julián Castro. “By leveraging these partnerships, we will give the most vulnerable folks in our communities a platform for success.”

Preface from the Executive Director, U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) and our Federal partners know that housing and employment are critically linked. Stable housing makes it possible for people to obtain and retain employment; employment makes it possible for people to obtain and sustain stable housing. And we know how important providing employment and economic opportunity to youth, single adults, and families with children is to our shared success—for collaboratively creating stable, sustainable permanent housing opportunities and for ensuring such housing is a platform from which people can achieve their goals. These goals include being active, contributing members of their communities through community connections, service to others, and meaningful employment. These two critical elements, employment and housing, help people achieve success and advancement, which leads to shared successes within our communities.

I am pleased to share this report from the Partnerships for Opening Doors Summit, made possible by the Butler Family Fund. This report reflects the efforts of the 11 communities who were represented by Workforce Investment Boards, Continuums of Care, State Workforce Development Councils, and community-based groups, as well as expert national nonprofit organizations who also attended the Summit. These communities and organizations came together with Federal partners to focus on integrating employment and housing strategies to prevent and end homelessness. I would like to thank these participants for providing feedback during the Summit. I also especially appreciate the dedication and commitment to the work that drives successes within each community; successes that communities all across country can learn from and share.

Since the Summit, a team of representatives from Federal agencies has begun the process of fully reviewing the report recommendations generated by the participants. I look forward to identifying opportunities to support acceleration of efforts to implement the strategies of *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*. The views and recommendations expressed in the report reflect the discussion among Summit participants and provide Federal agencies with insight into the potential opportunities for increased cross-system collaboration. The joint message from Secretaries Thomas Perez and Julián Castro affirms the commitment of Federal partners in continuing to provide guidance and support for communities engaged in this important work. We also hope you find this report to be a helpful resource on how to enhance connections between employment services and housing and homelessness services systems in your own communities.

To all of our national and community partners who are working tirelessly to support individuals and families experiencing homelessness and strengthen employment outcomes, I am grateful for your dedication and commitment. Together, we can strengthen these critical links and achieve even greater shared success.

Matthew Doherty
July 2015



“We’re all here – and we’re all in on this effort – because we know how important providing employment and economic opportunity to youth, single adults, and families with children is to our shared success,” said Matthew Doherty, Executive Director of USICH.

Executive Summary

In October 2014, Federal government agencies, U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), and the Butler Family Fund convened Partnerships for Opening Doors Summit (Partnership Summit), a national summit on integrating employment and housing strategies to prevent and end homelessness. The purpose of this report is to share key findings, recommendations and ideas from the Summit, and guide agencies and national partners toward integrating employment and homeless assistance programs.

The Partnerships Summit focused on addressing the employment needs of adults in families and single adults, including individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. More than 100 people participated in the Partnerships Summit, including teams from 11 communities, Federal government agencies, and national organizations. Top Federal officials participated in the Summit, including Labor Secretary Thomas Perez, HUD Secretary Julián Castro, USICH Director Laura Green Zeilinger, Roy Austin, Deputy Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs, Justice and Opportunity at the Domestic Policy Council at the White House, and DOL Deputy Assistant Secretary Gerri Fiala.

The Partnerships Summit built on employment- and income-related objectives of Opening Doors: the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness (Opening Doors) 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) presents new opportunities to better meet the employment, training, and career needs of persons experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

Participants expressed the following key themes during the Summit:

- President Obama is committed to investing in America's workforce and helping people – including individuals and families experiencing homelessness – to help them enter jobs with career ladders and achieve the goals of Opening Doors.
- Meaningful employment plays a central role in preventing and ending homelessness.
- Employment and stable housing are connected, and people experiencing homelessness must be linked to employment, using practices that have been shown to be effective.
- An integrated and comprehensive local response should be created that coordinates and leverages the assets of the public workforce system and the homeless assistance system.



Roy Austin, Deputy Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs for Justice and Opportunity at Domestic Policy Council, spoke to the President's commitment to making the right investments in our workforce that will lead to long-term and positive outcomes across all communities, and help Americans enter jobs with career ladders, citing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.



"The October 16 Summit was an exciting kickoff to the critical work of helping homeless job-seekers on their road to independence," said Martha A. Toll, Executive Director, Butler Family Fund. "The Butler Family Fund is thrilled to partner with the Department of Labor, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the U.S. Interagency Council to move this systems change work forward."

- Key opportunities under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) of 2014 should be leveraged to better serve individuals, including youth, experiencing homelessness as a targeted sub-population served by WIOA.
- Federal programs and funding should be better utilized and leveraged with local, state and philanthropic sources to expand employment and training offerings to people experiencing homelessness.
- Greater clarity is needed about how Federal resources can be harnessed by local communities to create integrated and comprehensive local systems that end homelessness.

Key resources developed as part of the Summit include:

- Effective practices for employment and training for people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.
- Federal resources that can be used 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.
- Practice guides for employment and training that reference available how-to resources for implementing effective practices for employment and training for people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.
- Community profiles for nine communities to share current practices and future plans for ending homelessness through integrated housing and employment strategies.

Opening Doors: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) is the Federal agency responsible for coordinating the Federal response to homelessness, consisting of the work of 19 member agencies. The nation's first-ever comprehensive strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, *Opening Doors* provides a roadmap for joint action by USICH member agencies, focused on four goals:

1. Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness by 2017;
2. Prevent and end homelessness among Veterans by 2015;
3. Prevent and end homelessness for families, youth, and children by 2020; and
4. Set a path to ending all types of homelessness.

A key theme of *Opening Doors* is to increase the economic security of individuals experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. Two objectives of the strategic plan include increasing meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities, and improving access to mainstream programs and services to reduce people's financial vulnerability to homelessness.



Ben Seigel, Senior Policy Advisor for the Employment and Training Administration at the Department of Labor, introduces the 11 communities participating in the Summit.

Communities participating in the Partnerships Summit

Chicago and Cook County, IL
 Hennepin and Ramsey County, MN
 Houston and Harris County, TX
 Los Angeles, CA
 Nashville, TN
 Phoenix, AZ
 Portland and Multnomah County, OR
 Richmond, VA
 Salt Lake County, UT
 Seattle and King County, WA
 Western Massachusetts



Summit Planning Team Process

The Summit planning team, composed of staff from DOL, HUD, USICH, and the Butler Family Fund, guided the implementation of a six-month planning process that began with a literature review and a series of interviews with key leaders in the fields of homelessness and workforce development. The team identified a pool of communities that appeared to be collaborating to implement innovative employment and training programs or system initiatives for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This list was further refined based on community's use of data to drive decisions, ability to bring together and leverage a variety of resources, and their current, past, or planned use of innovative approaches. Ultimately, local teams from 11 communities participated in the Summit.

The Summit planning team also identified and invited national organizations from the fields of homelessness and workforce development, philanthropic organizations with interest in workforce development and homelessness, and key staff from major Federal agencies. (See Appendix 1 for more on how the Summit was organized.)



Gerri Fiala, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Employment and Training Administration at the Department of Labor, discusses the impact of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). WIOA creates a job-driven, comprehensive, accessible, and accountable public workforce system, creating a framework that encourages collaboration across programs to provide robust services to individuals with barriers to employment.

USICH, with its partners at DOL, HUD, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and other Federal agencies, will lead the efforts to coordinate activities in the near term, as well as the longer-term efforts that will sustain the partnership between homeless assistance and employment systems going forward. Partnering with the Butler Family Fund and the Heartland Alliance, the Federal team is working to identify a set of high-impact and meaningful next steps based on the input from the Partnerships Summit. The next steps may include joint guidance from Federal agencies, new technical assistance resources, improvements to Federal programs to help implement local, integrated approaches to employment and training for people experiencing homelessness, and opportunities for continued sharing among local, state, and national organizations in partnership with the Federal agencies that comprise USICH.

Across all levels of government and sectors, an aligned sense of purpose, and knowledge of effective strategies, the capacity to accelerate progress to end and prevent homelessness through appropriate and meaningful employment is within reach.

Goals of the Partnerships for Opening Doors Summit

Homelessness is a significant problem across the country. HUD's 2014 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress found that 578,424 persons were experiencing homelessness on a single night in 2014.¹ Of the homeless population, 37 percent are members of families with children, and 63 percent are individuals. Among people who were sheltered during 2013, the population was most commonly aged 31-50 years, predominantly male, and disproportionately Black or African American. Significantly, 40 percent of the adult population was disabled.²

Despite the challenges posed by the Great Recession, communities are making strides to prevent and end homelessness. Since 2010 – the year the Obama administration launched *Opening Doors* – homelessness has dropped 10 percent overall and by 25 percent in the unsheltered population. Homelessness among Veterans decreased by 33 percent, including a 43 percent reduction in unsheltered homelessness since 2010, and a 10.5 percent decline since last year. Homelessness among families and children declined by 15 percent since 2010, with a reduction of 53 percent among these families who were unsheltered. Building on these encouraging trends, it should be possible to accelerate progress through improved access to employment, if communities can mobilize a comprehensive and integrated response.

Federal agencies, in partnership with Butler Family Fund, convened the Partnerships for Opening Doors Summit to advance the following goals:

Learn together

- Identify promising program practices for helping people with histories of homelessness and barriers to entering the workforce and pursuing training and career pathways; understand the implementation of these practices and the resolution of the key challenges; and explore potential benefits of replication or expansion.
- Identify emerging practices that communities can undertake to improve coordination and integration of employment programs with homeless assistance programs and other community services and benefits programs, including specific opportunities or approaches that have yielded sustained engagement and coordination across systems.

Updated approach to addressing homelessness: Rapid Re-Housing

Rapid re-housing is a time-limited intervention designed to help individuals and families to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. Rapid re-housing assistance utilizes a Housing First approach, where services are offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety). The resources and services provided are typically tailored to the unique needs of the household, and are provided over a period of time up to 18 months. Critical to the success of rapid re-housing for many households is the ability to attain and sustain employment at wages sufficient to cover ongoing housing costs. Summit participants are encouraged to recommend ideas to support rapid re-housing programs with strong employment components.

The core components of a rapid re-housing program include housing identification, financial assistance with rent and move-in costs, and rapid re-housing case management and services. Some characteristics of case management and services are:

- Helping identify and select among various permanent housing options based on program participants' unique needs, preferences, and financial resources;
- Addressing issues that may impede access to housing such as poor credit history, utility arrears, and legal issues;
- Monitoring housing stability and resolving crises; and
- Providing connections to resources that promote safety and well-being and achieve participants' long-term goals. This component includes providing access to benefits, employment, and community-based services so that program participants can sustain rent payments independently after rental assistance ends.

¹ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2014). The 2014 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress: Part 1.

² U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2013). The 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress: Part 2.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

President Barack Obama signed WIOA into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA replaces the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and retains and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. WIOA is designed to help job-seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Congress passed the Act by a wide bipartisan majority; it is the first legislative reform of the public workforce system in more than 15 years. Every year the key programs that form the pillars of WIOA help millions of job-seekers and workers to connect to good jobs and acquire the skills and credentials needed to obtain them.

WIOA brings together, in strategic coordination, the core programs of Federal investment in skill development:

- Employment and training services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth and Wagner-Peyser employment services administered by the Department of Labor (DOL) through formula grants to states; and
- Adult education and literacy programs and Vocational Rehabilitation state grant programs that assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining employment administered by the Department of Education (ED).

WIOA also authorizes programs for specific vulnerable populations, including the Job Corps, YouthBuild, Indian and Native Americans, and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker programs, as well as evaluation and multistate projects administered by DOL. In addition, WIOA authorizes other programs administered by ED and the Department of Health and Human Services.

DOL will provide technical assistance, tools, and resources to states and local areas through the WIOA resource page (<http://www.doleta.gov/WIOA>), webinars, and virtual and in-person discussions. DOL and Education will issue final regulations in 2016.

- Identify common misconceptions and barriers that communities experience in efforts to provide employment, training, and career pathways for people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

Act together

- Identify key activities that DOL, HUD, USICH and other Federal agencies could undertake in the near term, including educational, administrative, or regulatory mechanisms to improve access to quality jobs, skills training, and supportive services (in the context of employment, training, and career pathways).
- Disseminate ideas, actions, and available resources for follow-up by national and local non-profits, Federal/state/local governments, and philanthropy.
- Create the seeds for a network for follow-up, and promote continued communication among communities and coordination with Federal and national partners.



“This report serves as a roadmap to guide Federal partners as we work together to increase opportunities for people who are at risk or have fallen into homelessness to reach career ladders and increase their economic security.”

– Secretary Perez and Secretary Castro

Employment, Training and Career Development Needs of People Experiencing Homelessness

According to Summit participants, most people experiencing homelessness want to work or are working but are not earning enough to make ends meet. This finding is reinforced in a report by the National Transitional Jobs Network and National Health Care for the Homeless Council³:

Individuals experiencing homelessness consistently rank paid employment alongside healthcare and housing as a primary need, and numerous studies find that increased income is a strong predictor of a person exiting homelessness and maintaining housing.

According to accounts from the key informant interviews and Summit participants, people who experience or are at-risk of homelessness possess a range of work histories and varied educational backgrounds. Research confirms that the population of people experiencing homelessness has a similar proportion of high school graduates as the general population of individuals and families from low-income households, and nearly half have worked within the past 30 days⁴.

For most people, the path out of homelessness will require securing employment sufficient to cover basic housing needs. For individuals experiencing chronic homelessness⁵, the desire to work is also strong, although admission to permanent supportive housing usually will need to precede engagement with workforce training and educational programs⁶. For all people experiencing homelessness, the challenges and trauma associated with homelessness can be ameliorated with targeted interventions and access to an array of supports.⁷ Individuals who experience homelessness may face difficulty with balancing their desire and motivation to further their education and skill level with the need to have a stable income in order to maintain their housing.

³ National Transitional Jobs Network and National Health Care for the Homeless Council. (2013) Work Matters: Employment as a Tool for Preventing Homelessness and Improving Health, pg. 2. Retrieved via https://www.scribd.com/fullscreen/156826251?access_key=key-19qobigrod5i4v380n5b&allow_share=true&escape=false&view_mode=scroll

⁴ Burt, M.R., Aron, L.Y., Douglas, T., et al (1999). Homelessness: Programs and the People they Serve: Findings of the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients. Washington, D.C.: Interagency Council on the Homeless, Dept. of Housing and Urban Development.

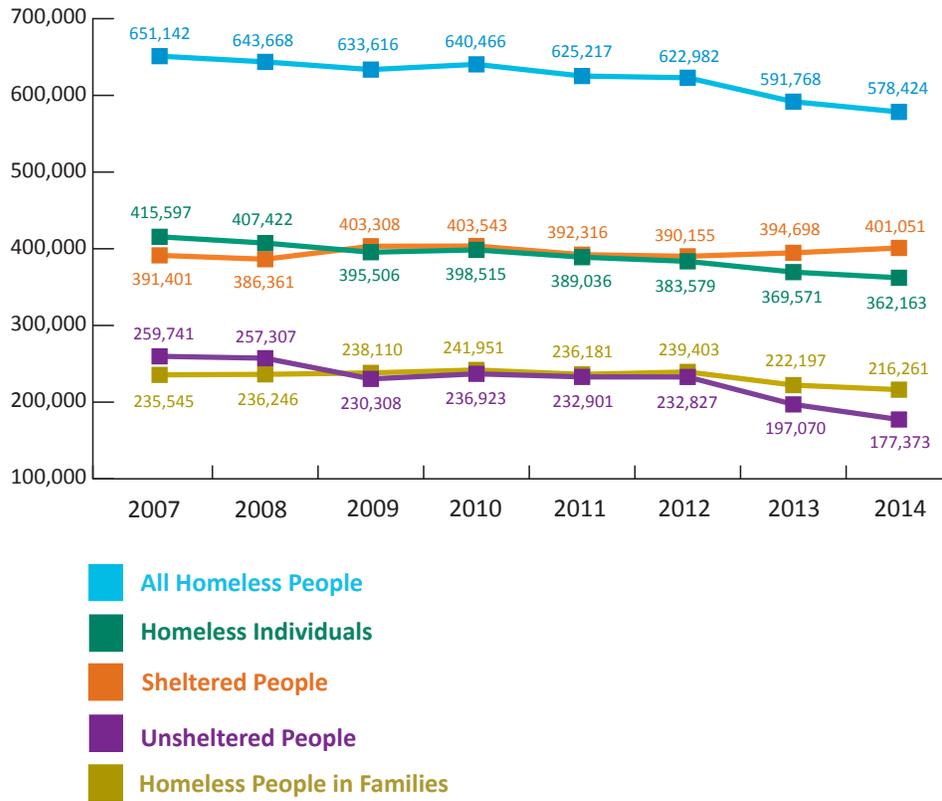
⁵ HUD has defined chronic homelessness as an individual or family with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more or has had at least four (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three years. The definition of chronic homelessness in the CoC Program interim rule is currently in effect. On March 27, 2013, HUD published the [Rural Housing Stability Assistance Program \(RHSP\) proposed rule](#) in the Federal Register. The proposed rule included a revised definition of chronic homelessness that includes a definition of homeless occasion that better targets persons with the longest histories of homelessness and the highest level of need. The public comment period on the definition of chronic homelessness closed on May 28, 2013.

⁶ Chronic Homeless Employment Technical Assistance Center, a partnership between the Corporation for Supportive Housing and Advocates for Human Potential (2008). Ending Chronic Homelessness Through Employment and Housing: a program and policy handbook for successfully linking supportive housing and employment services for chronically homeless adults. Retrieved via http://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Report_CHETA_ProgramPolicy_Handbook.pdf

⁷ Hopper, E.K., Bassuk, E.L. et al. Shelter from the Storm: Trauma-Informed Care in Homelessness Services Settings. The Open Health Services and Policy Journal, 2010, 3, 80-100.

Point-in-Time Estimates

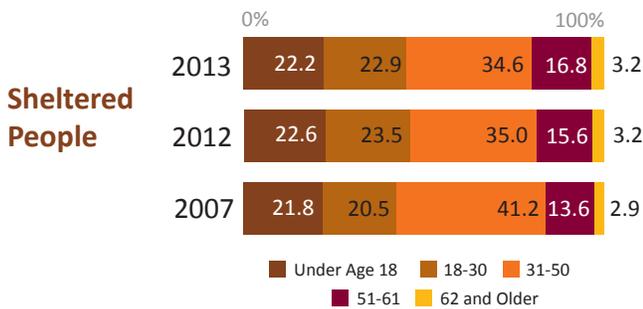
Estimates of Homeless People 2007-2014



Source: The 2014 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress: Part 1

Age

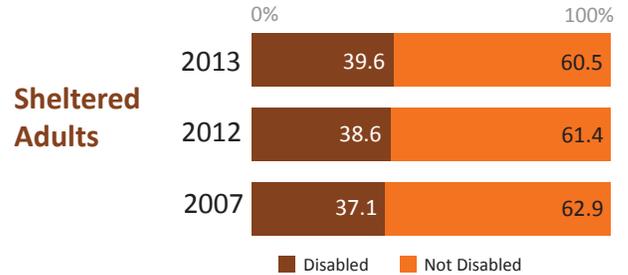
Sheltered Homeless People and Total U.S. Population, 2007-2013



Source: The 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress: Part 2

Disability Status

Sheltered Homeless Adults and Total U.S. Adults, 2007-2013



Source: The 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress: Part 2

Examples of Diversity Among Job-Seekers

“Karen”

Karen, 55 years old, recently became homeless when her husband abandoned her. Since her husband handled the family finances, she did not know that the mortgage on their suburban home had not been paid in more than a year. The property was foreclosed on, and she was evicted. She went to live with her oldest daughter’s family in another state. Although she had a master’s degree in education, she had only taught school as a part-time substitute teacher while raising her children. She became homeless when her daughter’s landlord threatened to evict the entire family from their apartment since the occupancy exceeded her lease.

Masters, etc.

Some Job Experience

Computer Literacy

“Susan”

Susan and her three children became homeless due to eviction for non-payment of rent. She stayed with different family and friends over the past two years, then entered the local family shelter when those family and friends were exhausted. She is employed part time at a local convenience store. Her mother can provide occasional child care when her children are not in school. She was sexually abused as a child and has experienced domestic violence at the hands of a couple boyfriends. She completed high school and started a college nursing program. She would like to get a community health worker certificate so she can get back on a path to nursing.

GED/High School

Under Employed

Credit Problems

Domestic Violence

“Mac”

Mac has been steadily employed for more than 20 years in the hospitality industry, despite not completing high school. He lost his job when the hotel where he worked closed. Unable to pay his rent, he moved in with his cousin. He has always been described as a social drinker, but with time on his hands, his drinking increased. After about a year, his cousin kicked him out. Alone and on the streets, Mac began panhandling and staying near the riverbank downtown. While living outdoors, Mac was arrested and spent time in jail for “open container” violations and loitering. After serving his term, he decided to take up the outreach worker’s offer of applying for a new permanent supportive housing program. Mac moved in and has gradually been reducing his drinking and is now ready to begin seeking work.

Limited Literacy

Unemployed

Criminal History

No Computer Literacy

Substance Abuse

Some individuals who become homeless, like Mac, have numerous and difficult barriers that hinder their employability. Others, like Karen, will enter the workforce with the least difficulty. Communities should be prepared to meet the individual needs of job seekers who experience homelessness, which will vary by literacy and education level, employment history, computer literacy, health issues, and other factors.

Overview of Promising Strategies and Available Federal Resources

In preparation for the Partnerships Summit, the project consultant interviewed key leaders in the fields of homelessness and workforce development (see Appendix 2). The purpose of the interviews was to identify promising practices and strategies that communities and providers can deploy to integrate housing and employment to prevent and end homelessness. The consultant also conducted a scan of Federal resources to identify funding and programs that can be used to implement these practices and strategies.

The following program practices were mentioned across the literature and during key informant interviews as effective at meeting employment and training needs of people experiencing homelessness and populations with multiple barriers to employment:

- Adult education bridge programs
- Alternative staffing organizations
- Contextualized instruction
- Customized employment
- Earn and learn opportunities
- Supported employment
- Navigators (direct client services or staff support/ombudsman models)
- Sector-based training and employment
- Social enterprise
- Subsidized employment
- Transitional jobs
- Work-First oriented packages

The following themes were consistent across key informant interviews, review of materials, and community applicant responses as ways to implement program practices effectively to meet employment and training needs of people experiencing homelessness and populations with multiple barriers to employment:

- Co-location of workforce staff at homeless assistance programs and vice versa
- Intensive supports with individualized services
- Client-centered with a trauma-informed care approach
- Engaged and supportive employers
- Holistic programs
- Provision of flexible funds for training, transportation, rent, etc.
- Integration of employment services with housing and human services, reducing requirements for multiple visits, and streamlining processes to more quickly connect people to a job.

Career Pathways

Career pathway initiatives allow youth and adults with limited work experience to combine work and education while obtaining in-demand postsecondary credentials. State policies that support career pathway strategies make it easier to align adult basic education, job training, post-secondary education, and support services. For example, these policies can make it easier to provide basic skills education in the context of occupational training, or to move educationally underprepared students more successfully to certificate or degree completion. These policies can also provide tuition assistance to working students enrolled in part-time or in non-credit occupationally focused programs. To meet the needs of persons experiencing homelessness, states must provide “bridges” to ensure basic household needs are met, while enabling individuals to focus on their education. These services include housing, food, health care, child care and transportation, and should be coordinated with the employment and training provider.

Many respondents noted that a range of approaches can be effective and should be available in every community in order to meet the individual needs of job-seekers who experience homelessness. **A key finding was that the time it takes to secure competitive, unsubsidized employment will vary based on the individual job-seeker’s needs and desires as well as the local employment market.** For individuals with more barriers seeking work in a community with high unemployment, the time between entry into the workforce system and exit to competitive, unsubsidized employment will be greater than for individuals with fewer barriers to employment who are seeking work in a community with low unemployment.

There are multiple entry points into a comprehensive, coordinated community system of employment and training services. As depicted in Figure 2, programs such as social enterprise, transitional jobs, and skills-based training serve individuals who have the most barriers to employment. Mainstream programs, including American Job Centers, are more likely to benefit individuals with the fewest barriers. Most people experiencing homelessness will need some supports – “bridges” – to ensure that their basic needs are met while they devote themselves to improving their skills and increasing educational attainment. Under this coordinated approach, they may exit the career pathway at any point along the continuum (i.e., from social enterprise to 4-year degree) into jobs that align with their newly enhanced education, experience, and skills.

Career Pathways with Bridges

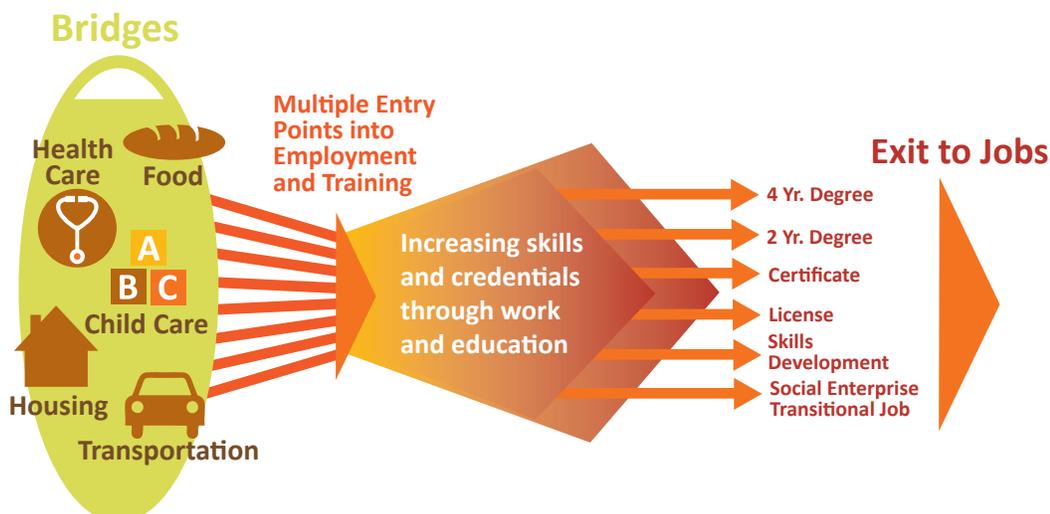


FIGURE 2

To better understand the ways the Federal government and communities can harness resources, the project consultant reviewed available mainstream resources and resources targeted toward individuals experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. The scan covered the following departments on the Federal level: Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, and Veterans Affairs, as well as the Social Security Administration. Federal resources can provide individuals experiencing or at-risk of homelessness access to quality jobs, skills training, and supportive services in the context of employment, training, and career pathways. State and local government administer many Federal programs in order to link individuals and families from low-income households with means to self-sufficiency. The availability of some resources may vary by geography.

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“By better aligning our workforce and homeless assistance systems now, we can connect individuals to rewarding employment with sustainable wages and permanent housing, achieving long-term and positive outcomes for both individuals and their communities.”

– Secretary Perez and Secretary Castro



USICH Policy Director Jasmine Hayes (left) and project consultant Barbara Poppe receive input from participants during an interactive session. Poppe developed content for the process and facilitated the day-long Summit.

For more information about strategies, practices and resources related to integrating employment and housing strategies to prevent and end homelessness, please see these publications:

- [Effective practices](#) for employment and training for people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.
- [Federal resources](#) that can be used 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.
- [Practice guides](#) for employment and training that reference available how-to resources for implementing effective practices for employment and training for people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.
- [Description of DOL’s programs](#) that collect data about homelessness.
- [HUD’s targeted homeless assistance programs](#).

Community Practices

Local teams from 11 communities accepted the invitation to participate in the Summit. They were selected based on the innovative programs in varying stages in their communities linking homeless services with employment opportunities. (See the [report](#) on Community Profiles for a full description of the work underway.)

Three communities presented examples of strong collaboration between the workforce systems and the Continuum of Care, with demonstrated use of DOL-WIA funding to support activities. One community has a history of collaboration with use of philanthropic and HUD funds to underwrite a Navigator approach for homeless families. The other seven communities appear to be at the beginning stages of partnerships between their workforce systems and the Continuum of Care; some could identify projects targeting employment and homeless assistance even though there was no specific collaboration at the systems level.

Chicago, IL

Under the community's new Plan to End Homelessness – Plan 2.0 – A Home for Everyone, All Chicago (CoC) is partnering with the Chicago Cook County Workforce Partnership and the City of Chicago. The goals of this alignment of the workforce development system with the homeless services system are two-fold: 1) identify increased and dedicated funding to workforce development and the homeless system, and 2) vastly improve productivity. The work underway includes conducting an assessment of the current workforce system in Chicago and Cook County to determine the most effective strategies for connecting people experiencing homelessness to employment opportunities; recommending program models for workforce programs targeted at people experiencing homelessness; developing a standard employment readiness assessment for homeless services that is consistent with the workforce system and leads to appropriate linkages with employment services; setting reasonable targets for the increase in number of households employed at exit along with systems-change strategies to achieve progress on goals; planning an Employment Summit and providing trainings to case managers and workforce staff.

Innovative program approaches

Navigators

Navigators provide individuals and families experiencing homelessness improved access to workforce system benefits and training. The direct client service model utilizes specialized case managers, called Navigators, to provide individualized guidance to individuals experiencing homelessness that bridges the cultural divide among service systems, helps clients articulate their needs, and provides a means to self-sufficiency. In addition, Navigators play an advocacy role for their clients within homeless, workforce, and other systems. Under the staff support/ombudsman model, the Navigator focuses on developing new and ongoing partnerships to achieve seamless, comprehensive, and integrated access to services, creating systemic change, and expanding the workforce development system's capacity to serve customers with disabilities and employers.

Hennepin and Ramsey County, MN

Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Hennepin and Ramsey counties, and the state of Minnesota seek to end homelessness through a Housing First and Jobs Fast approach. Heading Home: Minnesota's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness sets increasing employment as a priority. Strong leadership of the state's workforce system contributes to the sense of opportunity.

One promising innovation is the Heading Home SNAP E&T⁹ Project at the Opportunity Center in Minneapolis. This multi-agency collaboration co-locates housing and employment services, leveraging

⁹ The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) program promotes long-term self-sufficiency and independence by preparing SNAP recipients for employment through work-related education and training activities.

Innovative program approaches

DOL's focus on improving services for people with disabilities is also a way to address homelessness

Since 2010, the United States Department of Labor (DOL) has awarded over \$95 million to 37 projects within 26 states under the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) to improve education, training, and employment outcomes of youth and adults with disabilities, by refining and expanding already identified successful workforce strategies. The DEI is jointly funded and administered by the DOL's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). DEI projects build on the Disability Program Navigator initiative by hiring staff with expertise in disability and workforce to serve as Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs). Many DEI grantees have been working to meet the needs of persons who experience homelessness and have a disability. Examples are described below.

Golden Sierra Workforce Investment Board (WIB) – a Disability Employment Initiative site – partners with the Auburn Welcome Center, operated by Placer County Health and Human Services, to provide employment and training services to people who experience mental illness, substance abuse, and homelessness. The Welcome Center is a consumer-run program that is structured by the needs and wants of the community. WIB and Welcome Center staff and customers have met repeatedly over the course of the DEI grant. The Welcome Center has a job board with employment opportunities and encourages people experiencing homelessness to drop in and use this resource. The partnership has been able to provide Supportive Services dollars to individuals looking for work who are experiencing homelessness.

The DEI Disability Resource Center serving the Snohomish Workforce Development area is co-located with staff coordinating the Snohomish County Investing in Families initiative (IIF) to end family homelessness, supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Both the DEI and IFF initiatives at Snohomish are managed by the same director. Experience has shown that individuals identified through the IIF program often are also those with disabilities. Workforce Snohomish leadership is very strategic about maximizing resources through coordinated efforts to support individuals with disabilities to obtain stabilized housing, and connect them with employment resources such as training, Ticket to Work, and job leads. Information on the Snohomish County Investing in Families initiative can be found at: <http://www.workforcesnohomish.org/advance/iif>

philanthropic resources from the United Way and other funders for providers to deliver services that would be difficult to offer or sustain with existing public funding streams. These services are used as a match for Federal financial participation by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) for USDA's Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program Employment and Training program (USDA's SNAP E&T). DEED seeks reimbursement from USDA for allowable expenditures and reimburses these providers. Since the project's inception in 2011, this effort has served over 890 SNAP-eligible participants and achieved employment for 35 percent of participants completing the program, with average hourly wages of \$10.50 and 34 average work hours per week. Nearly half (42 percent) of program participants have criminal histories, and all were homeless one year or more at entry.

Houston, TX

The Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County (lead agency for the Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care) and Workforce Solutions, the public workforce system in the 13- county Houston-Galveston region, are exploring new ways to partner to provide collaborative approaches to connecting people experiencing homelessness with employment and training. The most significant effort to date has been working with SEARCH Homeless Services, a multi-service organization that provides a drop-in center, street outreach, employment services, disability services, coordinated access, housing navigation, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing and early childhood education. SEARCH's approach to employment provides case management, assists clients in signing up for and access the Work-In-Texas database, links customers to the career centers, and offers other needed support.

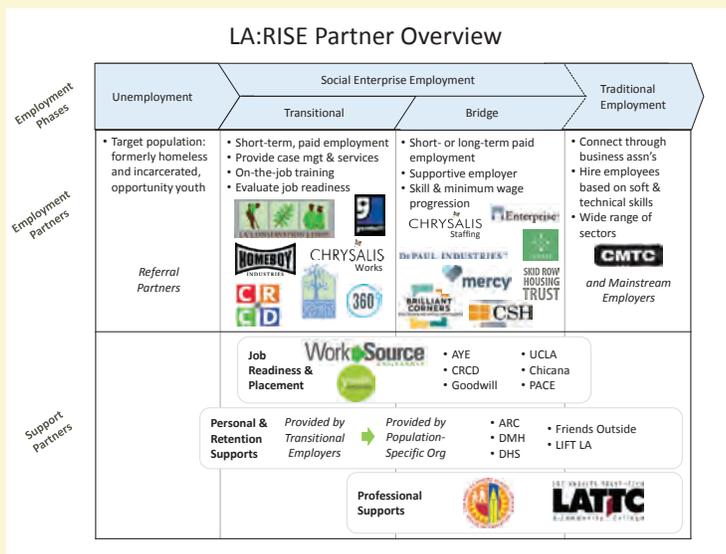
Los Angeles, CA

Los Angeles County is in the process of implementing several groundbreaking initiatives to coordinate housing and homeless services. The initial strategy was to implement coordinated assessment and intervention systems that are population-specific and focused on the most vulnerable and most in need. In 2010, the United Way of Greater Los Angeles released the Home for Good Plan to end homelessness in Los Angeles. The Plan was updated in 2012 with a goal of ending chronic and Veteran’s homelessness by 2016. The LA Workforce Investment Board recently received notice of the award of the \$6 million Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) Grant for the Los Angeles Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise (LA-RISE). The project will stimulate job acquisition and retention for the hardest to serve population, including those with a history of chronic homelessness and incarceration, Veterans, and disconnected youth. A key innovation of this program is the linkage of the workforce system with social enterprise. This will be achieved through a unique partnership with the city and REDF, an agency with employment and social enterprise expertise. This grant will help the city link the mainstream workforce development system in a way that includes economic development strategies to strengthen and establish social enterprise activities for people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles.

Innovative program approaches

DOL’s new Workforce Innovation Fund award will expand Social Enterprise in Los Angeles

The City of Los Angeles was awarded a \$6 million grant through the Department of Labor’s Workforce Innovation Fund to implement Los Angeles Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise (LA:RISE). LA:RISE will stimulate job acquisition and retention for 500 individuals who make up the hardest-to-serve population – those with a history of homelessness, incarceration, and disconnected youth – by uniting a mix of public and private revenue sources to leverage existing, available services. This will be achieved through the LA:RISE partners, which include WIB WorkSource and YouthSource centers, community-based service providers, and non-profit and for-profit employers. This collaborative will be led by the City of Los Angeles WIB, with support from REDF (employment social enterprise expert). A random control trial will be conducted by Social Policy Research Associates (SPR).



LA:RISE includes four components: 1) transitional jobs, delivering subsidized transitional employment; 2) bridge jobs, designed to provide unsubsidized employment opportunities to a select group of transitional graduates demonstrating sufficient gains in skills; 3) training services, providing both hard and soft job skills; and 4) supportive services, designed to help participants stabilize their lives. The combination of these four components, in conjunction with the WorkSource system, represents an innovative approach to serving the hard-to-employ.

Nashville, TN

How's Nashville is a strategic collaborative of homeless service providers, housing services, public and private apartment facilities, and Federal, state, and local resources. Similarly, the Nashville Workforce Network is a coalition of agencies with the mission of helping vulnerable populations reach economic self-sufficiency through employment and career advancement. While both entities have a focus of helping people experiencing homelessness get off the streets, stay off the streets, and maintain housing through combinations of employment and support, there were previously few formal links between the two. As a result of Summit participation, there is now active planning underway to formalize the partnership and identify new ways to collaborate to deliver integrated employment and housing programs that prevent and end homelessness.

Phoenix, AZ

Through various regional collaborations among workforce development program partners, community, and faith-based organizations, Phoenix identified an opportunity to strengthen outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness and enhance employment opportunities, while maximizing Continuum of Care services. The employment approach in development is a hybrid model of currently used practices in SOAR¹⁰ job readiness workshops, development of stronger employer relationships through Sector Strategies to understand workforce needs, utilization of the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (IBEST) model to increase training and education attainments, and development of on-the-job-training agreements (OJT) as a strategy for work experience and entrance for gainful employment. Within the City of Phoenix, the workforce development program is part of the Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD). The relationships developed through CEDD divisions and staff will help identify hiring trends and training and workforce skills that businesses need. These relationships will allow the City of Phoenix and workforce programs to help in identifying a pipeline of skilled and qualified candidates.

Portland-Multnomah County, OR

The City of Portland and Multnomah County invest in a number of strategies to link employment, economic opportunities and housing placement services for populations experiencing homelessness. For example, Portland's Aligned Partner Network (APN) is a collaboration of public and non-profit agencies that intentionally integrate housing, relationship-based case management, and participant-directed career plans into a shared goal of helping participants move toward quality, living-wage employment. The workforce system sets aside training and employment resources, which are available exclusively to the clients of Aligned Partner organizations. Those partner organizations offer client-centered vocational case management and access to housing or rent assistance, which is often funded through a contract with the housing authority or via the Continuum of Care.

The APN model has worked with a variety of target populations, including families with children, chronically homeless individuals with multiple barriers, survivors of domestic violence, people living with HIV/AIDS, people with Limited English Proficiency, and people with criminal backgrounds. The APN model leverages each system's or agency's expertise with the workforce system, to coordinate long-term support for people as they gain stability and develop plans for employment and career advancement.

¹⁰ SAMHSA's SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery Technical Assistance (SOAR TA) Center is funded by the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) (SAMHSA). This national project is designed to increase access to the disability income benefit programs administered by the [Social Security Administration](#) (SSA) for eligible adults who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have a mental illness and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder.

Richmond, VA

The Greater Richmond Continuum of Care works in eight localities with over 35 non-profit and public-sector partners to understand and address the needs of people experiencing homelessness. Several Richmond partner agencies work directly with workforce resources to assist households experiencing homelessness with navigating existing resources. These include a large emergency shelter with an employment and life skills program targeting men who are overcoming addiction and homelessness, and a nationally certified rapid re-housing provider that has incorporated employment services into its program. In addition, a permanent supportive housing provider developed supportive employment models to better serve their clients. The CoC recently began working with the DOL-funded workforce system to develop protocols that facilitate cross-system referrals for all sub-populations experiencing homelessness.

Salt Lake County, UT

In an effort to better coordinate and align goals of housing and employment, Utah's Department of Housing and Community Development joined with the Department of Workforce Services (DWS), local non-profit shelters, Salt Lake County and City government – Housing Divisions, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the local offices for the Department of Veterans Affairs, and local non-profit and governmental health clinics. (Note that the County manages the CoC, thereby integrating these programs.) DWS has 16 full-time staff stationed at local shelters and permanent supportive housing sites; 14 are employment counselors who focus on job search and employment strategies in a one-on-one environment with each customer. DWS offers several programs to customers that help them toward their goal of employment. Customers can apply for SNAP, financial assistance, Medicaid, child care, training funds, as well as get other help in learning how to find, get, and maintain a job. Customers who apply for any of the public assistance benefits receive an individualized employment plan, which targets a specific occupational goal based on an assessment, with associated services, tasks, and referrals to services that will help them to achieve their employment goal. A team of workers reaches out to those who may not qualify or be interested in any of the public assistance programs, to provide employment counseling, assessments, job coaching, and job search assistance to people experiencing homelessness, regardless of whether they are attached to a specific program.

Seattle-King County, WA

For 10 years, the City of Seattle, King County, United Way of King County, A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH), King County and Seattle Housing Authorities, suburban cities, and Building Changes and the Committee to End Homelessness, have jointly set funding priorities and implemented a joint application and allocation process to fund proposals that meet the goals of the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness. One of the priorities set by the Governing Board and Interagency Council of the Committee to End Homelessness, which oversees the implementation of the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness, is to improve the efficiency and coordination of existing resources.

With philanthropic and HUD CoC resources, Seattle has developed and employed Navigator models that enhance the workforce system's responsiveness to families experiencing homelessness and facilitate customers' connections across service-delivery systems. By making broad, high-level commitments to community-wide priority-setting and systems integration initiatives, Seattle is ensuring that limited resources are used to greatest effect.

Western Massachusetts

Western Massachusetts' employment efforts on behalf of individuals and families experiencing homelessness span dozens of providers through private, public and quasi-public funding, all working collaboratively under the coordinating umbrella of the Secure Jobs Advisory Council, facilitated by the Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness. The Secure Jobs Initiative pairs rapid re-

housing with employment and training. The region's employment efforts for homeless families and individuals include participation from all four county career centers, early education and childcare organizations, shelter and housing providers, community colleges, Regional Employment Boards, and multiple state agencies that intersect with the job-seeking homeless population.

This initiative began with the vision of the Paul and Phyllis Fireman Foundation, a long-time state partner in the effort to end family homelessness. The Foundation initially funded a Western Massachusetts planning grant to respond to employment needs for homeless families and individuals in spring 2012. Based on that plan's recommendations, The Foundation launched the Secure Jobs pilot project, with Western Massachusetts being one of five awards statewide. That initiative's success inspired the complementary publicly funded efforts now under way.

Innovative program approaches

Secure Jobs: Integrating rapid re-housing with employment services

The Paul and Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation initiated Secure Jobs with Massachusetts' Gov. Deval Patrick's administration and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness, Brandeis University, and others.

Secure Jobs began with funding for a one-year, \$1.5 million demonstration project to build a coordinated service system that links homeless households who are receiving rental assistance with the public workforce system. During this pilot year, the program supported five regional partnerships to secure employment for approximately 390 individuals. In Year 2, DHCD contributed \$1.5 million and The Paul and Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation contributed \$1 million to deepen and expand this regional work. The target goal for placements during Year 2 of Secure Jobs is 641 adults.

The regional partnerships are formed with representation from the homeless services system and the public workforce system to provide access to job readiness, skill training, job development, and job placement services. Importantly, the Department of Transitional Assistance contributed childcare and transportation services. The Secure Jobs partners have demonstrated the ability to cut across normal bureaucratic and service delivery boundaries to accurately assess the employability of each participant, remove barriers to employment, and secure the best job possible for each participant, so they have the skills, self-esteem, and knowledge to sustain and increase economic security once enrollment in the project ends.



Small-group spokespersons report out ideas and recommendations.



Participants take notes during small group discussion, to ensure that insightful ideas and recommendations are recorded and shared.

Output from the Summit

Working in small groups, participants responded to a series of questions aimed at Summit goals to learn together and act together (see page 6). Additionally, participants were encouraged to identify barriers to using Federal funding and programs. The purpose was to identify key activities that DOL, HUD, USICH and other Federal agencies could undertake in the near term 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. Federal agencies are currently considering ideas, recommendations, and perceived barriers to determine feasibility for implementation. The following pages summarize the input received and prioritized by Summit participants.

Participants' Ideas

Summit participants generated a range of ideas across four 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 non-profit organizations. After they generated ideas, participants were asked to rank the best ideas for consideration by Federal agencies. (See the full [report](#) for direct comments from the Summit participants on the prioritized ideas for recommendation to the Federal agencies.) A few of the prioritized ideas follow.

- **Match DOL measurements and eligibility to HUD's homelessness definition.** DOL performance measures may reduce the desire of the workforce system to work with people who are experiencing homelessness. Often people experiencing homelessness may lack documentation, which is necessary for enrollment in DOL-supported programs. Summit participants suggested that if DOL measurements and eligibility matched HUD's for homelessness, the workforce system would be more likely to serve this population. One idea was for DOL to provide detailed guidance on adjusting measures to consider the "degree of difficulty" of the population served that can be incorporated during performance measure negotiation between the states and DOL. DOL also could promote and allow presumptive eligibility requirements (i.e., if you are homeless by HUD standards then that is all that should be required by WIB's—no other documentation needed). Another idea suggested DOL clarify how to remove disincentives based on barriers (harder-to-employ individuals).
- **Align data systems.** The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and workforce system data systems are not aligned and use different definitions and outcomes. Consequently, it is very difficult to plan between the workforce and homeless assistance systems. To respond to this

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) state set aside

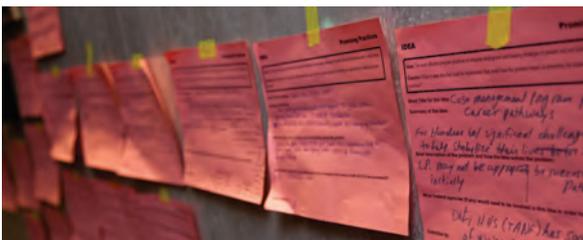
WIOA will allow governors to reserve, or set aside, formula funding under Title I to carry out statewide employment and training activities for youth, adults, and dislocated workers. Many states have used these "set aside" funds under WIA to innovate and advance systemic workforce development initiatives. These funds could be used by governors to create innovative, targeted and evidence-based workforce development strategies to address the needs of job-seekers experiencing homelessness. In addition, WIOA includes provisions to ensure that states and the Department of Labor work together to share these promising strategies; evaluate and disseminate information regarding these practices; and identify and commission research to address knowledge gaps, particularly as they relate to improving employment outcomes for eligible youth, including those who experience homelessness.



"Today is a key step advancing the Obama administration's efforts to end homelessness and critical to our ability to connect people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness with meaningful and sustainable employment," said Laura Green Zeilinger, Executive Director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. "But ending homelessness is not just a one day effort; it requires day-in and day-out sustained energy, motivation and clarity around a shared vision and purpose."

issue, HUD and DOL could work together to pilot and share best practices in aligning HMIS and workforce system data to achieve better results in employment of people experiencing homelessness.

- **Provide entry-level jobs for people on career pathways.** While Summit participants expressed enthusiasm and support for career pathways approaches, they noted that spending time in training without earning income is not feasible for people experiencing homelessness. Instead, career pathways need to provide access to entry-level jobs so people experiencing homelessness can earn money and afford to pay for basic needs. In addition, education and training hours need to be compatible with work schedules, which often include evening and weekends.
- **Reduce case loads.** Many of the promising practices work best with small caseloads and require offering support to people in the workplace. To support clients who are experiencing homelessness, DOL, HUD, HHS, and other Federal agencies could work together to identify those programs that can fund case management at low caseload ratios.
- **Issue a national challenge to encourage training and employment.** DOL, in partnership with HUD and the White House, could issue a national challenge to train and employ people experiencing homelessness (like the Mayor’s challenge to end Veteran’s homelessness). Governors could be challenged to use a portion of their 15 percent set-aside to fund targeted services to homeless populations with barriers. DOL could strongly advise states how to make this part of their allocation process, suggest best practices, and highlight ways to leverage additional funds from other Federal and private sources. Governors that participate in the challenge would be recognized and receive Federal technical assistance.
- **Promote awareness of the SNAP E&T Program.** The lack of state and local knowledge about the SNAP Employment and Training program was noted as a real opportunity to increase resources to serve people who experience and are at-risk of homelessness. USDA and HUD could promote awareness of the availability of Federal SNAP matching funds and that all sheltered homeless are SNAP eligible. This effort could particularly benefit non-disabled, non-Veteran single adults without children who are not eligible, or are not a priority for most other Federally funded training programs.



Participants post the most promising practices to integrate employment and housing strategies to the Idea Wall.



Idea

Work Across System Silos to Support Access to Employment and Opportunity for Homeless Job-seekers

In order to leverage all available mainstream and targeted Federal resources to prevent and end homelessness, USICH, DOL, HUD, VA, the Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, and others could work together to support a continuum of career pathways and supports for people experiencing homelessness, including ensuring that system and program performance measures are outcome-oriented, aligned when appropriate across multiple programs and systems, and focused on supportive services as an essential component of a career pathway continuum. Funding within these agencies and others could bridge silos to make it easier to serve job-seekers experiencing homelessness.



Participants presented ideas to improve job-seekers’ employment opportunities. Federal agencies may implement the recommendations that are within the scope of their authority and resources, or promote them to states and communities.

Recommendations from Summit Participants

During the Summit, participants generated recommendations for Federal agencies across the same categories noted above. Through this process, community teams identified possible ways 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. Federal agencies are in the process of reviewing these recommendations and considering the feedback from Summit participants to determine feasibility for implementation. (See the full [report](#) for direct comments from the Summit participants for recommendations to the Federal agencies. A few of the recommendations are included below.)



After sharing challenges and ideas, Summit attendees voted on the recommendations they generated that lay the groundwork for improving practices and policies.



Idea

National Demonstration Project to Combine Rapid Re-housing Plus Employment

Program models combining rapid re-housing and employment interventions have shown promise in both stabilizing individuals in housing and creating pathways to employment. Indeed, if the investment in rapid re-housing is to succeed, individuals and families need to increase income to access and maintain permanent housing. In order to promote adoption of rapid re-housing and employment, HUD and DOL could work together to spearhead a national demonstration project focused on combining rapid re-housing and employment interventions. Employment interventions such as transitional jobs, subsidized employment, IPS Supported Employment or others that blend wage-paid real work and experiential work and learning could be prioritized in order to get much needed income into the hands of individuals and families and promote work-based skill building. Philanthropic organizations could participate by supporting the evaluation and technical assistance aspects of the demonstration.



Participants presented ideas to improve job-seekers' employment opportunities. Federal agencies may implement the recommendations that are within the scope of their authority and resources, or promote them to states and communities.

- **Federal agencies should collaborate to issue joint guidance.** HUD, DOL, HHS, and other Federal agencies could work together to provide guidance to the homeless assistance system and workforce system to encourage and show how to integrate housing and employment services. Topics could include performance measures and outcomes, data sharing, how to work with varying definitions of homelessness and program eligibility, incorporate employment into coordinated assessment, refer individuals to workforce and homeless assistance systems, and ways that HHS-funded and other Federally funded benefits programs can fit within the DOL/ HUD funding streams. Guidance could be supplemented with technical assistance on best practices for methods to blend funding, policy, procedure, outcomes, and implementation.
- **Federal agencies should issue more information about federal resources.** Federal agencies could provide more information and guidance on how to harness Federal resources. This included promoting USDA's SNAP E&T Program, providing how-to guidance on combining TANF with DOL and HUD resources to serve families in integrated employment and housing programs, providing guidance on how providers can access and use U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration, and creating a crosswalk of available funding sources and ways to use these resources to fund all the components of an integrated housing and employment program for people experiencing homelessness.

- ***DOL and HUD should partner to educate the workforce system about job-seekers who are experiencing homelessness.*** DOL and HUD could partner to educate the workforce system about the strengths and needs of the job-seekers who are experiencing homelessness and how homeless services are organized. Participants suggested joint Federal training and professional development for the workforce system frontline staff to support job-seekers experiencing homelessness.
- ***DOL should encourage Workforce Development Boards to connect with planning resources.*** With the implementation of WIOA, DOL could encourage states and local Workforce Development Boards to include CoC's in the planning process, use HMIS and PIT data to identify special populations in order to focus efforts on serving people experiencing homelessness, and provide how-to examples of planning processes.
- ***Make American Job Centers more hospitable to job-seekers experiencing homelessness.*** American Job Centers (AJCs) could be more accommodating to people with histories of homelessness. Recommendations included placing AJC staff experts within the homeless system, and promoting the use of “navigators” within the AJCs to serve as liaisons to clients referred by the homeless assistance system.

Barriers Identified by Summit Participants

Summit participants were asked to consider the Federal policy barriers that impact their approach to implementing employment, training, and career pathways for people experiencing or most at-risk of homelessness. Communities provided examples of ways they have overcome, or attempted to overcome, these barriers in addition to identifying potential opportunities where Federal assistance and support can help to advance local efforts. Federal partners are committed to the detailed review of each identified barrier to determine where a barrier actually exists (e.g., legislative or statutory challenges), or where there may be a need for guidance or stronger communication about the intent of policy or program implementation and the parameters of local discretion (e.g., “myth-busting”).

Participants emphasized the need for greater clarity on the following:

- how Federal agencies define success in responding to homelessness across Federal programs;
- opportunities to encourage funding sources; and
- processes to encourage more collaboration and the use of coordinated entry systems to integrate homeless assistance systems with employment and training systems-related mainstream supports, such as child care, public benefits, and transportation.



Idea

Ensure Career Pathways Programs Include Rapid Attachment to Work and Onramps to Opportunity

The recent passage and signing of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) prioritizes and acknowledges the need for workforce services and supports for adults and youth facing barriers to employment, and provides greater flexibility to implement promising practices for connecting chronically unemployed individuals to work. WIOA prioritizes the implementation of career pathways models, work-based learning models, and integration of contextualized education and training. In order to ensure that career pathways programs truly create pathways to good jobs for people experiencing homelessness, DOL could encourage local career pathways programs to include strategies that create opportunities at the front end for lower-skilled, job-seekers like transitional jobs, subsidized employment, social enterprise, and supported employment that offer wage-paid, real-work opportunities for individuals to gain hands-on work experience while earning a paycheck to meet basic needs. DOL could also prioritize blending contextualized education and training in career pathways to equip job-seekers with the education and math skills necessary to qualify for meaningful and sustainable jobs. Technical assistance that incorporates how-to guidance on serving people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness and providing extra supports and connections would be beneficial.



Participants presented ideas to improve job-seekers' employment opportunities. Federal agencies may implement the recommendations that are within the scope of their authority and resources, or promote them to states and communities.

In summary, program-specific barriers included:

Public Benefits Systems: Participants signaled that as individuals and families experiencing homelessness return to work and add earned income, they tend to become too quickly ineligible for safety-net program assistance such as HHS' Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and SSA's Social Security Income (SSI), and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). This can create an abrupt and a difficult transition. However, states have the flexibility to provide a gradual reduction in TANF benefits for people newly employed or re-employed, through policy levers such as income disregards, periodic bonuses to families who leave the TANF program, and non-assistance work support payments

to make the transition into jobs smoother, thereby increasing economic stability for people experiencing homelessness.



Idea

Understand and Address Safety Net Cliffs

Public benefits and income supports such as housing, child care, transportation, nutrition, and cash assistance decrease at different points as individuals' and families' earnings increase. For individuals and families experiencing homelessness, this can create "cliffs" at points in time when earnings may be too high to allow them to access public benefits or income supports, but fall short of allowing them to meet basic needs for housing or food. Such cliffs can create disincentives to engaging in work opportunities and force low-income individuals to choose between paying the rent and utilities and buying groceries. Federal agencies could issue guidance and messaging on policies that states can implement to decrease the cliff effect for individuals and families by changing the sliding scale and adopting earned income disregards.



Participants presented ideas to improve job-seekers' employment opportunities. Federal agencies may implement the recommendations that are within the scope of their authority and resources, or promote them to states and communities.

DOL's Workforce Systems: Summit participants identified barriers in the categories of eligibility and documentation, misaligned performance measures, too little engagement with the business and employer community, and lack of focus on serving people experiencing homelessness. Fortunately, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) will eliminate or reduce many of these barriers and improve current workforce systems with the adoption of career pathways and other practices focused on growing skills and improving economic stability for adults and youth experiencing homelessness. Federal agencies will be releasing guidance and providing technical assistance to community partners in planning and implementing state and local workforce development plans to include a focus on serving people experiencing homelessness.

HHS' Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program:

Participants cited that the complexity and rigidity of the work requirements in the TANF program can force states to design their

TANF programs in ways that compromise, rather than promote, the goal of connecting parents experiencing homelessness to employment. Furthermore, participants identified misaligned performance measures that prioritize participation and placement in a job over the quality of the job placement, leading to low wages, little room for advancement, and often a cycle back to the TANF program. Federal partners are exploring additional clarification and guidance to support the design of local systems that promote a family's ability to enter jobs with living wages with the opportunity for advancement – which is a critical factor in exiting homelessness for good.

Presentations to the Federal Leadership

The Partnerships Summit concluded with presentations made to the Secretary of the Department of Labor (DOL) Tom Perez, Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Julián Castro, and Executive Director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) Laura Zeilinger. The aim of the presentations was to provide concrete and actionable recommendations to leaders of these Federal agencies that would improve employment and earnings of homeless job-seekers. Eight recommendations were presented. The recommendations reflect the community perspective and input from Summit participants. DOL, HUD, and USICH are reviewing the recommendations and, subject to allowable authority and resources, will implement and promote these policies and practices to states and communities. A summary of all presentations is available at this [link](#). A few of the presentations are highlighted throughout this report.

Moving Forward

DOL, HUD, HHS, USICH and other Federal agencies are developing activities in the near term and longer term that will sustain the partnership between homeless assistance and employment programs going forward. Partnering with the Butler Family Fund and the Heartland Alliance, the Federal team is working to identify a set of high-impact and meaningful next steps based on input from the Summit. The next steps may include joint guidance from Federal agencies, new technical assistance resources, improvements to Federal programs to help implement local integrated approaches to employment and training for people experiencing homelessness, and opportunities for continued sharing among local, state, and national organizations in partnership with the Federal agencies that comprise USICH.

With the right collaborative leadership across all levels of government and sectors, an aligned sense of purpose, and knowledge of effective strategies, the capacity to accelerate progress to end and prevent homelessness through appropriate and meaningful employment is within reach.

U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Thomas Perez (left) and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julián Castro (right) join hands at the request of a community partner to signify the commitment each Department has to continued collaboration and the acceleration of federal efforts to connect people experiencing homelessness with increased economic security through employment and career services.



Idea

Prioritize Serving Homeless Job-seekers with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Governor's Discretionary Funds

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) allows the ability to reserve a portion of WIOA funds for discretionary workforce investment activities. Allowable activities have been expanded to cover a range of activities, including innovative services to individuals with barriers to employment, non-traditional employment programs, coordination with programs from other agencies, demonstration projects, implementing promising practices, and performance incentive grants. In addition, for eligible youth who have not completed secondary school, the Governor's Discretionary funds can be used to encourage them to reenter and complete secondary education, enroll in postsecondary education and advanced training, progress through a career pathway, and enter into unsubsidized employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency. DOL could issue guidance and messaging to states to utilize Governor's Discretionary funds to support the implementation of employment interventions targeted at homeless job-seekers and other vulnerable populations. DOL and HUD could host a challenge competition to encourage states to fund projects that integrate WIOA and HUD's Emergency Solutions Grant Program funds. The competition could award Federal technical assistance and leverage philanthropic participation to support evaluation.



Participants presented ideas to improve job-seekers' employment opportunities. Federal agencies may implement the recommendations that are within the scope of their authority and resources, or promote them to states and communities.



Appendix 1

Description of the Partnerships Summit

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 [U.S. Department of Labor](#) (DOL), the [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) (HUD), the [U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness](#) (USICH) and the [Butler Family Fund](#). The Summit took place in the Great Hall at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, DC.

Laura Zeilinger, Executive Director of USICH, welcomed participants and opened the Summit, highlighting the central theme throughout the day: the connection between employment and stable housing. Roy Austin, Deputy Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs, Justice and Opportunity at the Domestic Policy Council at the White House, underscored President Obama's commitment to investing in America's workforce and helping people — including individuals and families experiencing homelessness — enter jobs with career ladders. DOL Secretary Thomas Perez spoke of the importance of connecting people experiencing homelessness to employment and of his personal passion for the issue, affirming the Administration's commitment to the goals of [Opening Doors](#) and recognizing the central role that meaningful employment plays in preventing and ending homelessness. DOL Deputy Assistant Secretary Gerri Fiala highlighted key opportunities under the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act](#) (WIOA) of 2014, and participants learned how individuals, including youth, experiencing homelessness are a targeted sub-population served by WIOA.

Representatives of the 11 communities invited to share practices delivered a fast-paced and high-impact presentation on local practices, challenges, and outcomes for employing people experiencing homelessness. The highly interactive Summit engaged participants in discussions to develop recommendations to improve policies and practices on the Federal level to break down silos and integrate workforce systems with homeless assistance systems, promote effective program practices, and harness mainstream Federal resources. Volunteers presented “big ideas” to Secretary Thomas Perez and Secretary Julián Castro, who responded to participants with potential actions for follow up: a pilot program to integrate rapid re-housing with employment services, partnerships with governors to strategically use Federal funding to create employment opportunities for people experiencing homelessness, and a re-evaluation of incentives for employers to hire employees with histories of homelessness. The Summit concluded with remarks by Ann Oliva, HUD, and Ben Seigel, DOL, who committed to continued partnership and noted that the foundation has been laid for a network of committed partners at the Federal, state, and local level.

October 16, 2014
Great Hall, U.S. Department of Labor
Washington DC

Agenda

Welcome	Laura Zeilinger, <i>USICH</i> Roy Austin, <i>WH DPC</i>
Remarks	Secretary Perez, <i>DOL</i>
Remarks	Gerri Fiala, <i>DOL</i>
Introductions	Barbara Poppe, <i>Barbara Poppe and Associates</i>
Community presentations	
Speed round presentations	Ben Seigel, <i>DOL</i>
Gallery walk	Martha Toll, <i>Butler Family Fund</i>
Share ideas & generate recommendations	Barbara Poppe, <i>Barbara Poppe and Associates</i>
Small Group #1: Busting through Silos	
Small Group #2: Promising Practices	
Small Group #3: Engaging the Private Sector & Employers/Harnessing Federal Resources beyond WIA and CoC	
Afternoon break	
Priority setting	
Sharing of ideas	Laura Zeilinger, <i>USICH</i> Secretary Perez, <i>DOL</i> Secretary Castro, <i>HUD</i>
Commitments & next steps	Ann Oliva, HUD and Ben Seigel, <i>DOL</i>

Appendix 2

Key Informant Interviews

The following organizations participated in key informant interviews with Barbara Poppe:

Organization	Individuals
CLASP	Vickie Choitz and Elizabeth Lower-Basch
Gulf Coast Workforce Investment Board (Houston/Galveston region)	Mike Temple
National Skills Coalition	Rachel Gragg
National Association Workforce Boards	Ron Painter
National Transitional Jobs Network	Melissa Young
National Youth Employment Coalition	Mala Thakur
REDF	Carla Javits
U.S. Department of Agriculture	Moira Johnston
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	Multiple
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	Ann Oliva

Appendix 3

Partnerships Summit Participants

Community Participants

Chicago, IL

Ray	Bentley	The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership	Chief Program Officer
Nonie	Brennan	All Chicago	CEO
Felix	Matlock	Mercy Housing Lakefront	Vice President - Resident Services
Karin	Norington-Reaves	The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership	CEO
John	Pfeiffer	Chicago Department of Family and Support Services	First Deputy Commissioner

Houston, TX

Cathy	Crouch	SEARCH Homeless Services	Executive Vice-President
Greg	Hambrick	Baxter Trust	Chairman
Mike	Temple	Gulf Coast Workforce Board	Director
Eva	Thibaudeau	Coalition for the Homeless	Director of Programs/CoC
Alberto	Uribe	SER Jobs for Progress - Houston	Lead Agency Associate Executive Director

Los Angeles, CA

Kathy	Godfrey	Economic and Workforce Development Department	Chief Operating Officer
Michael	Graff-Weisner	Chrysalis	Vice President, Programs & Government Relations
Monica	Guthrie-Davis	Weingart Center Association	Vice President of Programs & Services
Abigail	Marquez	City of Los Angeles, Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti	Executive Director External Affairs
Robert	Sainz	City of LA - EWDD	Director, Workforce Development & Economic Opportunity
Orlando	Ward	Volunteers of America Greater Los Angeles	Assistant General Manager

Nashville, TN

Erik	Cole	Mayor's Office, Metro Government of Nashville and Davidson County	Director of Financial Empowerment
Will	Connelly	Metropolitan Homelessness Commission	Director
Matthew	Gloster	Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee, Inc.	Senior Director
Ellen	Zinkiewicz	Middle TN Workforce Investment Board	Director of Youth and Community Services

Phoenix, AZ

Belinda	Hanson	Arizona Department of Economic Security	Region Manager
Darlene	Newsom	UMOM New Day Centers	CEO
Amy	Schwabenlender	Valley of the Sun United Way	Vice President
Cynthia	Tweh	City of Phoenix	Deputy Community and Economic Development Director

Portland, OR

Jennifer	Chang	Portland Housing Bureau	Program Coordinator
Clay	Cooper	Central City Concern	Director of Employment Services and Social Enterprises
Rachel	Devlin	Home Forward	Strategic Initiatives Program Director
Pam	Hester	Worksystems	Senior Project Manager
Rachel	Post	Central City Concern	Public Policy Director

Salt Lake County, UT

Karla	Aguirre	Department of Workforce Services	Director
Jeremy	Christensen	Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health	Assistant Director
Jonathan	Hardy	Department of Workforce Services	Director
Janice	Kimball	Housing Authority of the County of Salt Lake	Director of Programs and Operations / CoC Representative
Kerry	Steadman	Salt Lake County Government	Community Services Manager

Seattle, WA

Sarah	Chavez	WDC of Seattle-King County	Project Manager
Nick	Codd	Building Changes	Senior Economic Opportunities Specialist
Dale	Peinecke	Washington State Employment Security Department	Commissioner
Mark	Putnam	Committee to End Homelessness in King County	Director
Marlena	Sessions	Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County	Chief Executive Officer

Twin Cities, MN

Gail	Anderson	Hennepin County	Human Services Supervisor
Heidi	Boyd	Hennepin County	Project Manager
Annika	Dommer	Goodwill-Easter Seals	Workforce

Steve	Erbes	MN Dept. of Employment and Economic Development	Development Manager Employment and Training Program Coordinator
Carrie	Scheffler	RESOURCE Inc.	Center Director
Patricia	Yates	Ramsey County Workforce Solutions	Planner

Richmond, VA

Brian	Davis	Capital Region Workforce Partnership	Executive Director
Kelly	Horne	Homeward	Executive Director
Dave	Norris	United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg	Director of Community Impact: Income
Cordelia	Starkes	Goodwill of Central Virginia	Operations Manager
Deborah	Woolford	Virginia Employment Commission (VEC)	Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP)

Western MA

David	Gadaire	CareerPoint	Executive Director
Lisa	Lapierre	Corporation for Public Management	Director of Employment and Training
Pamela	Schwartz	Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness	Director
Lynne	Wallace	HAPHousing	Executive Vice President/COO
Phyllis	White	Franklin Hampshire Career Center	Programs Director

Other

KJermaine	Hampton	Friendship Place
N'Neka	Hawkins	Friendship Place
Tiffini	Jackson	Friendship Place
Ajibade	Jegede	Friendship Place
Mariam	Nek	Friendship Place

National Organizations

Nancy	Baker	Employment and Social Development Canada	Manager, Community Engagement and Knowledge Development
Steve	Berg	National Alliance to End Homelessness	President & CEO
Andre	Bryan	Harris Teeter	Workforce Investment Associate
Anna	Cielinski	CLASP	Senior Policy Analyst
Baylee	Crone	National Coalition for Homeless Veterans	Executive Director
Manuela	Ekowo	CLASP	Research Assistant
Janice	Elliott	Melville Charitable Trust	Executive Director
Tim	Foran	Employment and Social Development Canada	Director, Homelessness Partnering Strategy
Rachel	Gragg	National Skills Coalition	Federal Policy Director
Alex	Highley	Barbara Poppe & Associates	Intern
Carla	Javits	REDF	President and CEO
Janette	Kawachi	CSH	Director of Innovations and Research
Anne	Miskey	Funders Together to End Homelessness	Executive Director
Anne	Morin	Butler Family Fund	Program Officer
Barbara	Poppe	Barbara Poppe & Associates	Principal
John	Rio	Advocates for Human Potential	Senior Associate
Nan	Roman	National Alliance to End Homelessness	Vice President for Programs and Policy
Amy	Rynell	Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights	Senior Director, Research and Policy
Jody	Snider	Butler Family Fund	Board Member
Martha	Toll	Butler Family Fund	Executive Director
Eve	Wildrick	Butler Family Fund	Board President
Melissa	Young	Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights	Director, National Initiatives on Poverty & Economic Opportunity

Federal Agencies

Lauren	Antelo	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	Senior Fellow
Amanda	Benton	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services / ASPE	Federal Program Coordinator
Annie	Blackledge	U.S. Department of Education	Special Assistant to the Director
Leigh	Gantner	U.S. Department of Agriculture	Program Analyst
Chantenia	Gay	U.S. Department of Labor / ILAB	
Nora	Gilligan	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	Special Assistant
Jasmine	Hayes	U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness	Policy Director
Carma	Heitzmann	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	Director, Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services
Ryan	Jones	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	
Kevin	Kissinger	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	Homeless Programs Specialist
Anthony	Love	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	Director of Community Engagement
Brian	Lyght	U.S. Department of Labor	Senior Fellow
Laura	MacDonald	U.S. Department of Labor	Senior Policy Advisor
Tiffany	McCormack	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	
John	McLaughlin	U.S. Department of Education	
Peter	Nicewicz	U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness	Management and Program Analyst
Robert	Pfaff	U.S. Social Security Administration	Acting Deputy Associate Commissioner
Kalen	Pruss	U.S. Department of Labor	Office of the Secretary
Ben	Seigel	U.S. Department of Labor	
Todd	Shenk	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	Special Assistant
Jeff	Simms	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services / ASPE	Social Science Analyst
Joaquin	Tamayo	U.S. Department of Education	Social Science Analyst
Marcy	Thompson	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	
Jennifer	Troke	U.S. Department of Labor	
Susan	Wilschke	U.S. Social Security Administration	Deputy Associate Commissioner
Laura	Zeilinger	U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness	Executive Director