

Developing a State Interagency Council to End Homelessness

A Framework for Action
Updated April 2016





Purpose of a State Council

A State Interagency Council drives the state-wide response to homelessness:

- **Creates** a state plan to prevent and end homelessness that assesses overall needs, coordinates resources, and promotes national best practices. SIChs can facilitate alignment of state-wide and local plans with the goals, vision, values, and strategies of *Opening Doors*.
- **Fosters** the development of local community plans to end homelessness throughout the state.
- **Recommends** policy, regulatory, and resource changes needed to accomplish the objectives outlined in the state plan.



Purpose (cont.)

- **Ensures** accountability and results in implementation strategies.
- **Creates a state-wide partnership** with local stakeholders and local elected officials through Continuums of Care and Ten Year Planning Councils.
- **Promotes** a research-driven, performance-based, results-oriented plan and implementation strategy.
- **Sustains** a non-partisan approach to address homelessness.



Establishing a State Council

A State Interagency Council can be established in one of three ways:

1. Executive Order of the Governor*
2. Executive Order and Legislative Action
3. Legislative Action

*The most common vehicle is an Executive Order that identifies membership, meeting frequency, functions, and timeframe.



Example of an Executive Order

Executive Order Number 2004-13

The Honorable Janet Napolitano, Former Governor of Arizona

WHEREAS, multiple state agencies bear the responsibility of serving the homeless and those who are at risk of homelessness; and

WHEREAS, ending homelessness requires collaboration among state agencies, local governments, the private sector and service provider networks to coordinate program development, deliver essential services and provide housing; and

WHEREAS, ending or reducing homelessness contributes to economic development and improves the overall quality of life within our communities;



Example (cont.)

Executive Order Number 2004-13

The Honorable Janet Napolitano, Former Governor of Arizona

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Janet Napolitano, Governor of the State of Arizona, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of this State, hereby order and direct as follows:

1. The Governor's Interagency and Community Council on Homelessness (the "Council") is created to develop and implement a plan to prevent and end homelessness in the State of Arizona.
2. The Council shall be chaired by the Governor of the State of Arizona, and in his/her absence, co-chaired by the Directors of the Department of Economic Security and the Department of Housing, each of whom shall have the power to convene the Council.



Example (cont.)

Executive Order Number 2004-13

The Honorable Janet Napolitano, Former Governor of Arizona

3. The Council shall be comprised of the following eighteen (18) members, each of whom shall be appointed by the Governor, and serve, without compensation, at the pleasure of the Governor:
 - Director, Department of Economic Security; Director, Department of Housing;
 - Director, Governor's Office for Children, Youth and Families; Director, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System;
 - Director, Department of Health Services; Director, Arizona Department of Corrections; Director, Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections; Director, Arizona Department of Commerce;
 - Director, Arizona Department of Veterans' Services; Director, the Office of the Courts;
 - Director, Government Information Technology Agency; The Arizona School Superintendent (or his/her designee); and
 - Six members of the public.



Council Membership - State

Representatives from the following elected and appointed state offices:

- Governor's Office
- Lieutenant Governor's Office
- Judicial Offices
- Attorney General's Office
- State Fiscal or Comptroller's Office

AND...



Council Membership - State (cont.)

Secretaries and Commissioners (or their representatives) from the following departments, agencies, and resources:

- Housing & Housing Finance
- Substance Abuse & Mental Health
- Veterans Affairs
- Office of Management & Budget
- Social Security/Disability Determinations
- Managed Care Entity
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Education
- State and County Corrections/ Public Safety/Juvenile Justice
- Labor/Employment Services
- Welfare
- Medicaid
- Transportation
- Children & Families/Youth Services
- Health & Human Services/Homelessness Services



Council Membership - Community

State Councils should include non-state and community stakeholders for their grassroots perspective. Some states have non-state officials as co-chairs.

Councils can include the following:

- Local Federal Officials
- Local elected leaders
- United Way and Philanthropic Groups
- Business and Corporate Representatives
- People with first hand experience of homelessness (currently or formerly)
- Local Continuum of Care Representatives
- Providers of Homeless Services, including Veteran - serving Groups
- State Advocacy Group Members
- Faith-Based Representatives



Council Membership - Federal

1. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) – Field Office Director, CPD Director, or Regional Administrator
2. Veterans Affairs (VA) – VISN Director or VISN Network Homeless Coordinator
3. Labor (DOL) – Regional Liaison to state or WIA Directors/Administrators
4. Health and Human Services (HHS) – Regional Liaison to state
5. Social Security Administration – Field Office Director
6. Agriculture (USDA) – State Director
7. USICH – Regional Coordinator



Council Organization

Three Alternative Models:

1. State officials and stakeholders meet as a group*
2. State officials and advisory group of stakeholders met separately
3. State officials only

*recommended



Chair, Terms, Meetings

Chair

- Chair or Co-chairs appointed by the governor, or
- Chair or Co-chairs elected within the Council

Terms

- Terms of the Chair or Co-chairs are set by Executive or Legislative Order or may be determined by the Council
- Terms for members are also set by Executive or Legislative Order or determined by the Council and are generally between 1 and 5 years, with many Councils offering up to 3 consecutive terms

Meetings

- Meeting frequency can vary from quarterly to monthly



Characteristics of a Successful Council

- Governor or Legislature initiated
- Active participation of Governor's Office
- Chaired/Co-chaired by Lt. Governor or Governor's Appointees (Secretaries, Commissioners, or Directors)
- Council representation maintained at the State Secretary or Deputy Secretary level
- Senior Staff dedicated to overseeing and implementing Council activities



Characteristics (cont.)

- Membership is represented by the core State Agencies:
 - Housing
 - Welfare
 - Human Services
 - Corrections
 - Labor/Economic Development
 - Education and Finance
- Council activities are performance-based and results-oriented with measurable outcomes that are periodically reviewed and documented in written reports
- Council is transparent and meetings are open to public



Characteristics (cont.)

- All stakeholders have a say in the process of creating a statewide plan and the accompanying action steps
- Member legislators are champions of the plan, strategy, and resources needed for homelessness initiatives in the legislature
- Coordination with local community planning processes is enhanced
- Council promotes fiscal responsibility and enhanced efficiency by identifying and eliminating duplicative programs and costs



Characteristics (cont.)

- Credible documentation of research-driven, measurable outcomes is available for future funding requests
- Greater buy-in is generated for elements of the strategy through expansive stakeholder involvement, including supportive housing, discharge planning, and assertive engagement initiatives
- Federal partners are engaged in joint discussions with the Council
- Membership or an Advisory Board to the State ICH includes community stakeholders and interested parties



Characteristics (cont.)

- Map out a state-wide production plan for supportive housing
- Coordinate goals and tasks of Balance of State Continuum of Care with local continuums
- Promote systems integration (e.g., health services and housing supports) to increase effectiveness and efficiency



Major Council Tasks

- Create the State Plan to End Homelessness
- Promote the plan and evaluate progress
- Monitor plan implementation
- Provide an annual progress report on the plan to the Governor and Legislature
- Disseminate information (e.g., data and best practices) to educate state officials and the public regarding issues related to homelessness
- Create a website that provides information on Council activities, copy of plan, membership and minutes
- Host an annual conference on homelessness



Key Elements of a State Plan

- Develop measurable goals to end homelessness
- Set targets and measure results
 - Set numeric goals for permanent housing units made available for target homeless populations
 - Measure progress using the annual point-in-time or other local data for the four population goals
 - Measure housing retention and how well homelessness programs help their clients become employed and access mainstream programs
- Create and coordinate statewide data collection and reporting system
- Assemble accurate fiscal and demographic information and research/data to support policy development and track outcomes



Align Plan with *Opening Doors*

State Councils are critical in aligning state and local plans with the four principal national goals as set forth in *Opening Doors*:

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



Align with Values of *Opening Doors*

State Councils promote state-wide plans based on a common set of values shared by federal, state, and local plans:

- Homelessness is unacceptable.
- There are no “homeless people,” but rather people who have lost their homes who deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Homelessness is expensive; it is better to invest in solutions.
- Homelessness is solvable; we know what works.
- Homelessness can be prevented.
- There is strength in collaboration.



Coordination with Local Plans

State takes on issues beyond reach of local plans:

- Provide tools and resources to local community plans
- State-wide data: HMIS
- Prisoner re-entry policies
- Coordination of state housing resources
- Guide overall production of supportive housing
- Guide local effort to align with national strategies, such as Housing First
- Support local connection to mainstream resources like Medicaid, TANF, education, employment
- Policy guidance to rural and small community plans



Navigating Political Transitions

- Maintain continuity through changes of administration
- Emphasize practical solutions and partnership over partisanship
- Obtain a new executive order re-authorizing the State Council
- Seek new executive appointments to lead State Council



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