

HB 5201 EHA/SHAP BUDGET NOTE REPORT

***From Transaction to Transformation:
Strategies to Achieve Equity and Accountability in
Oregon's Homeless System***



February 2019

OREGON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, HOUSING STABILITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY ACTION
PARTNERSHIP OF OREGON

Housing Stability Council Budget Note Subcommittee Members

Martin Campos-Davis
Executive Director
Oregon Human Development Corporation

Brenda Durbin
Director
Clackamas County Social Services

Christy Hahn
Homeless Services Policy Analyst
Oregon Housing and Community Services

Claire Hall
Commissioner
Lincoln County

Barb Higinbotham
Executive Director
Community in Action

Jimmy Jones
Executive Director
Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action
Agency

Mary Li
Member
Housing Stability Council

Vicki Massey
Interim Homeless Services Manager
Oregon Housing and Community Services

Margaret Salazar
Director
Oregon Housing and Community Services

Claire Seguin
Assistant Director, Housing Stabilization
Division
Oregon Housing and Community Services

Tricia Tillman
Equity and Inclusion Policy Analyst
Health Systems Division

Val Valfre
Chair
Housing Stability Council

Facilitated by: Mariah Acton
Strategic Business Analyst & Special Assistant to the Director
Oregon Housing and Community Services

Disclaimer

This report synthesizes approximately four months of work, discussion, and research by the Budget Note Subcommittee, which was assembled by Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS). The report does not reflect the personal opinion of any one Subcommittee member, but rather OHCS staff's attempt to capture the agreements reached in the Subcommittee's work. The report and agreements reached herein draw from research regarding best practices in the homeless services field nationally, including the experience of other communities where leadership and partnerships have successfully reduced homelessness. Any errors, omissions or other shortcomings should be attributed to OHCS, and not to the members of the Subcommittee.

Definitions

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are private or public non-profit organizations that were created by the federal government in 1964 to combat poverty in geographically designated areas. In order to reduce poverty in its community, a Community Action Agency works to better focus available local, state, federal, and private resources to assist low-income individuals and families to acquire useful skills and knowledge, to gain access to new opportunities, and to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Community Action Partnership of Oregon (CAPO) is a non-profit association that serves the agencies that serve Oregonians in need. These agencies are Community Action Agencies (CAAs), part of a nationwide poverty-fighting network. CAPO is comprised of 18 member organizations (17 CAAs and Oregon Human Development Corporation), serving Oregonians in every county in the state.

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) provides core funding to local agencies to reduce poverty, revitalize low income communities, and to empower low income communities to become self-sufficient.

Continuum of Care (CoC) is a funding source for homeless services programs provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Continuum are responsible for coordinating the full range of homelessness services in a geographic area, which may cover a city, county, metropolitan area, or an entire state.

Coordinated Entry and Assessment is a process developed to ensure that all people experiencing a housing crisis have a single or coordinated point of entry to the homeless delivery system. This type of entry allows homeless persons and those at-risk of homelessness to be quickly identified, assessed, referred, and connected to the appropriate housing resource available. It also facilitates the ability to prioritize the most vulnerable individuals and households for immediate assistance.

Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA) provides state funds through OHCS to supplement existing local programs and/or establish new programs designed to prevent and reduce homelessness. EHA funds are available for the following program components: street outreach, emergency and transitional shelter, transitional housing, homelessness prevention, supportive in-home services, rapid re-housing, data collection, real estate acquisition and rehabilitation, and community capacity building designed to enhance, expand or sustain homeless services. EHA program funding comes from legislatively-approved state general funds and the Document Recording Fee (DRF). OHCS contracts with CAA partners to deliver these services.

Equity and Racial Justice is the first priority in the OHCS Statewide Housing Plan. OHCS and CAAs commit to an intentional, data driven approach to reduce disparities in housing and social service provisions. OHCS is creating a system to analyze OHCS-funded programs and to removing identified barriers to accessing opportunities within those programs. Work in the 2019-2021 biennium will establish and measure equity and racial justice performance goals. This will help CAAs analyze their progress in meeting these goals.

Housing First models encourage clients to create and implement their own goals while immediately housing clients with no preconditions (except complying with a shelter code of conduct or standard lease agreement). Research has shown that Housing First programs increase housing stability for clients served, are cost effective compared to traditional services that impose sobriety prerequisites to shelter or housing, and increase client utilization of other services.

Housing Stability Council is OHCS's advisory body, which guides and advocates for the agency's work. The Council helps establish strategic direction and a policy framework for OHCS, specifically by issuing decisions regarding loans, grants, and funding awards. The Council helps the Director to foster constructive partnerships with other state agencies and key partners engaged in housing and community services, informs the Director's annual operating plan and biennial budget, and oversees OHCS operations through regular reports from the Director.

Incorporating Lived Experience of homelessness into program design and implementation is a commitment and framework to include everyone, especially people who have experienced homelessness, in planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Low and No Barrier Policies allow homeless individuals and households to access shelter, housing and services without preconditions such as sobriety, compliance with treatment plans, no pets, or agreement to participate in specific programs, activities, or classes. These policies allow the most in need to have access to shelter and housing.

Low Income Rental Housing Fund (LIRHF) program provides state funds through OHCS to CAAs for short-term and medium term rental assistance to very low income tenants who are unstably housed and at risk of homelessness. Assistance includes rent payments, housing related deposits and rent arrears. Funds are available for homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing, and data collection

Oregon Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS) is the state's housing finance agency. OHCS develops and implements policy, funding, and financing to support the creation and preservation of quality affordable housing and the provision of community-based services for lower and moderate income Oregonians.

Safe Havens are a form of supportive housing that serves hard-to-reach individuals experiencing homelessness who have severe mental illness. Safe havens target chronically homeless with mental illness and substance use problems.

State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP) provides state funds through OHCS for emergency shelters and related client supportive services for homeless individuals, families, and households. SHAP funds are available for the following program components: street outreach, emergency and transitional shelter, real estate acquisition and rehabilitation, and data collection. SHAP program funds come from legislatively-approved state general funds allocated on a biennial basis. OHCS contracts with CAA partners to deliver these services.

Acronyms

CAA	Community Action Agency
CAPO	Community Action Partnership of Oregon
CoC	Continuum of Care
CSBG	Community Services Block Grant
DRF	Document Recording Fee
EHA	Emergency Housing Assistance Program
EPIC	<u>E</u> nding Homelessness, <u>P</u> reventing Homelessness, <u>I</u> nclusion & Diversity, <u>C</u> apacity of the Community
GDIB	Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks
HMIS	Homeless Management Information System
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
LIRHF	Low-Income Rental Housing Fund Program
MGA	Master Grant Agreement
OHCS	Oregon Housing and Community Services
OHDC	Oregon Human Development Corporation
PIT	Point-in-Time Count
PSH	Permanent Supportive Housing
ROCC	Rural Oregon Continuum of Care
SHAP	State Homeless Assistance Program
SWHP	Statewide Housing Plan

HB 5201 Budget Note

“The Housing Stability Council, in alignment with preliminary findings from the Statewide Housing Plan, shall make recommendations to the Director of Oregon Housing and Community Services about how to prioritize funding for the Emergency Housing Account (EHA) and the State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP) to ensure that funds are being spent as efficiently and effectively as possible. At a minimum, the Council shall consider how the use of funding incentivizes regionally and nationally recognized best practices, and outcome oriented strategies, to create a more effective system to prevent and reduce homelessness. The Director shall present recommendations to the Legislature by February 28, 2019.”

Introduction and Background

In 2018, the Oregon State Legislature included a Budget Note in House Bill 5201, which included the funding for the Emergency Housing Account (EHA) and the State Housing Assistance Program (SHAP). These funds, which are managed by Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS), are utilized by the Community Action Agency (CAA) network and Oregon Human Development Corporation (OHDC) to deliver services to prevent and end homelessness across Oregon. The Budget Note requires a set of recommendations be delivered to the Legislature by February 28, 2019, regarding the transformation of the homeless services delivery system in Oregon into a more efficient and effective system to prevent and reduce homelessness.

This series of recommendations included in this document responds directly to the important elements called out in the Budget Note language:

- I. Alignment with the Statewide Housing Plan (SWHP)
- II. Use of Outcome Oriented Strategies
- III. Establishment of Funding Priorities for EHA and SHAP
- IV. Use of Best Practices in Homeless Services Delivery
- V. Creation of an Efficient and Effective System to Prevent and Reduce Homelessness

Oregonians in Need

The need for transformation is clear; more Oregonians are experiencing the crisis of homelessness presently, than in the recent past. According to the 2017 Point-in-Time (PIT) count, approximately 14,000 Oregonians experienced homelessness on one night in January, an increase of nearly 6% since the previous full count in 2015. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that Continuum of Care (CoCs) conduct a count of homeless persons who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and safe havens, as well as those who are living in places not meant for human habitation, on a single night.

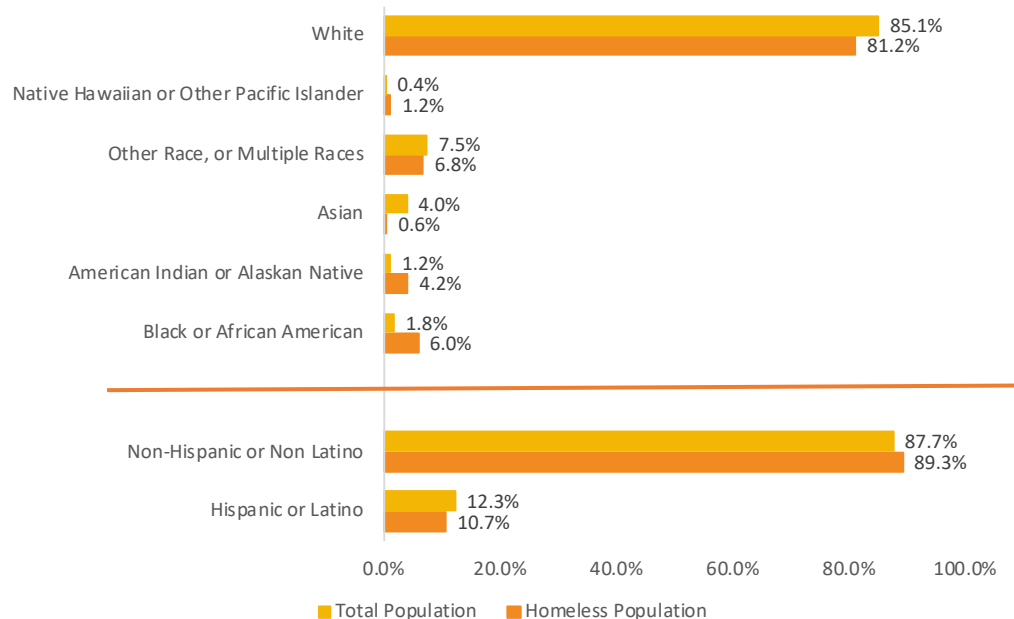
The number of Veterans experiencing homelessness in Oregon highlights the need to focus resources on this subpopulation. According to the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) produced by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)¹, Oregon had the 25th

¹ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *The 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress: Part 1: Point-in Time Estimates of Homelessness*, (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2017).

largest number of Veterans in the country but the fifth largest number of Veterans experiencing homelessness, and is one of only three states in the country where more than half (53%) of Veterans experiencing homelessness were living without shelter. Homeless Veterans are more likely than the overall homeless population to be chronically homeless, with 36% of homeless Veterans experiencing chronic homelessness, compared to 25% of the overall homeless population. Chronic homelessness is defined as an individual with one or more disabilities who has been homeless or living in emergency shelter continuously for at least one year or on at least four separate occasions in the last three years, where the cumulative total of the four occasions is at least one year.

Similarly, people of color² are generally overrepresented in the homeless population. Exhibit 1 depicts the composition by race and ethnicity of people experiencing homelessness. According to this information, Black or African American Oregonians are the most overrepresented race in the Point in Time data, accounting for 6.0% of all Oregonians experiencing homelessness but representing only 1.8% of the total state population. American Indian or Alaskan Native Oregonians are also overrepresented in the Point in Time data, accounting for 4.2% of all Oregonians experiencing homelessness, but representing only 1.2% of the total state population. However, Asian Oregonians, White Oregonians, Oregonians of another race or two or more races, and Hispanics of any race are underrepresented in the Point in Time data.

Exhibit 1. Homeless Individuals by Race and Ethnicity, 2017

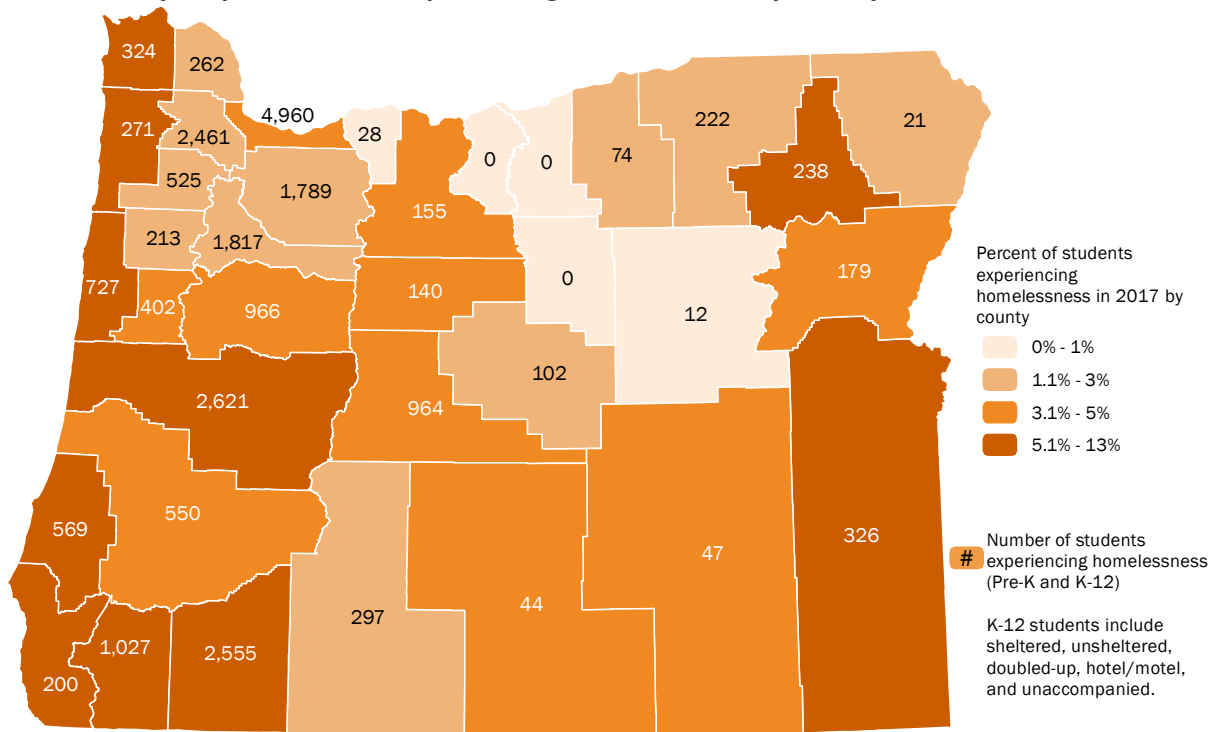


Source: ECONorthwest analysis of 2017 Point-in-Time estimates from each Oregon Continuum of Care, aggregated by OHCS.
 Note: Any PIT respondent identifying as Hispanic or Latino and another race is included in the Hispanic or Latino category.

² Census data tends to undercount people of color for a variety of reasons. This is a particular issue for undocumented immigrant populations. In addition, not all people of color are well represented by the general race and ethnicity categories available on the Census forms. The general categories also obscure the different outcomes for some Asian American populations within this larger data category.

According to the 2017 Point in Time Count, approximately 3,500 Oregonians experiencing homelessness were families with children. The majority (52%) are living without shelter, which is the second highest rate of unsheltered families with children in the country.³ In addition to the PIT Count, the Oregon Department of Education estimates that 21,756 students were homeless or at risk of homelessness in some form, including approximately 17,000 students doubled-up and living with friends and or family members during the 2017-2018 school year⁴. The number of homeless students has increased for four straight years, including a 5.6% increase from the previous school year. As can be seen in Exhibit 2, in some counties, more than 10% of students are experiencing some form of homelessness.⁵

Exhibit 2. County Map of Students Experiencing Homelessness by County, 2016-17 School Year



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of Oregon Department of Education Homeless Student Data, 2016-2017

In addition, Oregon’s unsheltered population has increased more rapidly than the sheltered population, and the state’s rate of unsheltered homelessness is the third highest in the nation at 57%. The state is also in the top five nationally for the rates of chronic homelessness, unsheltered

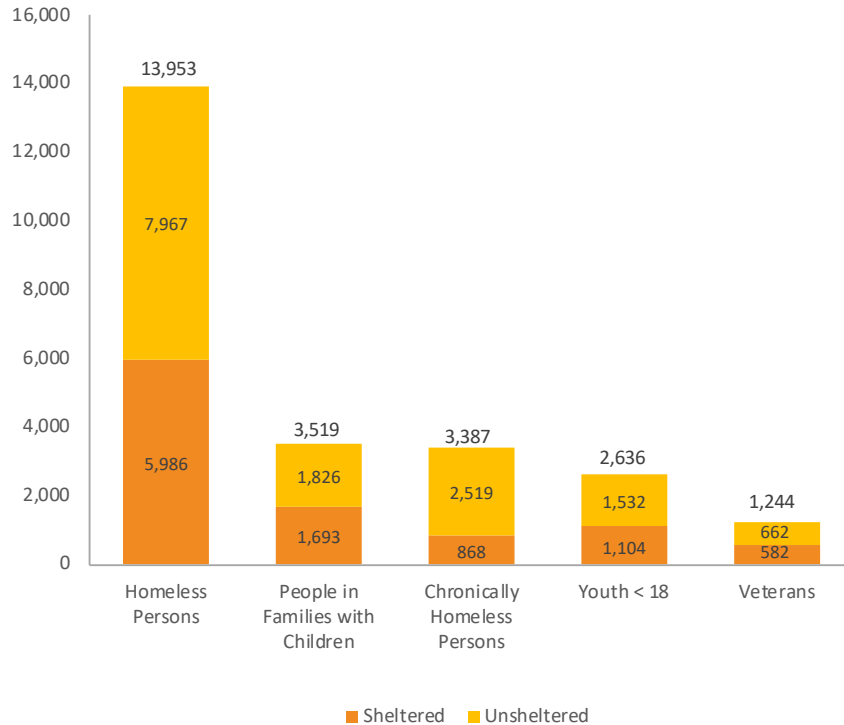
³ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *The 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress: Part 1: Point-in Time Estimates of Homelessness*, (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2017).

⁴ The definition of homelessness used by the U.S. Department of Education includes individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including those who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations, among other considerations.

⁵ Oregon Department of Education, “Homeless Student Count Reaches All-Time High: Reflects trend of increased homelessness in Western U.S.,” Oregon Department of Education (News Release), November 15, 2017.

homelessness of families with children, and unsheltered rural homelessness.⁶ These high rates of unsheltered homelessness are shown in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3. Populations Experiencing Homelessness, by Household Type, Sheltered and Unsheltered, 2017



Source: ECONorthwest analysis of 2017 Point-in-Time estimates from each HUD Continuum of Care, aggregated by OHCS

Budget Note Subcommittee Approach

In response to the Budget Note call to action and the overwhelming incidence of Oregonians experiencing homelessness, OHCS assembled a Subcommittee of Housing Stability Council members, directors of Community Action Agencies, the OHCS Director and OHCS staff members to develop a plan to improve delivery of the homeless services programs through increased coordination between OHCS and the CAA network. Over the course of four months, the Subcommittee prioritized discussion about immediate and long term actions that will transform the existing homeless delivery system into an outcomes oriented system, with responsibilities for OHCS as a funder and CAAs as funded agencies.

The Subcommittee established the following guiding agreements for the upcoming 2019-2021 biennium:

- OHCS will define accountability expectations to ensure progress is being made across all standards incorporated into the Master Grant Agreement (MGA) to include Operational Standards and EPIC Outcomes tool (detailed in Section II of this report and Attachment A).

⁶ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *The 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress: Part 1: Point-in Time Estimates of Homelessness*, (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2017).

- OHCS will support Community Action Agencies to achieve desired outcomes through individualized capacity building, training, and technical assistance.
- OHCS and CAAs will continue to work through a collaborative, cooperative approach and articulate decision making expectations and authority.

I. Alignment with Statewide Housing Plan

The Statewide Housing Plan (SWHP) articulates how OHCS will pave the way for more Oregonians to have access to stable housing opportunities, a required resource necessary for self-sufficiency. The plan, approved by the Housing Stability Council in February 2019, introduces six priorities to build support for and inspire coordinated action across Oregon. These priorities include Equity and Racial Justice, Homelessness, Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), Affordable Rental Housing, Homeownership, and Rural Communities, while identifying major bodies of work and areas for funding prioritization for the agency and its partners over the next five years. Therefore, it was critical for the Budget Note Subcommittee to align plans for the homeless service delivery system with the SWHP in order to create recommendations for designing a more effective and efficient homeless services system to serve the state.

While this work will touch on all SWHP priorities in various ways, such as providing PSH to support Oregonians experiencing chronic homelessness, the Subcommittee placed significant emphasis on the first two SWHP priorities:

1. Equity and Racial Justice
2. Ending Homelessness for families with children and Veterans

Subcommittee members agreed there is a great need to further develop strategies to **incorporate the first priority, Equity and Racial Justice, into the homeless services delivery system**. From this discussion emerged a **commitment to address racial disparities** by incorporating racial justice into program design, service delivery, data analysis, and training investments for CAAs and OHCS staff. In order to adequately measure success, OHCS will report disaggregated data by race. Specifically, OHCS will report outcomes and performance measures data (adopted in the use of the EPIC Outcomes tool referenced in Section II. of this report) by race/ethnicity for each performance measure selected by CAAs. CAAs will set goals and identify strategies to continually reduce disparities over time, and will commit to internal inclusion and diversity training.

In addition, Budget Note Subcommittee members agreed that the **funding allocation formula OHCS will use in future allocation cycles to distribute homeless services funding will include culturally-specific considerations**.

A substantial time investment and commitment were also placed on the Homelessness priority, which takes aim at ensuring that each community has a **comprehensive system to prevent and end homelessness, particularly for Veterans and families with children experiencing homelessness**. In line with that commitment, OHCS will provide data analysis for, and monitor progress around, goals and strategies to serve families with children and Veterans experiencing homelessness.

II. Use of Outcome Oriented Strategies

To fully align with the Budget Note directive to utilize outcome oriented strategies designed to create a more effective system to prevent and reduce homelessness, the Subcommittee developed the **EPIC Outcomes Tool, a framework to prioritize outcomes and track performance measures in homeless services programs in the 2019-2021 MGA**. CAAs will drive toward achieving the following five outcomes: Ending homelessness, Preventing homelessness, creating Inclusive and diverse organizations, building Capacity in the community, and advancing equity and racial justice.

The current required Key Performance Measures (KPMs) for OHCS homeless services programs are: participant exits to permanent housing from programs, and 6-month housing retention rate after exits to permanent housing. Multiple performance measures have also been identified for each outcome in the EPIC Outcomes tool. CAAs will choose one performance measure for each of the four outcomes for tracking purposes. Although each CAA will be choosing their own performance measure for each outcome, we anticipate seeing a marked improvement in serving the targeted populations. All applicable performance measures will be displayed with disaggregated data for race/ethnicity, families with children, and Veteran status.

In order to enhance CAA organizational capacity to serve all Oregonians, including communities of color, a workgroup will be developed to plan goals and action steps. The workgroup, which will consist of OHCS staff and CAAs, will use the Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDIB) to design performance measures that track progress toward incorporating inclusion and diversity specifically for the CAA network across Oregon.

The 2019-2021 biennium will be a time of transition for OHCS and CAAs. Compliance with MGA Service Delivery Standards (see Section IV. of the report) and the use of the EPIC Outcomes tool will create a series of accountability expectations for CAAs. OHCS will work with CAAs to ensure high quality data is available for analysis in order to establish reliable baselines for EPIC performance measures, including baselines for communities of color, families with children, and Veterans. At a minimum, baselines attached to the goal of eliminating racial disparities will include an analysis of the percentage of persons served by a CAA by race. The analysis will also look at types of service interventions provided and outcomes attained for communities of color. These baseline percentages will be compared to the racial demographics of each CAA service region. After baselines are established, CAAs will develop goals for each chosen performance measure and will report on those strategies to achieve those goals on a quarterly basis.

III. Establishment of Funding Priorities

Overall, the Subcommittee's work focused on establishing a path upon which homeless services funding administered through OHCS incentivizes the use of best practices, promotes innovation, and builds the capacity of CAAs to deliver high quality services throughout the state. For example, the Subcommittee agreed to **prioritize the use of EHA Discretionary funds to further invest in outcome oriented strategies in the upcoming biennium**. Specifically, EHA Discretionary funds will be directed toward capacity building for CAAs and for innovation initiatives that CAAs can use to maximize optimal outcomes for Oregonians they serve.

The Budget Note Subcommittee answered the call to prioritize homeless services funding by aligning with the statewide housing plan priorities of racial justice and serving families with children and Veterans experiencing homelessness. Another funding priority addressed by the Subcommittee was the need to **develop a formal and durable agreement for funding the Oregon Human Development Corporation (OHDC)**, the statewide agency that provides assistance to Oregon's farmworker community. OHDC is named in statute as a recipient of funding from OHCS and currently receives EHA and Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding. However, funding for OHDC historically has not distributed by formula as it is for the rest of the Community Action Agency network.

There was agreement among Subcommittee members that despite some differences in populations served and programs provided, OHDC is an essential part of the Community Action Agency network and the development of a funding formula for OHDC provides a tool to ensure that a fair and sustainable level of funds are available to Oregon farmworkers in need. Therefore, members of the Subcommittee, supported by OHCS staff, developed a formula based on the numbers of farmworkers in poverty. This formula will determine the amount of funding OHDC receives in the 2019-2021 biennium, drawing from EHA and Document Recording Fee (DRF) fund sources. OHDC will be held to the same contractual agreements, including adoption of Operational Standards (see reference that follows in section V. of this report), and tracking performance measures through the EPIC Outcomes Tool (see section II.).

Subcommittee members expressed the need to **revisit funding formulas for both CAAs and OHDC, in the 2021-2023 biennium**. This future work will allow OHCS and CAAs (including OHDC) to incorporate culturally-specific and responsive services, prioritize subpopulation needs, and other geographical considerations into a more responsive and equitable funding allocation methodology.

Another area the Subcommittee identified as a priority related to funding is the allowable allotment CAAs can use to support the essential administrative functions of their work. OHCS will work to **increase the administrative support level from 10 percent to 15 percent for EHA and SHAP, and from 7 percent to 15 percent for the Low Income Rental Housing Fund (LIRHF) program** to ensure that CAAs have the internal infrastructures necessary to support an outcomes oriented service delivery system.

Developing an approach to funding emergency and winter shelters statewide was identified as a major priority for the homeless service delivery system in Oregon. OHCS is currently conducting a study of the state's emergency shelter system and anticipates the final report in May 2019. The Subcommittee agreed the **findings and recommendations from the shelter study should guide the development of a new approach to funding shelters with state dollars**.

IV. Use of Best Practices in Homeless Services Delivery

A major step toward outcomes oriented strategies for state homeless services funding is a shift in the requirements contained in the Master Grant Agreement (MGA), the contract between OHCS and Community Action Agencies. **MGA Operational Standards will be established to set a foundation of administrative, fiscal, and service delivery expectations for CAAs**. The purpose of establishing Operational Standards is two-fold: 1) to create parity across the state for individuals

and families experiencing homelessness by ensuring that no matter where they enter the homeless system, all Oregonians are provided services rooted in national best practices, and 2) to develop a capacity assessment and measurement system that demonstrates agencies' success levels in delivery of services.

The current MGA contains standards for CAAs that focus on fiscal, monitoring, and procurement issues and includes remedies for non-compliance. These standards address requirements based on statute and regulatory guidance and will therefore continue into future biennia. Updated administrative standards will include, but are not limited to, requirements for: reporting timeliness, quality data collection, and satisfactory monitoring performance. Along the same lines, OHCS completed fiscal policies that focus on funding spend down in 2018. These policies were approved by the Housing Stability Council and the Community Action Agency network and will be incorporated into the 2019-2021 MGA.

In the upcoming biennium, MGA Operational Standards will be expanded to include expectations for program design and service delivery based on nationally recognized best practices in homeless services. CAAs will adopt the following best practice approaches as part of the required MGA Service Delivery Standards:

- The use of a Housing First approach
- Full CAA participation in local Coordinated Entry systems
- CAA supported access to low-barrier shelters
- The incorporation of lived experience in service delivery
- CAAs will intentionally act to reduce racial disparities in homeless services programs they administer

The 2019-21 biennium will be the time when CAAs identify EPIC Outcomes goals and strategies to meet those goals, complete their capacity assessments, and determine current levels of accomplishment. CAA achievement of the performance measures and service delivery standards will be analyzed by OHCS at the start of the biennium, and CAAs will be expected to begin making progress toward their self-identified goals during this time.

OHCS will invest heavily in technical assistance and training for CAA staff during the 2019-2021 biennium. **Each CAA will work with OHCS to develop a capacity building plan that will include a customized technical assistance and training schedule.** In addition, the capacity building plans will describe accountability expectations for CAAs that include reporting schedules and clear action steps needed for achievement of goals.

Recognizing that partner agencies will require time and resources to implement system level program changes, a formal programmatic monitoring system with remedies for non-compliance with Service Delivery Standards will be established for the 2021-2023 biennium.

V. Creation of an Efficient and Effective System to Prevent and Reduce Homelessness

In addition to setting aggressive targets to achieve improved outcomes for people served, one of the most critical elements for creating a more efficient and effective homeless services delivery system in Oregon is in the support and development of the organizations conducting the work. A significant investment of resources for training and technical assistance will be made in the 2019-2021 biennium to align the work in Oregon more closely with nationally recognized best practices and to achieve the aggressive targets established through the SWHP and EPIC Outcomes Tool.

To this end, the Subcommittee agreed to the development of individualized capacity building plans for CAAs, OHDC, OHCS, and Community Action Partnership of Oregon (CAPO) that align with EPIC performance measures and MGA Operational Standards. The plans will address organizational development, improvements in service delivery, and knowledge base in best practices for each partner agency.

Another vehicle to ensure that homeless services funds are being spent as efficiently and effectively as possible is the streamlining of the MGA; the contract between OHCS and CAAs that guides the provision of programs and services across the state. **OHCS will release a simplified MGA that integrates performance measures for shared outcomes, including the implementation of MGA Operational Standards, the EPIC Outcomes Tool, and individualized capacity building plans for the 2019-2021 biennium.** The more user-friendly MGA will minimize paperwork and process inefficiencies, and provide a platform for simplified budgeting. In addition, the release of the revised MGA will be accompanied by additional technical assistance and training in order to support CAAs' understanding of the new requirements and goals. The new MGA will not only create new efficiencies for service providers within the CAA network, but will serve as a pledge from OHCS to administer funds in a way that balances the requirements of law and statute with the needs of the communities being served.

Data management is an essential component of an outcomes oriented homeless services delivery system. Accurate and complete data entry, analysis, and sharing in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) are all necessary functions to tracking improvements in outcomes over time. In the 2019-2021 biennium, **OHCS will invest heavily in data collection capacity to assist with the provision of HMIS licenses, training, and analysis.** Developing the capabilities of OHCS and the CAAs in the collection and analysis of HMIS data will further align the system with national best practices. Subsequently, it will provide for a better understanding of the dynamics of the homeless population and help build a more nuanced service delivery system over time.

Another critical element of effective data management in an outcomes oriented service delivery system is the maximization of the shared Homeless Management Information System. Because service providers across the state use the same software to record transactions with homeless services program participants, the state is well positioned to fully utilize this tool for cross-jurisdictional reporting purposes. Along the same lines, jurisdictions across the state should have a strong voice in determining how the system can be more supportive of their work beyond the system's existing reporting capacity. Therefore, **OHCS will pursue an improved infrastructure for HMIS governance and oversight that allows for inclusive decision making and better utilization of information.**

In addition, OHCS will establish data dashboards to promote transparency and display progress toward achieving EPIC Outcomes selected by CAAs. In alignment with the EPIC Outcomes, the data presented in the dashboard will also publicly represent information about priority subpopulations and will be updated by OHCS on a quarterly basis at a minimum.

Future Efforts

The Budget Note Subcommittee agreed that immediate action should be taken to address the initiatives described in the report thus far, and also reached consensus regarding future efforts that should be undertaken to enhance the homeless services delivery system in Oregon.

The Subcommittee identified the need to improve Oregon's homeless delivery system to better serve unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 1,309 unaccompanied individuals under the age of 24 experienced homelessness in Oregon on a single night in January of 2018. Of these individuals, 62% experienced unsheltered homelessness, meaning they were living in places not meant for human habitation.⁷ This is one of the highest rates in the nation of unsheltered homelessness for unaccompanied youth.

Subcommittee members agreed there is a need to investigate ways to elevate and monitor progress in serving this vulnerable subpopulation, and to contemplate how to include this population in the EPIC Outcomes display in the future.

Additional topics to be addressed beyond the 2019-2021 biennium include:

- OHCS investing in improved service integration by aligning with other systems and fund sources. Examples include using EHA discretionary funding to enhance the work conducted through the HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) Program, and leveraging partnerships with other state agencies to achieve optimal outcomes for consumers.
- OHCS analyzing funding streams to identify comprehensive strategies to meet the outcomes designated in the EPIC Outcomes Tool.
- OHCS exploring ways to enhance homeless service efforts in rural communities through increased support of the Rural Oregon Continuum of Care (ROCC).
- OHCS pursuing cross-system data sharing possibilities to achieve more holistic service delivery and outcomes for Oregonians experiencing homelessness.
- OHCS and the CAAs clarifying decision making expectations and authority between the CAA network and OHCS for implementation and ongoing system improvement efforts.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The work of the Housing Stability Council Budget Note Subcommittee was intended and executed as a collaborative process to effect short-term change in the homeless services system, and to set into motion changes that will continue to take place over the next few biennia. Agreements

⁷ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *The 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress: Part 1: Point-in Time Estimates of Homelessness*, (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2018).

reached by the Subcommittee represent systemic changes in how homeless services are delivered and administered throughout the state, with significant impacts on CAAs and OHCS in the 2019-2021 biennium. Initial implementation steps of the agreements reached in this report are currently being executed by OHCS Homeless Services staff.

OHCS, the Housing Stability Council, and the Community Action network will meet in March to determine how collaboration of the three entities will evolve past the initial planning phase that developed the recommendations in this report. Further, the Budget Note Subcommittee will further discuss planning for future phases of this work beyond the 2019-2021 biennium.

Attachments

- A. EPIC Outcomes Tool
- B. EHA and SHAP Program Fact Sheets
- C. USICH Report: Home, Together

Helpful Links

Housing First Approach to service delivery:

<https://endhomelessness.org/resource/housing-first/>

<http://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/housing-first-fact-sheet.pdf>

<https://www.usich.gov/solutions/housing/housing-first/>

Coordinated Entry System:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Coordinated-Entry-Policy-Brief.pdf>

Low and No Barrier Shelter Entry Policies:

https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/emergency-shelter-key-considerations.pdf

Incorporating Lived Experience:

<https://www.usich.gov/news/people-with-lived-experience-must-be-meaningful-partners-in-ending-homelessness/>

<https://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/LEAC-7principles-final.pdf>

Equity and Racial Justice:

<https://www.centerforsocialinclusion.org/our-work/our-four-strategies/>

<http://center4si.com/sparc/>

<https://www.usich.gov/news/racial-equity-an-essential-component-of-our-nations-homelessness-response/>

OREGON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES 2019-21 EPIC OUTCOMES TOOL



AN OUTCOMES-ORIENTED TOOL FOR IMPROVING OREGON'S HOMELESS SERVICE SYSTEM

Each Community Action Agency will select one performance measure per outcome, in addition to reporting on and setting goals for the two continuing Legislatively-required key performance measures. All performance measures will be displayed with disaggregated data by race/ethnicity, Veteran status, and families with children.

This first biennium (2019-21) will be used to ensure quality data collection, get reliable baselines and provide substantial training and technical assistance. Once baselines are established, CAAs will identify annual goals over this baseline for each performance measure and establish strategies for achieving goals. Strategies will include ways to address gaps in services for communities of color, families with children and Veterans experiencing homelessness. Accountability expectations that include benchmarks for success will be established for CAAs and OHCS.

OUTCOMES

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	ENDING HOMELESSNESS	PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS	INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY	CAPACITY OF COMMUNITY
OUTCOMES	Oregon has some of the nation's highest rates of homelessness, particularly unsheltered homelessness, which causes trauma to individuals and significant costs across multiple systems of care. Resources should be focused on ensuring that homelessness is rare, brief and a one time event when it can't be prevented.	Rates of homelessness have increased in Oregon in recent years. Through prevention programs CAAs have the ability to prevent families with children and other Oregonians from experiencing the trauma of homelessness and from utilizing more expensive services.	Building CAA organizational capacity to provide inclusive services to diverse constituencies is a first step to ensure equitable and culturally responsive services for all Oregonians in need.	Homeless services funding is not adequate to ensure that all people experiencing homelessness receive the holistic services they need to obtain housing and remain stable. It is essential for CAAs to work collaboratively with community partners to provide wrap-around services to support Oregonians in need.
	EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE: OHCS and CAAs commit to set goals and adopt strategies to reduce and eliminate racial disparities. These efforts and the development of subsequent performance measures will be informed using baseline data focused on race and ethnicity.			
PERFORMANCE MEASURES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required KPM: Exits to permanent housing from programs. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required KPM: 6 month housing retention rate after exits to permanent housing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Increase in household income and/or mainstream benefits as a proxy for increased ability to sustain housing when assistance ends. <input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of households who received prevention assistance but return for housing assistance within one year.	OHCS and CAAs will adopt the Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDIB) as a tool to improve organizational capacity around diversion and inclusion (D&I). The GDIB will help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8Yj Y'cd U'gfc b [' fUhc bU'Y Zc f'8/ =j]gc b' UbX' gfuHY [mUbX' U'] [b']htc' c f [Ub]nUhc bU'' [cU'g • Hold leaders accountable for implementing the organization's D&I vision, setting goals, achieving results, and being role models • Provide dedicated support and structure with authority and budget to effectively implement D&I OHCS and CAAs will establish a work group in order to promote practices and performance measures for CAAs based on the GDIB.	<input type="checkbox"/> Increase in household income and/or mainstream benefits as a proxy for increased CAA connection to community partners providing workforce and employment services. <input type="checkbox"/> Increased CAA collaboration with community partners through participation in local homeless services coordinated entry system. <input type="checkbox"/> MOUs and collaboration plans as a proxy for increased CAA connection to community partners providing family support services (DHS). <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord engagement initiatives, client participation in tenant readiness, use of housing navigators, and outreach to housing developers as a proxy for increased CAA and client access to available permanent housing in the community.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of households/persons entering programs from unsheltered locations, as defined by sleeping in places not meant for human habitation. <input type="checkbox"/> Length of participation in homeless programs as a proxy for measuring the ability to move participants to permanent housing. <input type="checkbox"/> Length of time home-less system-wide as a proxy for measuring the ability of participants to move to and sustain permanent housing across jurisdictions over time. <input type="checkbox"/> Returns to homelessness after previous exit to permanent housing.			

Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA)

Program Overview	<p>The Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA) program assists low- or very low-income persons who are homeless or are unstably housed and at risk of becoming homeless.</p> <p>EHA funds can pay for services from the following eight program components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street outreach • Emergency and transitional shelter • Transitional housing • Rapid re-housing • Homelessness prevention • Supportive in-home services • Data collection • Community capacity building designed to enhance, expand or sustain homeless services
Eligibility Requirements	<p>People requesting assistance must have a total household annual income no greater than 80% of the area's median income for their size of household.</p> <p>To be eligible for services through the Veterans' funding, an applicant must have served on active duty or received a ribbon or medal for service and was discharged or released under honorable conditions; or received a non-service-connected pension from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.</p>
Program Funding	<p>EHA program funds come from legislatively approved state general funds and the Document Recording Fee (DRF). Funds are allocated every biennium and DRF funds are distributed quarterly.</p>
Program Delivery	<p>Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) makes funds available to community action agencies in localities across the state. These lead agencies are responsible to coordinate the use of the funds to serve their communities.</p>
For More Information	<p>To talk with someone about resources and services in your local area or county, contact your local community action agency at: http://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/CRD/css/docs/homeless-referral-list.pdf Information is also available through http://www.211info.org or by calling "211".</p>



State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP)

Program Overview	<p>The State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP) offers state funds to help meet the emergency needs of homeless Oregonians by providing operational support for emergency shelters and supportive services to shelter residents.</p> <p>SHAP can pay for services from the following four program components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street outreach • Facility maintenance and operations • Resident support services • Data collection and reporting
Eligibility Requirements	<p>The State Homeless Assistance Program has no income restrictions; however, people requesting assistance must meet the program's definition of homeless.</p>
Program Funding	<p>SHAP program funds come from legislatively approved state general funds. Funds are allocated every biennium.</p>
Program Delivery	<p>Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) makes funds available to community action agencies in localities across the state. These lead agencies are responsible to coordinate the use of the funds to serve their communities.</p>
For More Information	<p>To talk with someone about resources and services in your local area or county, contact your local community action agency at: http://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/CRD/css/docs/homeless-referral-list.pdf. Information is also available through http://www.211info.org or by calling "211".</p>





Home, Together:

THE FEDERAL STRATEGIC PLAN TO
PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS



United States Interagency Council on Homelessness

Department of Agriculture

Department of Commerce

Department of Defense

Department of Education

Department of Energy

Department of Health and Human Services

Department of Homeland Security

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Department of the Interior

Department of Justice

Department of Labor

Department of Transportation

Department of Veterans Affairs

Corporation for National and Community Service

General Services Administration

Office of Management and Budget

Social Security Administration

US Postal Service

White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

USICH would like to thank the hundreds of people from across the country, including staff from local, state, and national agencies and organizations, community volunteers, advocates, people with past and current experiences of homelessness, and many others, who provided their time and expertise to ensure that this Plan reflects a diversity of perspectives.



Home. Because we know that the only true end to homelessness is a safe and stable place to call home.

Home enables our families, friends, and neighbors—indeed, everyone in our nation—to have a platform from which they can pursue economic opportunity. Having a home provides people with better chances for succeeding in school and advancing their careers. It also allows them to take care of their health, build strong families, and give back to their communities.

But far too many people experience homelessness in our country, limiting their ability to pursue these opportunities.

Together. Because the causes of homelessness are complex, and the solutions are going to take all of us working together, doing our parts, strengthening our communities.

Thriving communities need enough housing that is affordable and equitably available to people across a full range of incomes—from young adults just starting out to seniors who want to spend their remaining years feeling secure. Quality educational and career opportunities, child care, health care, substance abuse and mental health services, and aging services can help individuals and families build strong social networks, pursue economic mobility, and strengthen their overall well-being. These services, and other federal, state, and local programs, must be well-coordinated among themselves, and with the business, philanthropic, and faith communities that can supplement and enhance them.

Together, We Are Making Progress

The problem of homelessness can seem daunting—it is estimated that on any given night more than 550,000 people are experiencing homelessness in America.¹ The good news is that states and communities, with the support of the federal government and the private sector, are making progress, using best practices and building the coordinated responses that are necessary to reduce and ultimately end homelessness in America.



Driven by federal, state, and local actions, and by public and private partnerships, point-in-time data shows an estimated 13% fewer people were experiencing homelessness in 2017 compared to 2010, and there were 17% fewer people who were unsheltered, sleeping on our sidewalks, in our parks, and in other unsafe environments.²

For some targeted groups, communities have made even greater progress. For example, since 2010, there are 46% fewer Veterans and 27% fewer families with children experiencing homelessness. And we've reduced chronic homelessness—homelessness among people with disabilities who have been without a home for long or repeated periods of time—by 18%.³

In addition, since the release of federal criteria and benchmarks in 2015 to measure progress for ending homelessness among Veterans, more than 60 communities across more than 30 different states have effectively ended Veteran homelessness.⁴ And three communities have achieved the federal criteria and benchmarks for ending chronic homelessness.

These achievements show that ending homelessness is possible. And we know that it's possible in all kinds of places—big cities, suburbs, small towns, and across entire states.

Working Together is What Works

We are making this progress because communities are focused more than ever on the ultimate solution to homelessness: Home. And they are doing this work by breaking down silos and working together in profoundly new ways. To help people find the stability of home, communities are embracing Housing First practices, through which people experiencing homelessness are connected to permanent housing swiftly and with few to no treatment preconditions, behavioral contingencies, or other barriers. Communities are also developing coordinated homelessness service systems so that people who need help are identified quickly, their needs and strengths are assessed, and they can be matched to the appropriate

Areas of Increased Focus in This Plan

- Increasing Affordable Housing Opportunities
- Strengthening Prevention and Diversion Practices
- Creating Solutions for Unsheltered Homelessness
- Tailoring Strategies for Rural Communities
- Helping People Who Exit Homelessness to Find Employment Success
- Learning from the Expertise of People with Lived Experience

local housing and services opportunities and social supports. Through housing interventions like supportive housing and rapid re-housing, individuals and families are connected to the tailored array of community services that can help them stay and succeed in their home and pursue economic advancement.

Our Path Home

While our progress is promising, we also know that we have much more work to do, and many more challenges that we must face together. Beyond the critical work to make sure there is enough housing for everyone, we must also focus more attention on preventing people from falling into homelessness in the first place and on diverting people from entering emergency shelter if they have other stable options available.

We also have an urgent need for strategies to address the immediate crisis of unsheltered homelessness—especially in communities with high-cost housing markets—and homelessness in rural communities, where housing and services are scarce. We must also address the racial inequities and other disparities in the risks for, and experiences of, homelessness. And we must be clear that exiting homelessness is not the end point for people, it is a starting place from which they can pursue employment, education, community involvement, and other goals.

These are difficult challenges, but momentum is on our side. We know where we are going and we know how we are going to get there: **Home, Together.**





OUR SHARED NATIONAL GOALS

Through the hard work of communities around the country, we now have proof of something that we didn't before—that ending homelessness is achievable. *Home, Together* builds upon what we have learned from states and communities over time, and lays out the strategies we know we must advance at the federal level in order to support and accelerate state and local progress.

Home, Together has one fundamental goal, a goal shared across federal, state, and local partners: to end homelessness in America.

But the people who experience homelessness are diverse—in their experiences, in their challenges, in their household compositions, in their ages, in many other ways—and we must tailor and target our strategies and actions to reflect that diversity.

Therefore, the Plan sets important population-specific goals as well:

- **To end homelessness among Veterans**
- **To end chronic homelessness among people with disabilities**
- **To end homelessness among families with children**
- **To end homelessness among unaccompanied youth**
- **To end homelessness among all other individuals**

Achieving these shared goals is not possible through federal action alone—it requires strategic focus, effort, and investments from both the public and the private sectors and across all levels of government.

Achieving these goals as a nation means achieving these goals in all our communities, communities that are also diverse—in their demographics, in their needs, in their geographic characteristics, in their progress to date, in their resources, in their infrastructure, in their housing markets, and in many other ways. Some communities have already succeeded at achieving some of these sub-goals, others are on the cusp of major successes, and many are striving hard to make progress but face very significant challenges.

Therefore, the Plan does not set uniform timeframes. Rather, federal partners will continue to work with communities, and provide tools and information, that will enable them to set their own ambitious goals, tailored to their local conditions, and grounded in their local data.

With a few exceptions, the Objectives and Strategies outlined in this Plan are not population-specific. In the implementation of the Plan, USICH will work with its federal partners, through established inter-agency working group structures, to plan, implement, and assess the impact of specific activities to drive progress toward the population-specific sub-goals. Those activities will also be attentive to the specific needs of other subpopulations of people, such as older adults, people with disabilities, or people with substance use disorders, including opioid use disorders, who are represented across the population goals identified above.

Defining Success

Achieving these goals is grounded in a shared vision of what it means to end homelessness: that every community must have a systemic response in place that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible, or if it can't be prevented, it is a rare, brief, and one-time experience. That means that every community must have the capacity to:

- Quickly identify and engage people at risk of and experiencing homelessness.
- Intervene to prevent people from losing their housing and divert people from entering the homelessness services system.
- Provide people with immediate access to shelter and crisis services without barriers to entry if homelessness does occur.
- Quickly connect people experiencing homelessness to housing assistance and services tailored to their unique needs and strengths to help them achieve and maintain stable housing.

To help communities to assess their progress toward achieving this vision, USICH and our federal partners have developed qualitative criteria and quantitative benchmarks that provide states and communities a clear road map for assessing how well their local systems are designed and implemented, for measuring the effectiveness of those systems, and for determining if they have achieved the goals.

About the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) leads national efforts to prevent and end homelessness in America. We drive action among the 19 federal member agencies that comprise our Council and foster the efficient use of resources in support of best practices at every level of government and with the private sector.

USICH is statutorily charged with developing and regularly updating a national strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness. *Home, Together* is the strategic plan adopted by our Council for Fiscal Years 2018-2022.

USICH will work with its federal partners and the interagency working groups we manage to implement this Plan. USICH will lead and support federal activities aligned with the Plan's Objectives and Strategies, partner with states and communities to implement the most effective practices, and assess the Plan's impact to further strengthen our actions and outcomes.

Measuring Our Progress

To drive and track progress against the federal Strategies outlined in *Home, Together*, USICH and its federal partners will develop and utilize an annual performance management plan with specific target actions, milestones, and deadlines. USICH will also use multiple performance measures to assess the overall impact of the implementation of *Home, Together*.

USICH will focus on changes in the following key measures:

- The number of people experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness at a point in time in the annual Point-in-Time count, including Veterans, people experiencing chronic homelessness, families with children, unaccompanied youth, and all individuals.
- The number of states reporting increases versus decreases in the number of people experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness within annual Point-in-Time counts.
- The number of Continuums of Care reporting increases versus decreases in the number of people experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness within annual Point-in-Time counts.
- The number of people, including Veterans, people experiencing chronic homelessness, families with children, unaccompanied youth, and all individuals, spending time in emergency shelter and transitional housing annually.
- The number of children and youth, including both students in families and unaccompanied students, identified as experiencing homelessness at some point during the school year.
- The number of communities, states, and Continuums of Care that have achieved each population-specific goal.

These assessments will be used to inform future revisions to the Plan and its Objectives and Strategies, and USICH will provide an annual report on its effort to the President and to Congress.





THE PLAN: FISCAL YEARS 2018-2022

To end homelessness, every community needs to be able to implement a systemic response that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible or, if it can't be prevented, it is a rare, brief, and one-time experience. And that systemic response must endure for the long term. The development of such capacity cannot be achieved by any one level of government, or by any one sector alone, and requires the investment of time, effort, and financial resources by federal, state, and local public and private partners, working together in close collaboration.

The Plan focuses on identifying and describing essential federal strategies that will help states, communities, and public and private partners build effective, lasting systems that will drive toward the goals now, and be able to respond quickly and efficiently when housing instability and homelessness occur in the future.

The plan also seeks to serve as a road map for non-federal agencies and partners, providing a detailed framework through which they can identify and implement their own strategic activities and align their efforts with federal agencies and other partners.



Home, Together's Eight Objectives

Home, Together is focused on federal strategies that will support states and communities to make homelessness a rare, brief, and one-time experience—and that will sustain that success once achieved. That focus is reflected in its structure.

1. Ensure Homelessness is a Rare Experience

Objective 1.1: Collaboratively Build Lasting Systems that End Homelessness

Objective 1.2: Increase Capacity and Strengthen Practices to Prevent Housing Crises and Homelessness

2. Ensure Homelessness is a Brief Experience

Objective 2.1: Identify and Engage All People Experiencing Homelessness as Quickly as Possible

Objective 2.2: Provide Immediate Access to Low-Barrier Emergency Shelter or other Temporary Accommodations to All Who Need it

Objective 2.3: Implement Coordinated Entry to Standardize Assessment and Prioritization Processes and Streamline Connections to Housing and Services

Objective 2.4: Assist People to Move Swiftly into Permanent Housing with Appropriate and Person-Centered Services

3. Ensure Homelessness is a One-Time Experience

Objective 3.1: Prevent Returns to Homelessness through Connections to Adequate Services and Opportunities

4. Sustain an End to Homelessness

Objective 4.1: Sustain Practices and Systems at a Scale Necessary to Respond to Future Needs



1) ENSURE HOMELESSNESS IS A RARE EXPERIENCE

The Objectives and Strategies in this section focus on actions that will help to make sure that individuals and families experience homelessness much less often. This includes strategies for building strong local systems, expanding partnerships with mainstream programs that are not specifically targeted to people experiencing homelessness, putting a greater emphasis on diversion strategies, and strengthening our ability to prevent housing crises and homelessness. Implementation of these strategies will be grounded in data and analysis and will support communities to address the needs of populations that are disproportionately impacted by homelessness in each community.

Objective 1.1: Collaboratively Build Lasting Systems that End Homelessness

To achieve the goal of ending homelessness and to ensure that homelessness is a rare experience, leaders from all levels of government and the private, non-profit, and faith sectors can come together to:

Build momentum behind a common vision. The national definition of an end to homelessness, and the criteria and benchmarks for achieving the goals, provide the roadmap to success for communities across the country. This common vision allows us to coordinate and align activities, policies, and priorities through regional, state, and local interagency working groups, councils, and other processes, in a way that drives progress.

Understand and enumerate the size and scope of the problem. Collecting, analyzing, and reporting high-quality, timely data on homelessness is essential for understanding who experiences homelessness in the community at disproportionate rates and why. It also helps us target and scale interventions, track results, plan strategically, and allocate resources at the state and local level. By having comprehensive data at the center of collaborative decision-making processes, communities can stretch the resources they have further, understand where new resources are needed, target prevention efforts, and get better results.

Reduce fragmentation. Bringing together areas of government that have typically operated in silos reduces duplicative or contradictory activities and ensures the most effective use of public resources. For example, programs funded by the Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Veterans Affairs (VA) have increased coordination to provide better care and quicker access to permanent housing for Veterans experiencing homelessness.⁵

Drive implementation of cost-effective solutions. Using data, evaluation, performance measurement, and research to guide investments can lead to greater utilization of evidence-based and evidence-informed practices that efficiently solve homelessness and make better use of limited resources. For example, evidence-based Housing First approaches have helped serve more people with better results.

To support communities' progress, USICH and its member agencies will focus on the following Strategies:

- a. Equip states and communities to set their own bold and ambitious goals for ending homelessness and to prioritize and appropriately scale state, local, public, and private investments.** Federal agencies will provide technical assistance and modeling tools that can be implemented locally to project current and future needs and the types and scale of housing and services interventions that will be needed to achieve their goals and sustain those successes.
- b. Strengthen the collection, reporting, and utilization of essential data sources,** including Point-in-Time count data, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data, State and Local Education Agency Education for Homeless Children and Youth data,⁶ Worst Case Housing Needs data,⁷ and other relevant data, to better understand and enumerate the size and scope of the challenges that must be addressed. This work also includes increasing community capacity to match administrative data sets, such as health care and corrections, to improve interventions, tailor strategies, and improve outcomes for populations that are disproportionately represented among people experiencing homelessness.
- c. Engage people with lived experience** through advisory committees and policy and planning processes at the federal level, and encourage such engagement at the local and state levels to ensure meaningful opportunities for providing expert advice and input.
- d. Further engage and support state and local elected officials, and educate partners and the public,** regarding the: scope, causes, and costs of homelessness; necessary solutions; evidence-based practices and strategies; and risk factors of homelessness locally, including the disproportionate and persistent impact of homelessness on some populations.
- e. Provide guidance about the roles that a wide range of federal programs and resources can play to support best practices and increase their impact within efficient systems** to prevent and end homelessness—including both the programs that are targeted to addressing homelessness and those that are not.

“Homelessness prevention is not the responsibility of the homelessness crisis response system alone.”

Objective 1.2: Increase Capacity and Strengthen Practices to Prevent Housing Crises and Homelessness

Homelessness prevention is not the responsibility of the homelessness crisis response system alone. Rather, it requires a multi-sector approach and an active focus on housing needs, housing stability, and risks of homelessness across many different public systems. To strengthen our understanding of

and approach to implementing effective prevention, communities will be supported in developing partnerships that build a multi-pronged approach to preventing homelessness, focused on actions that:

Reduce the prevalence of risk of housing crises. A complex set of external factors contribute to the risk of housing crises within a community and among different sub-populations. To make inroads in reducing the risk of housing crises, communitywide action is needed to address the wide range of policies contributing to the availability of, and access to, an adequate supply of safe and affordable housing; health and behavioral health resources; education and meaningful and gainful employment; opportunities for economic mobility; affordable child care; and legal assistance.

Reduce the risk of homelessness while households are engaged with or are transitioning from systems. Research and data demonstrate that individuals or families are often engaged with multiple public systems, such as health and behavioral health care, child welfare, and the juvenile and criminal justice systems, prior to their experiences of homelessness.⁸ Effective prevention approaches must include enhanced cross-system collaboration, such as increased awareness and attentiveness to housing stability, and effective transition and/or discharge planning that link people to other resources, including employment and other economic mobility supports, to reduce the risk of homelessness upon discharge or following the end of service provision. Communities can also consider policies that increase access to home-visiting programs, family support networks, school-based supports, and other community-based programs that focus on strong families and positive youth development. Family preservation and reunification can also be explored, whenever safe and appropriate, in order to address the disproportionate impact of homelessness on single mothers and youth of color.

Target assistance to prevent housing crises that do occur from escalating further and resulting in homelessness. Targeted assistance may include a combination of financial assistance, mediation and diversion, housing location, legal assistance, employment services, or other supports—many of which can be provided by public, non-profit, faith-based, and philanthropic programs within the community. Strong identification efforts through the implementation of housing status assessments are important tools for programs to effectively identify the most at-risk households, to connect them to the supportive services and/or resources that will best respond to their housing crisis, and to prevent homelessness from occurring.

To support communities' progress, USICH and its member agencies will focus on the following Strategies:

- a. Promote development of an expanded supply of safe and affordable rental homes** through federal, state, and local efforts and investments. This includes assisting communities that are working to adopt policies to expand overall housing supply and to project the scale of affordable housing units—including units that are affordable to people exiting homelessness and units that are accessible to persons with disabilities—needed to meet local demand on an ongoing basis.



- b. Improve access to federally funded housing assistance by eliminating administrative barriers and encouraging targeting and prioritization of affordable housing** to people experiencing homelessness in a community and/or to populations that are especially vulnerable to homelessness.
- c. Increase community capacity and state-level coordination to effectively identify, target, and connect at-risk individuals and families to local resources and opportunities that contribute to and strengthen housing stability**, including job training and apprenticeship programs that create access to career pathways, primary and behavioral health services, early childhood programs, and elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education. For children and youth at risk of homelessness, this work includes strengthening connections to school- and community-based resources that encourage education retention, high school completion, and services that address needs related to these goals, including transportation and additional education services.
- d. Strengthen the evidence base for effective homelessness prevention programming and interventions**, including through rigorous evaluation strategies where possible, disseminate results widely, and use that evidence to encourage resources that are not specifically targeted to ending homelessness to prioritize individuals and families imminently at risk of experiencing homelessness.
- e. Improve efforts to prevent people from entering homelessness as they transition from other systems, such as justice settings, health care facilities, and foster care**, by supporting the development of stronger transition planning, discharge practices, and re-entry processes to improve outcomes, and by prioritizing connections to housing options, family-focused interventions, education resources, health and behavioral health supports, employment and income supports, health care coverage, and legal services.
- f. Strengthen diversion strategies and practices** through guidance and technical assistance with a focus on using identified strengths and existing connections and on assisting people to access safe alternatives to emergency shelter.
- g. Identify and promote implementation of eviction prevention strategies**, including access to: civil legal aid and legal assistance to address obstacles to employment and housing; eviction and foreclosure prevention; and short-term and flexible financial assistance for households experiencing financial crises.
- h. Utilize opportunities in child welfare policy to expand resources for community-based preventive services to support stable housing outcomes** for children and families involved with, or at risk of involvement with, the child welfare system.
- i. Encourage programs that are not specifically dedicated to ending homelessness to fund interventions that promote and support housing stability or to prioritize or serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness**. Federal partners will further encourage partnerships with sources of public resources that can fund housing and related interventions, or that can prioritize or serve those experiencing homelessness, such as public housing, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and child welfare agencies, Head Start programs, and Child Care and Development Fund providers, to strengthen the communitywide approach that ensures that homelessness is a brief experience in any community.



2) ENSURE HOMELESSNESS IS A BRIEF EXPERIENCE

The Objectives and Strategies in this section focus on actions that will help make sure people experiencing homelessness are quickly linked to permanent housing opportunities with the right level of services to support their stability and success. Strategies focus especially on coordinated and comprehensive outreach, low-barrier emergency shelter, strong coordinated entry processes, and swift connections to different forms of permanent housing. Housing First practices underpin every element of this response.

Objective 2.1: Identify and Engage All People Experiencing Homelessness as Quickly as Possible

It is important to quickly identify and engage individuals and families when they do fall into homelessness—including sheltered and unsheltered homelessness in locations such as cars, parks, abandoned buildings, encampments, or on the street—to ensure that experience is brief. Communities can use coordinated, housing-focused outreach to people who are unsheltered, in-reach to people in institutional settings, data from multiple systems, and other methods, to identify and engage individuals and families experiencing homelessness, in conjunction with coordinated entry processes and other systems.

“It is important to quickly identify and engage individuals and families when they do fall into homelessness—including sheltered and unsheltered homelessness—to ensure that experience is brief.”

While recognizing that people may move among a variety of settings, communities need the capacity to:

- **Identify every individual and family** that is unsheltered, in shelter, or in transitional housing settings or other residential programs, and to implement robust efforts to identify at-risk households;

- **Coordinate a comprehensive set of strategies** that collect information and data from hospitals, jails, schools, the child welfare system, hotlines and 2-1-1, and other community-based programs; and
- **Use HMIS and other data sources to build and maintain active lists of people experiencing homelessness** and to track the homelessness status, engagements, and permanent housing placement for each individual or family.

Many individuals experiencing homelessness are disengaged from—and may be distrustful of—public and private programs, agencies, and systems, and they may be reluctant to seek assistance. Helping individuals to overcome these barriers often requires significant outreach time and effort, and can take months or even years of proactive and creative engagement to build trust. In order to comprehensively identify and engage all people experiencing homelessness, partnerships across multiple systems and sectors are critically important, particularly among homelessness service systems and health and behavioral health care providers, schools, early childhood care providers and other educators—including higher education institutions—child welfare agencies, TANF agencies, law enforcement, criminal justice system stakeholders, workforce systems, faith-based organizations, and other community-based partners.

To support communities’ progress, USICH and its member agencies will focus on the following Strategies:

- Support increased capacity of communities to ensure that identification, outreach, and engagement efforts are comprehensive and coordinated** across sectors and agencies, are focused on creating connections to permanent housing with appropriate services, are maximizing utility of shared data sets, and are effectively identifying and engaging people with diverse experiences, needs, and challenges.
- Provide targeted guidance and technical assistance to communities with high rates of unsheltered homelessness and high-cost, low-vacancy housing markets** to support innovation, develop stronger practices, and build the evidence base for the most effective practices and strategies for reaching, engaging, and linking people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to options for shelter and to permanent housing opportunities.
- Promote targeted outreach, in-reach, and data collection strategies to strengthen state and local efforts to identify people experiencing chronic homelessness and frequent users of shelter and other systems**, including emergency health services and the criminal justice system, and connect them to the housing and support they need.
- Strengthen capacity in rural and suburban areas to maximize outreach efforts** tailored to the unique challenges posed by geography and population distribution. Federal partners will develop guidance and tools to support such communities to build partnerships and efficient systems to identify and engage individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
- Support communities to develop partnerships with law enforcement that reduce the criminalization of homelessness.** Federal partners will develop further guidance on best practices in addressing unsheltered homelessness and encampments and strategies that reduce the criminalization of homelessness.
- Help communities to develop the skills of staff to implement essential best practices**, such as trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, and critical-time intervention, as well as other

skills, such as open communication, cultural responsiveness, mental health first aid, staff care, and recognizing patterns of interaction.

“Crisis services are the critical front line of communities’ responses to homelessness, helping people meet basic survival needs while also helping them swiftly secure permanent housing opportunities.”

Objective 2.2: Provide Immediate Access to Low-Barrier Emergency Shelter or Other Temporary Accommodations to All Who Need it

Emergency shelter, other temporary accommodations, and other crisis services are the critical front line of communities’ responses to homelessness, helping people meet basic survival needs for shelter, food, clothing, and personal hygiene, while also helping them resolve crises and swiftly secure permanent housing opportunities.

Provide access to low-barrier emergency shelter. An effective crisis response system helps individuals and families experiencing homelessness avoid the need to enter emergency shelter whenever possible. It is also able to immediately provide high-quality, housing-focused shelter or other temporary accommodations for those living in unsafe situations, including those fleeing domestic violence and human trafficking and those living in unsheltered locations. Communities should have effective models of emergency shelter and other temporary accommodations available that:

- Meet the needs of all members of a household and self-defined family and kinship groups, including infants and young children;
- Do not turn people away or make access contingent on sobriety, minimum income requirements, or lack of a criminal history;
- Do not require family members and partners to separate from one another in order to access shelter;
- Ensure that policies and procedures promote dignity and respect for every person seeking or needing shelter; and
- Provide a safe, decent, welcoming, and appropriate temporary living environment, where daily needs can be met while pathways back to safe living arrangements or directly into housing programs are being pursued.

Provide access to service-enriched, longer-term temporary accommodations when needed and appropriate. Longer-term temporary accommodations with a high level of supportive services, such as transitional housing programs, are typically costlier, but may fill a need for households with more intensive service needs.⁹ These households might include youth and young adults who would benefit from a longer-term, more supportive living environment, survivors of domestic violence or other forms

of severe trauma who feel unsafe living on their own in the community, or some people in recovery from substance use disorders who are seeking a communal, recovery-focused environment. Communities need the capacity to provide a meaningful array of housing options to promote choice and to assess both how these interventions are targeted and their outcomes in connecting people to permanent housing.

To support communities' progress, USICH and its member agencies will focus on the following Strategies:

- a. Partner with communities to identify and define appropriate standards for the provision of emergency shelter and other temporary accommodations,** addressing physical environments, service strategies, operational protocols, and performance expectations.
- b. Enhance the capacity of emergency shelter providers to implement low-barrier approaches,** to provide fair and equitable access, to address the needs of households of all compositions, and to implement Housing First approaches and provide adequate services within communities to strengthen exits to permanent housing.
- c. Improve access to emergency assistance, housing, and supports for historically underserved and overrepresented groups,** such as youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice and/or child welfare systems; people who have been sexually exploited or labor-trafficked; people who identify as LGBTQ; people who are gender-non-conforming; people living with HIV/AIDS; youth that are pregnant or parenting; people with mental health needs; and racial and ethnic minorities.
- d. Increase the availability of medical respite programs** in communities to allow hospitals to discharge people experiencing homelessness with complex health needs to medical respite programs that can help stabilize their medical conditions and assist them to access or return to safe and stable housing.
- e. Align services to ensure that people with behavioral health care needs have adequate and appropriate access to emergency shelter or other temporary accommodations** that can address their service and housing needs.
- f. Continue to assess and retool transitional housing programs to best address local needs.** Federal partners will support communities to reduce barriers to entry and consider conversion or reallocation of resources where appropriate to cost-effective alternatives, such as permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, crisis or interim housing, or transition-in-place models, and to maximize the effectiveness of transitional housing programs where appropriate.



Objective 2.3: Implement Coordinated Entry to Standardize Assessment and Prioritization Processes and Streamline Connections to Housing and Services

Coordinated entry processes make it possible for people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness to have their strengths and needs quickly assessed, and to be swiftly connected to appropriate, tailored housing and services within the community or designated region.

Standardized assessment tools, prioritization policies, and practices used within local coordinated entry processes should take into account the unique needs of different populations, including parents, infants and young children, youth, people with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, survivors of domestic violence, and populations that are disproportionately represented among people experiencing homelessness. These processes make it possible for households to gain access to the best options available to address their needs—incorporating participants’ choice—rather than being evaluated for a single program within a community. The most intensive interventions should be prioritized for those with the highest needs, as identified by the community. To implement effective coordinated entry systems, communities need the capacity to train staff consistently, to implement trauma-informed approaches, and to protect the confidentiality and safety concerns of people experiencing homelessness, including people living with HIV/AIDS and individuals or families fleeing domestic violence.

Coordinated entry systems also create the opportunity to bring non-traditional partners and resources to the table as part of a broad and collaborative community effort that engages other public programs and community- and faith-based organizations in preventing and ending homelessness. While these programs are often not targeted to individuals and families experiencing homelessness, they may have resources that are critical for ensuring that any experience of homelessness in a community is brief and for meeting the longer-term service needs of people experiencing homelessness.

To support communities’ progress, USICH and its member agencies will focus on the following Strategies:

- a. Support the implementation of strong coordinated entry processes that provide effective, low-barrier, comprehensive, and coordinated access to housing and services programs.** Federal partners will assist communities in improving access to programs, standardized assessment, prioritization, and referral processes between systems. This work will include developing guidance and technical assistance to navigate emerging challenges. Federal partners will also provide technical assistance and tools to support community partners to address data-sharing concerns, particularly in navigating confidentiality and safety concerns for survivors of domestic violence, individuals living with HIV/AIDS, and minors, including children identified by schools as experiencing homelessness.
- b. Encourage a wide range of programs to develop or strengthen partnerships with coordinated entry processes and to implement effective practices for referrals between systems.** Federal partners will encourage schools, early childhood programs, child welfare agencies, health and behavioral health care providers, HIV/AIDS housing and service organizations, affordable housing programs, benefits programs such as Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI), and other programs to implement processes to identify individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness to connect them to local coordinated entry systems and to connect people identified by the coordinated entry systems to other necessary programs.
- c. Strengthen the focus on income and employment within coordinated entry systems to effectively target and connect individuals and families to opportunities and services needed to**

attain and sustain income and employment, including job training and apprenticeship programs that create access to career pathways, primary and behavioral health services, early childhood education and child care programs, and resources for young children and youth available through schools and post-secondary institutions.

- d. Develop and strengthen best practices in population-specific coordinated entry strategies and processes** to ensure that practices effectively engage people with varied experiences of homelessness, diverse service needs, and differing eligibility for programs and services.
- e. Support rural and suburban areas to implement effective, regionally specific coordinated entry processes.** Recognizing the unique challenges posed by geography and population distribution in these areas, federal partners will offer technical assistance and tools to support communities in strengthening their coordinated entry processes and ensuring that they are fully accessible.

“Communities across the country have been embracing Housing First approaches across their systems, removing as many obstacles and unnecessary requirements as possible in order to expedite people’s access to stable housing.”

Objective 2.4: Assist People to Move Swiftly into Permanent Housing with Appropriate and Person-Centered Services

To end homelessness as quickly and efficiently as possible, communities must focus on streamlining connections to permanent housing and providing people with the appropriate level of services to support their long-term housing stability. Communities across the country have been embracing Housing First approaches across their systems, removing as many obstacles and unnecessary requirements as possible in order to expedite people’s access to stable housing. Effective Housing First approaches, developed in response to strong evidence, include: expanding access to new and existing affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness; providing rapid re-housing to families and individuals; and providing supportive housing to people with the most intense needs.

Expand access to new and existing affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness. To provide adequate housing opportunities, and for Housing First approaches to be taken to scale, it will be necessary to expand access to housing affordable to people who are at risk of or are experiencing homelessness. Strategies to expand the supply can be implemented by all levels of government and across the public and private sectors, and can also include:

- Examining and removing local policy barriers that limit housing development in the private market and have adverse impacts on housing affordability;
- Prioritizing people experiencing homelessness for affordable housing resources; and
- Expanding affordable housing opportunities through actions across all levels of government.

Connect people to rapid re-housing. Effective implementation of rapid re-housing requires providing each of the essential components of this intervention—housing identification, rent and move-in assistance, and case management. Rapid re-housing assistance should be offered without preconditions to entry—like income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety requirements—and the resources and services provided should be tailored to the unique needs of the household. Preliminary evidence shows that rapid re-housing, when combined with connections to appropriate resources, such as employment supports and other income, can successfully end homelessness for many families and individuals who do not need intensive and ongoing supports.¹⁰ For these households, rapid re-housing may also be a less expensive housing intervention when compared to other interventions, such as transitional housing.¹¹ Further evidence regarding the most effective rapid re-housing practices for different populations, and within different types of housing markets, needs to continue to be developed.

Connect people with the most intense needs to permanent supportive housing. Supportive housing combines non-time-limited affordable housing assistance with wraparound supportive services for individuals and families with the longest histories of homelessness and disabilities. When operated with Housing First practices, there are few or no preconditions for entry, such as sobriety, absence of a criminal record, or medication adherence. While participation in services is encouraged, it is not a condition of housing. There is no single model for supportive housing design—it may involve the renovation or construction of new housing, set-asides of apartments within privately owned buildings, or the leasing of individual apartments dispersed throughout an area.



When implemented effectively, permanent supportive housing can result in fewer expenses for shelters, jails, ambulances, and emergency departments.¹² Households in supportive housing programs receive support to get connected to SSI/SSDI benefits when eligible, health and behavioral health care, social supports, employment and supported employment opportunities and workforce programs, and other supportive services that promote health and long-term housing stability.

Link people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to housing and services solutions. Communities need to consider strategies to address the immediate safety and health concerns of people who are unsheltered, but they must also work to develop more low-barrier pathways into permanent housing. To drive greater progress, communities will need support to strengthen their capacity to identify and engage people who are unsheltered and to assist them to access permanent housing solutions, including strengthening the outcomes achieved for people who enter emergency shelter.

To support communities' progress, USICH and its member agencies will focus on the following Strategies:

- a. Support communities to expand the supply and increase access to rental housing subsidies and other affordable housing options** for individuals and families experiencing or most at risk of homelessness. These efforts will include:
 - Encouraging collaboration between public housing agencies, multi-family housing owners, and homelessness services systems, and promoting guidance on how public

housing agencies and multi-family housing owners can adopt admissions preferences and successfully house people exiting homelessness; and

- Supporting states and communities to better target and align rental assistance and capital financing sources to support new construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing units that can be effectively accessed by people exiting homelessness.
- b. Increase the capacity of communities to implement Housing First and harm reduction practices** in programs across their systems, to further explore and refine alternative housing interventions, such as shared housing, and to evaluate effectiveness.
- c. Encourage increased use of health, behavioral health, TANF, workforce, early childhood education, K-12 and higher education supports, and child welfare programs** to provide supportive services in conjunction with housing programs and interventions in order to expand capacity to create stable housing outcomes.
- d. Provide guidance and technical assistance to assist communities to implement and improve outcomes for rapid re-housing for families, youth, and individual adults**, drawing upon knowledge gained from implementation of VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families program, HUD-funded programs, and program evaluations and research studies on effective models.
- e. Increase access to permanent housing models for people with substance use disorders, including opioid use disorders**, by aligning housing and services and scaling evidence-based approaches, like medication assisted treatment.
- f. Support communities to implement expanded "move-on" strategies to assist people who have achieved stability in permanent supportive housing**—and who no longer need and desire to live there—to move into other housing options they can afford and create access to those permanent supportive housing units for other prioritized households currently experiencing homelessness.
- g. Help communities set specific, ambitious short-term goals to swiftly connect people experiencing homelessness** to housing and services appropriate to their needs, and support their efforts in achieving and tracking performance against those goals.
- h. Continue to improve targeting of permanent supportive housing for people with disabilities experiencing chronic homelessness** and for other individuals and families that are particularly vulnerable in order to improve cost savings and outcomes.
- i. Improve access to federally funded housing assistance by eliminating administrative barriers and encouraging prioritization** of people experiencing or most at risk of homelessness, including implementing the housing anti-discrimination and eviction protection provisions covered in the Violence Against Women Act. Federal partners will review federal program policies, procedures, and regulations to identify administrative or regulatory mechanisms that could be used to remove barriers and improve access to stable health care, housing, and housing supports.
- j. Encourage partnerships between housing providers and health and behavioral health care providers, such as health centers**, to co-locate, coordinate, or integrate health, behavioral health, safety, and wellness services with housing and create better resources for providers to connect patients to housing resources.



3) ENSURE HOMELESSNESS IS A ONE-TIME EXPERIENCE

The Objective and Strategies in this section focus on ensuring that people exit to permanent housing stably and successfully, using that housing as a platform for accessing essential services and connecting to the opportunities they need to pursue their goals and dreams for themselves and their families. Strategies emphasize strengthening the quality of housing and services interventions and providing connections to other services and opportunities, such as education and employment, that can help people find lasting success.

Objective 3.1: Prevent Returns to Homelessness through Connections to Adequate Services and Opportunities

To ensure that individuals and families don't fall back into homelessness, it will be necessary to strengthen partnerships with, and connections to, a larger array of federal, state, local, and private programs that serve low-income households, including programs that: advance education and employment opportunities and support upward economic mobility; provide connections to health and behavioral health care services; and link people to a range of other programs and systems that support strong and thriving communities, such as quality child care, schools, family support networks, and other resources.

To support communities' progress, USICH and its member agencies will focus on the following Strategies:

- a. Strengthen effective implementation of the core components of rapid re-housing—housing identification, rent and move-in assistance, case management—**by helping communities to assess outcomes being achieved and tailor their financial subsidy and services practices in order to reduce returns to homelessness among individuals and families, including households residing in high-cost, low-vacancy markets.
- b. Support communities to increase on-the-job training and apprenticeship opportunities, supported employment, and other strategies that offer access to employment and career pathways** for people with histories of homelessness and other significant barriers to employment, including people with disabilities.
- c. Review federal program policies, procedures, regulations, and administrative barriers to improve access to employment opportunities and income supports.** Identify and promote ways

in which the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), early care and education, SSI/SSDI, and TANF programs can help people who are experiencing or most at risk of homelessness—including people with multiple barriers to employment—access and maintain jobs.

- d. Encourage state and local efforts to implement a flexible array of behavioral health services that impact housing stability,** including quality case management and care coordination, peer supports and navigation services, intensive in-home services, mobile crisis and stabilization services, and other home- and community-based services.
- e. Support communities to increase access to and retention within high-quality education programs,** including quality child care and early childhood education through elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education.
- f. Share examples and best practices that support communities to maintain capacity to provide resources that will promote the long-term stability of people who have entered permanent housing,** including employment supports, case management and peer support, emergency financial assistance, transportation, legal services, early care and education, connection to programs, and other necessary services and supports.
- g. Strengthen coordination between early childhood, education, housing, employment, and homelessness services providers as part of a whole-family approach** to improve both child and family outcomes through meaningful connections to community-based programs and resources that target and prioritize the assessed needs of the entire household, including infants and young children, for sustained housing stability and economic mobility.





4) SUSTAIN AN END TO HOMELESSNESS

The Objective and Strategies in this section focus on supporting communities that have made homelessness a rare, brief, and one-time experience—either for a specific population or for all populations—as they respond to housing instability and homelessness quickly and efficiently into the future. Strategies emphasize the importance of tracking and measuring key data points routinely, projecting and responding to future needs, and implementing continuous quality improvement efforts.

Objective 4.1: Sustain Practices and Systems at a Scale Necessary to Respond to Future Needs

Communities across the country are demonstrating that ending homelessness is not just a worthy ambition, but a measurable, achievable goal. In order to sustain those successes, communities will need to monitor outcomes and returns to homelessness, to ensure that adequate investments into the crisis response system and into permanent housing interventions are sustained to address future needs, and to continue to refine projections to address changing needs and ensure the maximum impact of investments over time.

To support communities' progress, USICH and its member agencies will focus on the following Strategies:

- a. Support communities to track and measure their progress** on a routine basis by looking at key metrics, such as inflow, permanent housing rates, average length of time homeless, and housing retention rates. Federal partners will provide technical assistance and tools to help communities develop and refine by-name or master lists of people experiencing homelessness to track and report essential data and to inform projections.
- b. Identify and promote the strategies of communities that have effectively ended homelessness among one or more populations and are successfully sustaining those achievements** to enable other communities to learn from, replicate, and adapt those practices to their own local contexts.
- c. Support communities to implement continuous quality improvements to housing and services interventions** in order to sustain their successes and to be able to respond to changes in needs and conditions into the future.



HOME, TOGETHER

Through federal, state, and local actions, and through public and private partnerships, we've seen substantial progress toward ending homelessness and have identified many best and promising practices. Yet, there is still much more work to be done to ensure that all Americans have a safe and stable home, in a strong, nurturing community, where they can pursue their goals and succeed. USICH and its member agencies are committed to the implementation of this Plan in order to help drive continued progress—confident that, together, we can end homelessness.

Endnotes

¹Henry, Meghan et al., “The 2017 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress, Part 1: Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness.” (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, December 2017): <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2017-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>.

²Henry et al., *2017 AHAR Part 1*. (HUD, 2017).

³Henry et al., *2017 AHAR Part 1*. (HUD, 2017).

⁴U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, “Mayors’ Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness,” (June 2018): <https://www.usich.gov/solutions/collaborative-leadership/mayors-challenge>.

⁵U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, “Memorandum: VA Medical Center Participation in Continuums of Care Coordinated Entry System”, (October 1, 2017): <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/VA-Participation-in-Coordinated-Entry-Guidance.pdf>.

⁶National Center for Homeless Education. “Federal Data Summary School Years 2013-14 to 2015-16: Education for Homeless Children and Youth”, (December 2017): <https://nche.ed.gov/downloads/data-comp-1314-1516.pdf>.

⁷Watson, Nicole et al., “Worst Case Housing Needs 2017 Report to Congress”, (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, August 2017): <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/Worst-Case-Housing-Needs.html>.

⁸Burt, Martha R. et al., “Are Homeless Families Connected to the Social Safety Net? Homeless Families Research Brief, OPRE Report”: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/198426/HomelessSafetyNet.pdf>.

National Alliance to End Homelessness. Permanent Supportive Housing Cost Study Map. <http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/permanent-supportive-housing-cost-study-map>.

Gonzalez, Jennifer et al., “Criminal Justice System Involvement Among Homeless Adults.” *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 19, no.11 (2017): <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-017-9413-7>.

Walton, Douglas et al., “Child Separation among Families Experiencing Homelessness, Homeless Families Research Brief, OPRE Report”: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/opre_child_separation_brief_03_22_2018_508_2.pdf.

⁹Gubits, Daniel et al., “Family Options Study: 3-Year Impacts of Housing and Services Interventions for Homeless Families.” (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, October 2016): <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/Family-Options-Study.html>.

¹⁰Gubits, Daniel et al., Family Options Study. (HUD, October 2016).

¹¹Gubits, Daniel et al., Family Options Study. (HUD, October 2016).

¹²National Alliance to End Homelessness, “Permanent Supportive Housing Cost Study Map”: <http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/permanent-supportive-housing-cost-study-map>.

Sadowski, Laura et al., “Effect of a Housing and Case Management Program on Emergency Department Visits and Hospitalizations Among Chronically Homeless Adults.” *JAMA* 301 (17), 1771-1778 (2009): <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2009.561>.

Basu, Anirban et al., “Comparative Cost Analysis of Housing and Case Management Program for Chronically Ill Homeless Adults Compared to Usual Care.” *Journal of Health Services Research*, (2012): <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6773.2011.01350.x>.

Hall, Gerod et al., “Public Service Use and Costs Associated with NY/NY III’s Supportive Housing for Active Substance Users.” (Columbia University, 2014): https://www.centeronaddiction.org/sites/default/files/files/4_public-service-use-and-costs-associated-with-ny-ny-III-supportive-housing-for-active-substance-users.pdf.

Kidder, Daniel et al., “Access to Housing as a Structural Intervention for Homeless and Unstably Housed People Living with HIV: Rationale, Methods, and Implementation of the Housing and Health Study.” (John Hopkins University, 2007): http://www.aidschicago.org/resources/legacy/pdf/2008/housing_plan_AccessHousing.pdf.

Aidala, Angela et al., “Frequent Users Service Enhancement ‘FUSE’ Initiative. New York City FUSE II Evaluation Report.” (Columbia University, 2019): <http://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/FUSE-Eval-Report-Final-Linked.pdf>.



UNITED STATES INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS

