



# United States Interagency Council on Homelessness

## CHARTER

### I. OFFICIAL DESIGNATION

United States Interagency Council on Homelessness ("USICH").

### II. AUTHORITY

USICH is an *independent establishment* within the executive branch, authorized by Congress through Title II of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 (42 U.S.C. 11311 et seq.), as amended.

### III. MISSION

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

### IV. COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

The Council shall be composed of the following members:

- A. The Secretary of Agriculture, or the designee of the Secretary.
- B. The Secretary of Commerce, or the designee of the Secretary.
- C. The Secretary of Defense, or the designee of the Secretary.
- D. The Secretary of Education, or the designee of the Secretary.
- E. The Secretary of Energy, or the designee of the Secretary.
- F. The Secretary of Health and Human Services, or the designee of the Secretary.
- G. The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, or the designee of the Secretary.
- H. The Secretary of the Interior, or the designee of the Secretary.
- I. The Secretary of Labor, or the designee of the Secretary.
- J. The Secretary of Transportation, or the designee of the Secretary.
- K. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or the designee of the Secretary.
- L. The Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service, or the designee of the Chief Executive Officer.
- M. The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or the designee of the Administrator.
- N. The Administrator of General Services, or the designee of the Administrator.
- O. The Postmaster General of the United States, or the designee of the Postmaster General.
- P. The Commissioner of Social Security, or the designee of the Commissioner.
- Q. The Attorney General of the United States, or the designee of the Attorney General.
- R. The Director of the Office of Management and Budget, or the designee of the Director.

- S. The Director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, or the designee of the Director.
- T. The heads of such other Federal agencies or Administration officials or their designees, as the Council considers appropriate.

Additional members can be added by vote of the Council.

### **a. Voting**

If the matter of deciding any question has not been otherwise prescribed, it shall be decided by a majority vote of Council members. Two-thirds of the Council members shall constitute a quorum. Each Council member shall have one vote. A quorum is necessary for any Council action.

## **V. COUNCIL LEADERSHIP**

The Council is responsible for electing a Chair and a Vice Chair from among its members. The positions of Chair, Vice Chair, and Past Chair must rotate among its members, annually and at the first meeting of each year. The expectation is that the Vice Chair will rotate to the Chair. Should there be a vacancy in Council leadership, an agency can appoint its replacement Council designee.

### **a. Chair**

The Chair shall convene meetings of the Council. The Chair shall preside over meetings and ensure the Council collectively meets its functions and duties. The Chair shall set the final agenda for each meeting after considering recommendations from the Vice Chair, Past Chair, and Executive Director. The Chair shall develop and carry out a process to annually evaluate the performance of the Executive Director with input from the Vice Chair and other members of the Council, as requested by the Chair. Evaluation of the Executive Director's performance shall follow assessment guidelines established for the USICH Executive Director position.

### **b. Vice Chair**

The Vice Chair is expected to attend all four Council meetings per year and provide input to the Chair on meeting content and format. In the event the Chair is unable to attend, the Vice Chair will be asked to lead the meeting. The Vice Chair may also elevate attention on homelessness through public remarks, messaging or strategic communications, and special initiatives. The Vice Chair may be asked to participate in principal-level meetings with Council members and/or with the White House regarding key policy issues related to homelessness.

### **c. Past Chair**

The immediate Past Chair provides continuity of leadership and support to the current Chair. The Past Chair is expected to attend all four Council meetings per year.

## **VI. THE COUNCIL**

The Council meets at least four times a year, at the call of its Chair or a majority of its members, to advance federal collaboration and state and local coordination. The Council oversees strategic movement of federal homelessness initiatives. As statutorily required (four times a year).

## **a. Function and Duties**

The duties of the Council are specified in statute (42 U.S.C. 11313) and summarized below:

- i.** Submit to the President and to Congress a National Strategic Plan to End Homelessness, and shall update such plan annually.
- ii.** Review all Federal activities and programs to assist homeless individuals, and
  - a.** Take such actions as to reduce duplication among programs and activities; and
  - b.** Monitor, evaluate, and recommend improvements in programs and activities.
- iii.** Provide professional and technical assistance to States, local governments, and other public and private nonprofit organizations to:
  - a.** interpret regulations and assist in the application process for Federal assistance;
  - b.** provide assistance on the ways in which Federal programs may best be coordinated;
  - c.** develop recommendations and program ideas based on regional specific issues in serving people experiencing homelessness; and
  - d.** establish a schedule for regional workshops in each of the 10 standard Federal regions every two years.
- iv.** Encourage the creation of State Interagency Councils on Homelessness and the creation of 10-year plans to end homelessness locally.
- v.** Annually, identify consumer-oriented entitlement, mainstream, and other resources for which people experiencing homelessness may be eligible; identify improvements to ensure access for people experiencing homelessness; verify interagency and intergovernmental collaboration across such programs.
- vi.** Conduct research and evaluation related to the functions described in this section.
- vii.** Develop joint federal agency and other initiatives to fulfill the goals of USICH.
- viii.** Collect and disseminate information on individuals experiencing homelessness.
- ix.** Prepare and distribute a bimonthly bulletin that describes the Federal resources available to them to assist the homeless, including current information regarding application deadlines and appropriate persons to contact in each Federal agency providing the resources.
- x.** Develop constructive alternatives to criminalizing homelessness and laws and policies that prohibit sleeping, feeding, sitting, resting, or lying in public spaces when there are no suitable alternatives, result in the destruction of a homeless person's property without due process, or are selectively enforced against homeless persons.
- xi.** Prepare and transmit annual reports as required by 42 U.S.C. 11313 (c):
  - a.** Each member agency shall prepare and transmit to Congress and the Council an annual report that describes each homeless assistance program, the number of homeless individuals served by such program, impediments to program use by homeless individuals, and efforts made to increase the opportunities for homeless individuals to obtain shelter, food, and supportive services; and
  - b.** The Council shall prepare and submit to the President and Congress an annual report on homelessness, activities and accomplishments of the Federal Government and the Council to meet the needs of homeless individuals, assesses the level of Federal assistance, and specifies recommendations of the Council for appropriate legislative and administrative actions. USICH may compile annual reports on homelessness on behalf agencies.
- xii.** The Council shall notify the Inspector General of a Federal agency (or the head of the Federal agency, in the case of a Federal agency that has no Inspector General) if the Council determines any significant problem, abuse, or deficiency exists in the administration of programs or activities to assist homeless individuals conducted by any Federal agency.
- xiii.** Other applicable duties as stated in applicable statutes.

## **b. Delegation of Duties**

### **i. Executive Director**

The Council appoints an Executive Director at the first meeting of the Council. By way of appointment as Executive Director, the Council approves the Executive Director's authority to appoint additional personnel as necessary to carry out the duties of the Council. The Executive Director shall report to the Chair of the Council. This position is responsible for overseeing the administration and strategic plan of the agency. The Executive Director is responsible, overall, for staff performance and oversight of staff to meet the needs and requirements of the agency's mission. The Executive Director may delegate responsibility in these areas to the Chief Operating Officer, Chief of Staff, or direct supervisors. Other staffing positions and needs are determined by the Executive Director, as empowered by the Council through Statute.

### **ii. Personnel**

Required Staff. By statute (42 U.S.C. 11313(a)(5)), no more than 10 but no less than 5 regional coordinators must be employed by the Council to provide professional and technical assistance.

Upon request of the Council, the head of any Federal agency may detail, on a reimbursable basis, any of the personnel of such agency to the Council to assist the Council in carrying out its duties.

## **VII. AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS TO THIS CHARTER**

It is expected that the activities of USICH will evolve over time and that this charter will be periodically updated to reflect those changes in activities. However, the mission that underlie those activities will remain – namely that USICH coordinates the Federal response to homelessness and creates a national partnership at every level of government and with the private sector to reduce and end homelessness in the nation while maximizing the effectiveness of the Federal Government in contributing to the end of homelessness. Amendments and revisions to this charter must be approved by the Council.