
Chicago Plan 2.0 Community Charrette

Final Report

February 7, 2012



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Inquiries

If you are interested in learning more about Chicago's Plan to End Homelessness, please visit the Chicago Alliance's website at www.thechicagoalliance.org. For information on CSH, please visit www.csh.org for additional on-line resources and materials. If you have questions or comments regarding this document, please contact CSH at consulting@csh.org

Introduction

The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) is pleased to present this report to the Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness (Chicago Alliance). Committing to a thorough, thoughtful and intentional review of strategies to end homelessness is risky. To do it in an open and authentic manner is laudable. CSH witnessed these values throughout the process and hopes that the same authenticity comes through in this document.

CSH also appreciates the willingness of the Chicago Alliance staff and stakeholders to undertake the charrette process as a method of analyzing, discerning, and ultimately making difficult decisions about moving forward on complicated issues. This report is intended to inform the next body of work under the six issue areas identified and examined through this process, and to provide an opportunity to explore current structures and to increase the success of the work under Chicago's Plan to End Homelessness for its citizens – homeless and housed.

The Charrette Process

Chicago's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, *Getting Housing, Staying Housed*, was formally adopted by Mayor Daley in 2003 and implemented by a public-private partnership between the City of Chicago and the Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness.

The Plan outlined a bold, ambitious strategy for ending homelessness by:

- Preventing individuals and families from becoming homeless in the first place;
- Placing individuals and families in permanent housing as quickly as possible when they do become homeless, a strategy called "Housing First;" and,
- Providing wraparound services to promote housing stability and self-sufficiency.

As Chicago's Plan to End Homelessness enters its ninth year of implementation, it is time for Chicago to update its community's plan. Many components are part of Chicago's Plan Update including examining progress and challenges to date; reviewing system-wide data and Plan Evaluation results; and soliciting feedback and expertise from the community. To inform the update, Chicago organized an efficient process to update the plan, overseen by a Steering Committee convened by the Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness and the City of Chicago Department of Family and Support Services, and facilitated by the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH).

To ensure robust participation and feedback from the community - represented by the Chicago Alliance Constituency Groups and Commissions - the Steering Committee decided to organize and deliver a condensed community process, known as a community planning charrette. The charrette takes what is typically a long-term planning process, and focuses our community-wide energy on key issue areas. To develop community recommendations for Plan 2.0 on key issue areas, and to condense planning time while involving a broad range of stakeholders, the Chicago Alliance engaged CSH to facilitate this work using the CSH Charrette process. The CSH Charrette is specifically designed to help communities address key issues in ending homelessness at the local level. Similar to a traditional architectural charrette, the CSH Charrette provides a fast-paced but thorough exploration of the critical aspects of developing plans and action steps. CSH Charrettes capitalize on local and external expertise as well as the community organizing principle of engaging stakeholders in a dynamic process.

With guidance from the Plan 2.0 Steering Committee, CSH worked closely with the community to identify key issue areas, review data, and prepare for the charrette week. Community conversations and developing recommendations took place during a one-week “intensive” process, resulting in a final framework for action that will shape the next version of Chicago’s Plan to End Homelessness or “Plan 2.0.”

Pre-Planning: In September 2011, the Alliance launched the pre-planning process for the charrette. The Chicago Planning Council on Homelessness (Chicago’s public-private governing body for HUD Homeless Assistance funding) established a Steering Committee to guide the process. Sixteen participants from across the city comprised the Steering Committee. The committee met regularly from August 2011 through January 2012. A full list of committee members, as well as the committee’s mission, is included in the Appendix.

The Steering Committee used public input to determine the key issue areas for charrette week, ensuring as much representation and outreach as possible. The Committee identified the initial and final issue areas; reviewed and approved the recommended local and national experts; provided ongoing guidance and participation in the process; and participated in charrette week.

Issue Areas: The Steering Committee was tasked with narrowing down the key issue areas for charrette week. Initially, nine areas were chosen: entry points; prevention/diversion; interim housing; employment; HEARTH and children; permanent supportive housing access and supply; youth; and ex-offenders.



A brief study guide on the issues was developed and distributed to the community. CSH facilitated two community forums, one with the Service Providers Commission and a second with the Consumers Commission to narrow down the issue areas to six. These meetings included an overview of the issue areas, time for questions and discussion, and voting by those in attendance on their top issue areas. In addition to the two community forums, several constituency groups held supplementary meetings to provide feedback and ask questions. Over 200 people participated in the pre-planning sessions.

In the end, through community consensus and Steering Committee approval, the committee chose six key themes. While the other issue areas are important for the overall Plan, and will be covered in the Plan 2.0 document, those issue areas were not selected as the community charrette sessions for this process.

Charrette Week at a Glance



Charrette Week: Chicago’s charrette captured the local need for balanced representation and drew on the deep technical knowledge and investment of the community.

The charrette kicked off on January 24, 2012 with two full days of intense dialogue at the Chicago Temple in downtown Chicago.

Over 445 unduplicated people attended the charrette sessions.

The conversation focused on six issue areas:

1. Employment
2. Permanent Housing Access and Supply
3. Systems Integration
4. Coordinated Access and Prevention
5. Interim and Rapid Rehousing
6. Youth

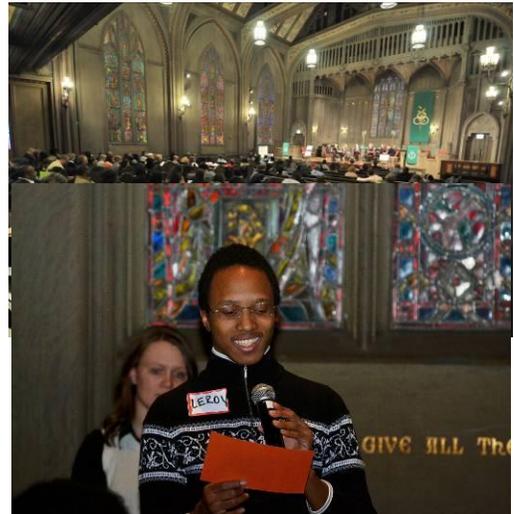


The Fishbowl: Each conversation occurred in a “fishbowl” setting with a group of experts sitting before community stakeholders. For the first hour, the local and external experts engaged in a dialogue that encouraged thinking of new systemic and programmatic responses in the issue areas. Experts from diverse communities and organizations drew from their experiences and expertise to exchange views and create suggestions for moving forward. *(A full list of experts is in the Appendix.)*

While the expert dialogue occurred, the rest of the charrette participants observed the discussion without comment. Half way through, the conversation among the experts ended and CSH facilitated audience observations and feedback.

During this time, the experts were not allowed to respond, and community members were given many opportunities to agree with or challenge the experts and to offer other suggestions on the issue areas. The purpose of this part of each session was to engage the community members in the discussion and benefit from their expertise and experiences.

After each fishbowl, CSH facilitators debriefed the experts, capturing any additional information or recommendations after the community feedback.



Feedback Loop: Following the intensive public process, CSH distilled the information into draft recommendations for each issue area. These recommendations were created on Thursday, January 26 and the draft recommendations were presented on Friday, January 27 in a two-hour feedback session. CSH facilitated the meeting and heard input on how well the recommendations did or did not reflect the teachings and comments gathered during the charrette. The feedback session also tested the recommendations to gauge their likelihood for implementation. The community submitted written comments through February 1, 2012 and included over 45 pages of written comments.

Final Report: CSH incorporated the feedback in their final report presented to the Steering Committee and the Chicago Alliance on February 7, 2012. This report will serve as one of the foundational documents for the writing of Plan 2.0.

Chicago has incredible information, evaluations, data, and expertise in place from eight years of implementation, practical experience, and a formal Plan Evaluation. The charrette process was a concentrated effort to talk through the ‘gnarly’ issues, but also a quick, decisive way to distill the incredible information and expertise into a concise Plan to move forward. The intense facilitated sessions, expertise from across the country and Chicago area, and insightful community comment and feedback loop will build and sustain the process and create a strong updated Plan.

The Chicago Charrette by the Numbers

Daily Attendance

- Expert Fishbowls on January 24: **267 people attended**
- Expert Fishbowls on January 25: **211 people attended**
- Total Number of Experts: **37 experts**
- Public Feedback Session on January 27: **96 people attended**
- Total Unduplicated Attendance: **445 people**

Stakeholders that Attended

- Provider Agencies: 54
- Consumers: 125 (approximately)
- Government Agencies: 14
- Partners and Advocates: 14
- Private Funders: 6
- Total: **212 stakeholders**

Recommendations

The fishbowl sessions, with expertise from across the country and Chicago, as well as the insightful community comment and feedback loop, built and sustained the charrette process. This resulting document and recommendations reflect the observations and expertise of all involved, with the goal of informing the next body of work under the six issue areas identified. These recommendations represent the information gathered from the experts and community in the Feedback sessions, and are informed by the Evaluation of Chicago's Plan and other reviewed data sources.

Each issue area has a short introduction, followed by suggested action items. Some issue areas have detailed recommendations; others propose setting up a task force to accomplish much of the groundwork and relationship building among different parties involved in the process. It should be noted that CSH recommends that any task forces be short-term in nature and focused on the specific recommendations outlined in this report. The report concludes with overall recommendations.

Charrettes serve as a way of quickly generating a solution while integrating the interests of a diverse group of people. A successful charrette promotes joint ownership of solutions focused on areas of action and implementation. The Chicago Planning Council and the Plan 2.0 Steering Committee believe this process will result in a successful Plan 2.0.

In addition to the results of Charrette week and the recommendations/action items outlined here, other sources of data – including the Evaluation of the Plan -- are informing Plan 2.0. The Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness and Department of Family and Support Services are working closely with CSH to use this data and information to guide final recommendations for action under the next Plan.

To do this, CSH staff will review key documents and information such as HMIS, point-in-time, and DFSS data; engage in discussions with key stakeholders; work with the Steering Committee; align the recommendations with HEARTH performance measures and the Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness, *Opening Doors*; and prepare the draft Plan 2.0.



Employment

People who experience homelessness are not "one size fits all" when it comes to housing and services, including employment. Some may need supported employment, transitional jobs, assistance in accessing employment networks, and to complete basic education or job training programs before they can get a job. To make an impact and elevate the issue, homeless services and employment systems will need to integrate, as they have never done.

Overall, this fishbowl recommended expanding capacity and flexibility of the workforce development system, and equipping homeless services providers with standard tools to assess and connect people to the most suitable employment programming, from education and literacy through career development. We also heard that it takes many tries to find the right job or career path, and workforce and homeless services agencies play a significant role in keeping morale, persistence, and confidence in tact for the people they serve.

The charrette session on employment generated many robust ideas for implementation. Questions covered in this session included:

- What are the main hurdles for homeless services providers in connecting participants to employment services and jobs?
- What connections to the employment sector need to be established or expanded? What is the systems integration work necessary to see further investment of the traditional workforce development sector in our population?
- What can Chicago institute and foster to provide alternative educational and employment services models?
- How do we address populations who cannot connect with traditional employment due to disabilities?
- How does Chicago address the disconnect between available employment trainings and client needs? How are we coordinating with other publically funded initiatives? What do collaborative have to teach us about employment programs in an age of resource reduction?
- How can we better integrate homeless service programs with other city/county funded workforce development programs?
- What resources exist for special population such as ex-offenders and veterans?
- What training or retraining exists or should be developed to assist older adults?
- What is missing? What works well?

Recommendations/Action Items

- A. Implement a system-wide, standard employment assessment that leads to appropriate employment programs or resources. Overall, homeless services providers are not using formal or standard assessments that are in accordance with the workforce development system. Adapting an assessment tool to help homeless service providers measure participants' educational attainment and employment readiness is encouraged, similar to what the Chicago Housing Authority has successfully done under "Opportunity Chicago" to increase employment among its residents.

- B. Explore the creation of "employment navigators" within the workforce development system to connect homeless households to employment resources, referrals, and services. Adapting the "disability navigator" model, the workforce development field could add specialists who assist those experiencing unemployment and homelessness in making and keeping connections in the web of job preparation and training services and increase positive outcomes for programs and individuals.
- C. Redirect flexible employment services funding in interim housing/shelters toward pre and post-employment supports including standard assessments and job retention services. Funds for fragmented services could be reissued and combined with other funding for more strategic purposes as listed above. Roles such as job developers were strongly recommended to keep within the workforce development system because of the specificity and time intensity required to build and maintain relationships.
- D. Expand Transitional Jobs programming. The time-limited "Put Illinois to Work" initiative funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) was effective at engaging the long-term unemployed quickly. Transitional jobs are time-limited as well and while this model cannot be used for long-term employment opportunities, it can be an effective intervention to build work history and meet basic financial needs.
- E. Leverage and package multiple funding streams for employment services, including the Departments of Labor, Education and Veterans Affairs, Medicaid, and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).
- F. Apply for available waivers for programs like the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to encourage more programming directed to homeless populations. Large jurisdictions such as Chicago can sometimes apply for flexibilities in federal funding standards because of the wide range of people to be served. Chicago and Cook County, under the newly established Cook County Works might be eligible for such waivers related to workforce programming, possibly opening the door to improved employment services for those experiencing homelessness.
- G. Integrate with the Cook County Works planning process. Chicago's homeless system - including the Department of Family and Support Services and the Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness, with support from the Mayor's Office must be a part of the planning process for the new Cook County Works to address the dire employment needs of the homeless population. This process should involve the overall influence on businesses coming to the region and their hiring expectations and agreements.
- H. Change state childcare assistance eligibility for homeless families to allow families to access subsidies while searching for employment. Current rules for state childcare subsidies require that one be enrolled already in job training or employed to access assistance. Provisions have been made to extend eligibility for families who have become unemployed, but do not include those who are experiencing homelessness and not yet employed.
- I. Explore innovations such as a micro-lending program for homeless/formerly homeless entrepreneurs. Consumers of homeless services were very clear that they often have several employment "certificates" and the skills to work now, even if they are not yet hired. This recommendation responds to the values of empowerment, creativity, and self-determination elicited by the many consumers in attendance.

- J.** Improve and promote the Property Management Curriculum offered at the City Colleges and encourage residents to attend and be hired by housing programs. Another strong theme was the desire for consumers to be involved in and shape the operation of the housing or shelter programs. Curriculum exists to train persons in property management, and could be an excellent opportunity to address the needs of programs and participants.
- K.** Explore opportunities to rehabilitate foreclosed properties and provide job training. Charrette participants made the strong connection between homelessness and vacant and foreclosed properties, both from the perspective of getting housing on-line, but also immediate jobs.
- L.** Explore adoption of the City of New York’s Work Connect System that allows all client identification records to be centrally stored and accessed. People experiencing homelessness often have to replace or track down essential identification records needed to obtain employment and other services. New York City recently implemented a new technology that maintains records of baptism, birth, and public services used so that individuals' movement to self-sufficiency is not interrupted because of temporary loss of identification.
- M.** Use legal expungement and clemency options to expand employment opportunities for ex-offenders. Criminal histories, large and small, often follow a person for the rest of their lives through the power of records and background checks in employment and housing applications. Legal remedies such as expungement apply to certain arrests and convictions and act to "seal" a record so it will no longer appear to the public. Clemency is an "official act of forgiveness", can only be delivered by the Governor, and involves a process of petitions.
- N.** Expand the City of Chicago and/or Cook County Human Rights Ordinance to disallow discrimination based on criminal history.

Permanent Housing Access and Supply

A range of permanent housing options is necessary to end homelessness in Chicago. From permanent supportive housing (PSH), a targeted intervention of housing and services for those who are homeless and disabled, to affordable housing resources, units underwritten to target lower-income populations, Chicago needs a two-prong strategy to accomplish the Plan's goals. For a portion of persons who are homeless in Chicago, PSH provides the key to remaining stably housed. For the majority of persons touching the homeless system, affordable housing is the intervention best suited to ending a household's homelessness.

The charrette session on permanent housing generated ideas for a range of permanent housing options and recommendations are listed below. Questions covered in this session included:

- What targets should the system set for new PSH production and targeting?
- What percentage of our housing options needs to be PSH or permanent housing with short-term support or affordable housing? Does Chicago have a mismatch between supply and population that needs permanent housing?
- What administrative barriers of PSH funders and programs can be changed to facilitate faster entry and placement into permanent supportive housing?
- What strategies could Chicago put in place to coordinate funding to develop and operate permanent supportive housing and other affordable housing options?
- In thinking about access, what can be put in place to allow for greater accessibility from the streets to permanent housing? How can permanent housing providers be encouraged or incentivized to collaborate with front line workers to gain quick access to housing?
- What role does the central referral process play in changing access for our consumers?
- What strategies need to be in place to ensure equal access to permanent housing in Chicago?

Recommendations/Action Items

Overall

- A.** Include affordable housing, integrated housing¹, and permanent supportive housing (PSH) strategies in Plan 2.0. A consistent theme throughout the charrette was the need for a two-pronged housing approach, focusing on both affordable and supportive housing. Increasing rental subsidies, preserving units, and creating new opportunities for housing should be pursued.
- B.** Create affordable and permanent supportive housing that provides access to a wider range of people experiencing homelessness such as people at risk of homelessness, doubled up, and non-disabled.
- C.** Create a foreclosure-focused permanent supportive housing and affordable housing initiative, targeted to persons who are homeless, with capital, operating, and services resources. Comments included

¹ "Integrated Housing" refers to the strategy of blending or integrating supportive housing units within developments that also provide affordable (for households with low to moderate income levels, but not necessarily with special needs) and/or market-rate housing units. While technically any project with less than 100% supportive housing is integrated, "Integrated Housing" typically refers to projects developed by mainstream housing developers who collaborate with a service provider to dedicate 10 to 25% of units through an extended use agreement for supportive housing.

examples such as transforming foreclosures into affordable housing through TIF funds or through a citywide initiative.

- D. Sponsor a landlord hotline to provide easy access for immediate needs and questions on housing partnerships. Developing a one-stop hotline for landlords to call when tenants may be in crisis, need additional services, or are facing eviction, can provide a necessary prevention and housing stability connection.
- E. Increase coordination among online housing search tools and build on existing online infrastructure. Websites to coordinate include: www.direct2housing.org, www.ilhousingsearch.org, and www.chicagohousingoptions.org
- F. Provide training to providers on the connection between benefits and employment.
- G. Develop eviction prevention programs to ensure housing stability.

Permanent Supportive Housing

- H. Implement a central referral system for PSH and connect it to other assessment systems for prevention, emergency shelter, interim housing, and rapid rehousing. Building on successful pilots in Chicago, the central referral system was a goal first outlined in the Plan Implementation Schedule in 2005. Creating a system-wide referral process and priorities for persons in order of vulnerability and length of homelessness will help Chicago meet the federal goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2015 and family homelessness in 10 years. Within the central referral system, Chicago can create a presumptive eligibility policy for documentation needed to move into PSH.
- I. Create flexible capital funding to reduce the development timeline for PSH and Integrated Housing and implement coordinated funding applications and initiatives for City agencies funding housing. Coordinated funding through CHA, DFSS, and DHED and a commitment to reducing the development timeline can lead to quicker development of permanent housing in Chicago.
- J. Implement efforts to assist people in PSH to move to affordable housing in the community when appropriate. These demonstrations connect households to affordable housing freeing up a supportive housing unit for the next, most vulnerable community member. Partnerships with the Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund or Chicago Housing Authority should be explored to launch pilots and then system-wide projects.

Permanent, Affordable Housing

- K. Create additional rental subsidies under Plan 2.0 as a critical component for more flexible permanent housing. Comments specifically called out the need for rental subsidies for homeless families, as well as expanding the Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund and other rental subsidy resources.
- L. Create a project or initiative to help people with income or in need of market rate housing to locate housing and exit homelessness. While efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing through

new production or rehabilitation of current stock are necessary, agencies and communities cannot “build their way” out of homelessness. Rather, frontline staff, program managers, and systems planners must have a laser-like focus on increasing access to existing rental units for unhoused populations, particularly in the private rental market.

- M.** Work with the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) to establish a special designation for households who are homeless on the CHA waiting list. In establishing this designation, work with CHA to ensure that all persons have an opportunity to be placed in the units, including persons with criminal backgrounds.
- N.** Explore successful community housing models. Several charrette attendees and comments suggested examining the models of home sharing or roommate matching options for households that are homeless.
- O.** Continue the development of supported employment programs for permanent housing residents and create career opportunities for residents in housing developments as much as possible.
- P.** Continue advocacy for the preservation and creation of affordable housing in Chicago.

Systems Integration

The goal of systems integration is to work across public and private systems of care to ensure that ending homelessness is a shared priority and to align funding, programs and/or policies to help prevent and intervene in homelessness. During this fishbowl session, we not only drew out issue-specific areas of integration, we also solicited key tenets and strategies to guide the implementers of Chicago's Plan 2.0 in successfully connecting across agencies and service domains.

Plan 2.0 needs to address the relationships between agencies and the various institutions that are included in any effort to work with those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Questions asked during the charrette included:

- As noted in the results from the evaluation of Chicago's Plan, the system is fragmented and full of silos. What mechanisms can be put in place to address this fragmentation?
- What systems need to be active participants in the discussions and plans to end homelessness?
- What are the strategies for systems integration with behavioral health systems; corrections; Chicago Public Schools; senior services; and affordable housing developers?
- What does current coordination look like between the homeless system, school system, and other developmental systems (early intervention, child care, health)?
- What would a truly integrated system look like? What can we learn from other communities that are doing this well?
- As a system, how can we better leverage our available resources to end homelessness? How do we break down the funding silos that exist?
- How can we leverage existing resources to have healthcare services embedded and integrated into our outreach and housing continuum?
- What lessons can we take away from the pilot and innovative projects in Chicago that focused on systems integration, such as the Street to Home Initiative, Chicago Housing for Health Partnership, 100,000 Homes Campaign, Family Assertive Community Treatment Project, and others?

Recommendations/Action Items

- A.** Ensure Plan 2.0 has dedicated systems integration staff. To achieve the goals of Plan 2.0, it will be critical to have multiple staff dedicated to the purpose of working across government agencies and with community-based partners to provide consistent direction and communication of the Plan's goals and shared accountability.
- B.** Fundraise for System Improvement Planning Grant opportunities that create incentives for systems to come together to plan and implement changes. Financial incentives to coordinate policies and programs can entice agencies to work strategically together.
- C.** Have stakeholder agencies (public health, seniors, mental health, homeless, etc.) convene grantees to foster coordination and solutions to integration barriers. Public and private funders in Chicago primarily deliver services through networks of community-based agencies. It is incumbent upon the funders to foster partnerships and knowledge sharing that can lead to service or systems integration.
- D.** Advocate with all systems to simplify eligibility criteria. Community-based programs and entitlement programs are required to use funder-driven eligibility criteria, but then often layer on additional

parameters based on program choice, agency mission, or just preference that can make accessing services difficult for vulnerable populations.

- E. Reinstate grant funding and/or expand Medicaid reimbursement to provide mental health services to people who are Medicaid-eligible but not yet enrolled. Efforts must be put in place now, as the Affordable Care Act seeks to enroll this population into services by 2014.
- F. Direct funding, or leverage Medicaid, to fund positions for SSI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) to drastically increase enrollment in SSI, which could connect to enrollment in Medicaid. Public funding, ideally through Medicaid, should be directed to increase enrollment of homeless and disabled persons onto SSI, which will allow recipients to obtain housing.
- G. Explore ways to integrate PSH and homeless programs into emerging Care Coordination Entities under healthcare reform. The City of Chicago and its partners should make a concerted effort to ensure all PSH and homeless providers understand healthcare reform and keep up to date with implementation to inform service partnerships and enrollment of clients or tenants into Medicaid and Care Coordination Entities.
- H. Leverage Medicaid-eligible services while protecting funding that covers services not reimbursable by Medicaid. PSH programs and homeless services providers deliver services recognized by Medicaid federally. The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services is charged with reviewing the current taxonomy and coverage under the Affordable Care Act to allow a greater range of services to be reimbursed through Medicaid-billing partnerships.
- I. Integrate with the VA on appropriate screening and referral and in-reach to the homeless system for immediate connection to available resources for veterans. Allow homeless service providers to determine veteran status prior to referral. In some communities, VA offices allow community partners to advocate with a client to retrieve veteran history, leading to improved service connections.
- J. Integrate prevention efforts for veterans by linking Supportive Services for Veteran Families programs with other prevention screening measures like the Homeless Prevention Call Center (HPCC). The Department of Veterans Affairs has adopted similar service interventions as the homeless system to align strategic plans to end homelessness among federal agencies.
- K. Work with the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) to implement its own Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP) connected to its reentry and recidivism prevention efforts, and enforce implementation of SSI and Medicaid upon release. IDOC should equip itself with a community service structure - directly or through contracts – to provide short- and medium-term prevention assistance to alleviate demands this population otherwise places on the homeless services system.
- L. Encourage IDOC to follow existing laws that require IDOC to suspend not terminate benefits for inmates. Reinstatement of benefits prior to release allows persons to have money to secure housing, and health insurance to continue medical services including mental health treatment. These interventions would establish that IDOC has responsibility to limit the impact on homelessness after release.
- M. Fund mobile case management staff for homeless students, beginning in CPS regions and schools with high concentrations of homeless students. It must be a joint priority of Plan 2.0 and Chicago

Public Schools to maintain stability of students living in doubled up situations and enhance their education by mitigating potential housing crises and disruptions in school attendance.

- N.** Increase the dedicated staffing of the CPS Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) programs to provide greater support for schools, and enhance training for those staff on integrated homeless and prevention resources. STLS staff must be trained to support school liaisons to screen for younger children in families so they can be linked to comprehensive early childhood services (including school and community-based preschool or Head Start programs, Early Head Start, home visitation and Early Intervention programs).
- O.** Encourage the City Colleges of Chicago to enumerate the number of homeless students similar to Chicago Public Schools and then create liaisons to assist with the special needs of homeless college students. There are an unknown number of homeless college students who will need special advocacy and assistance to stay on track for graduation. City Colleges could adapt the CPS model of liaisons.
- P.** Explore and reinstate school-based interventions that increase engagement and retention of homeless high schools students. Reinstating programs such as the “Cradle to Classroom” program that provides on-site childcare at CPS high schools is a step in the right direction.
- Q.** Engage the Chicago Transit Authority in discussions about the impact of fare hikes and rates for people who are homeless, including students and adults. Homeless students and families often travel long distances on CTA to access work, school, services, and shelter. The City and CTA should work with providers to address their transit needs and develop solutions.

Coordinated Access and Prevention

Ensuring simple, clear, and available access points to our prevention, shelter, and housing systems is critical to our Plan’s success. Chicago currently has a no-wrong-door approach with multiple entry points into homeless shelter services– through DFSS Service Centers, street outreach and engagement teams, 311, homeless service and housing providers, and others. The HEARTH Act calls on continuums of care to develop coordinated access systems for services that will improve data coordination and tracking, reduce duplication, and inform interventions. Chicago must improve its approach to accessing homeless shelter services to be clear, consistent, and follow people from beginning to end. Prevention services should target those most at-risk of entering shelter, and housing stability must take the needs of children into account.

Questions asked during the charrette on this topic included:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current system?
- Could Chicago benefit from and implement coordinated intake?²
- How do Chicago’s entry points (DFSS Service Centers, outreach teams, Prevention Call Center, 311, providers, and others) connect to longer-term solutions such as housing and services?
- What other systems affect the way our entry points function and how could their work become more integrated in creating a coordinated system?
- How can we incentivize better coordination among outreach providers? What supports this?
- How could Chicago implement system-wide shelter diversion and rapid rehousing strategies?
- How should Chicago target its limited prevention resources to support the goals of reducing annual instances of homelessness?
- What is missing? What works well?

Recommendations/Action Items

- A.** Connect all shelter request calls made to 311 hours to a 211-like entity for a prevention/diversion assessment and shelter in-take. The capability for real-time bed management for placements must be established and utilized. During daytime hours, persons could be directed to regional locations to receive shelter transportation or prevention assistance as needed. All shelter placements should take the educational needs of the children into account. Also, service interventions should be considered for handling repeat shelter and prevention requests.
- B.** Ensure client assessment information transfers from coordinated intake to next provider for continuity of service. Once an electronic placement and referral system is expanded from prevention to include shelter referral and placement, it is imperative that the service providers pick up where the previous assessment left off, so that families in transition do not have to continue to repeat all information, just confirm.
- C.** Target prevention funding to those who are most at-risk for entering shelter and explore implementation of a shelter diversion model. The HEARTH Act asks communities to reduce the annual number of

² In a coordinated system, each system entry point (“front door”) uses the same assessment tool and makes decisions on which programs families are referred to based on a comprehensive understanding of each program’s specific requirements, target population, and available beds and service.

people entering the homeless system, which will inform how Chicago targets its limited prevention resources and sets realistic outcome measures for success.

- D. Co-locate public benefits screening and facilitate tight coordination/data sharing with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) agency to obtain benefits quickly. Integration of these application systems and documentation is critical, as the enrollment rate of homeless families in TANF is unusually low.
- E. Assign one coordinated case manager at front end to follow person through the system. One significant observation from the consumer standpoint is there is duplication of effort among case managers, with each person likely having multiple people working with them. This can impede rather than enhance efforts. One option that was explored with stimulus funds in 2009-2010 was to have case managers stick with clients throughout their time in homelessness. This would include services after exit from shelter.
- F. Implement eviction-prevention curriculum for all permanent housing (including PSH) that is supported by flexible resources in order to implement proven practices preventing eviction. There is evidence that tenants are being served with evictions for small amounts of arrears, a situation that could be easily prevented and not lead to homelessness.
- G. Explore a plan to use hotline and social media communication tools to provide support to adults and youth in crisis.
- H. Replicate family mediation and support groups for parents and caregivers to be able to respond to their child's expression of sexual orientation and gender expression and other issues such as mental health, drug use, sexual activity, teen pregnancy, etc. that could lead to running away or asking the child to leave.

Interim and Rapid Rehousing

Chicago's Plan called for a Housing First approach. The Plan states, "For Chicago, this approach requires a fundamental shift in its shelter strategy, away from its current tiered system of care to an Interim Housing model in which short-term housing is provided for the minimum time needed to access permanent housing, with services focused on an immediate and comprehensive needs assessment, resource acquisition and housing placement." To date over 3,000 beds of interim housing exist in Chicago's system.

The charrette session on interim and rapid rehousing generated much strong dialogue and differing ideas for how to move forward. Strategies and recommendations are listed below. Questions covered in this session included:

- How does interim housing fit into Chicago's system? What are the pros/cons of interim housing over traditional transitional housing models?
- What network of interventions can Chicago bring to scale to achieve the interim housing goal?
- What lessons about rapid re-housing are there from HPRP and the Stable Families Initiative that can inform the interim housing model and take rapid rehousing efforts to scale? What resources are available to amplify our efforts?
- What are the national best practices for similar models? How do the HEARTH performance measures affect interim and rapid rehousing in Chicago?
- What are the current access points for youth who are homeless or at risk for being homeless and how do we expand those current access points?
- Whom do these interventions serve well? Who is left out?
- What is missing? What works well?

Recommendations/Action Items

Establish a time-limited, focused task force to create recommendations on interim housing for Plan 2.0. Through the charrette process, it was clear there was not consensus among providers, consumers, and experts on the next steps for interim housing in Chicago. We recommend a taskforce be established to concentrate on comprehensive recommendations for the model to be included in Plan 2.0.

Recommendations from this task force may include any of the ideas included below, or may include new ideas. The group should be representative of interim housing providers, consumers, and funders and should keep the HEARTH performance goals as an underlining premise for recommendations. In addition, from the charrette, consumer feedback overwhelming stated that people felt 'stuck' in the system; wanted to move quickly; and wanted providers held accountable. Providers stated they wanted flexibility to do their best work with each household; needed resources to move households more quickly; and had undergone large-scale changes to implement the model.

Ideas for the taskforce to consider:

- A.** Allow interim housing programs to provide client-centered services without imposing arbitrary time frames. Consider flexible innovations to generate the best results in interim and rapid rehousing. Test and assess performance-based contracting or other financial incentive models to move from current interim model to a rapid rehousing-focused program. Take models to scale based on the outcomes of

pilots. Performance measures should follow the HEARTH Act and the Federal Strategic Plan and focus on placement into stable housing, reduced length of stay in shelter, reduced recidivism in shelter, and fewer new entries into shelter.

- B.** Invest new resources in flexible rental subsidies and housing case management resources to get households out of shelter and interim housing. Support for new models of shelter provision that promote individual and agency success through increased housing placement, diversion, and rapid rehousing will advance the overall goal of ending homelessness. With many adults and families caught in shelter or not even turning to shelter as an option, it is vital that new investments focus on opening up the back-end to allow more exits out of interim housing.
- C.** Line up a supply of short-term rental supports and assistance specifically targeted to non-disabled single adults and families. Many households could move on from interim housing quickly, but are stuck in the current system or unable to access it at all.
- D.** Ensure all shelter and interim housing programs support family preservation both for children of all ages and genders as well as partners. Provide training and technical assistance to providers to make the changes required by the HEARTH Act regarding age of children.
- E.** Reinststate a system or program that helps people with income or in need of market rate housing exit homelessness. Not every household will qualify for or need long-term rental subsidy assistance. Consider supporting a program modeled on the lessons learned from housing locators in the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP) or the citywide Housing Locator Program to access market rate housing as an option for those exiting interim housing or for those who are diverted from interim housing.
- F.** Examine lessons learned under HPRP and apply best practices to new rapid rehousing programs and resources.
- G.** Fund and provide aftercare services for people exiting interim housing to live with family or friends to assist with future stability, which may include mediation for doubled-up households and small supports for the host households.
- H.** Emphasize job retention services in case management practices and examine how current employment service dollars can be best used to focus on job placement and retention.
- I.** Work with all providers to ensure safe, secure facilities. Require all providers to have a safe, secure place to store belongings for persons during stay with service provider. Develop a program that works with interim housing providers that have substandard conditions or emergency repair needs and that evaluates the cost and benefits of making those repairs.
- J.** Establish a diversion assessment to be conducted at all points of entry into the system including interim housing sites. Gather data on turnaways in HMIS to better understand the need for site-based waiting lists and housing requests.

Youth

Youth homelessness is a hidden epidemic in our community. The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless estimates that over 10,000 youth aged 16 to 25 experience homelessness over the course of a year. According to the Chicago Public Schools, the number of homeless students in Chicago has nearly doubled in the last three years alone. The causes of youth homelessness are extremely complex and often involve family disintegration, abuse, economics, criminal justice, child welfare, teen parenthood, mental health challenges, and sexuality. Youth, alone and disconnected from a parent or guardian, yet facing unique developmental challenges, become especially vulnerable to dangers on the street.

When Chicago's first Plan to End Homelessness was created in 2002, much less was known about the prevalence of youth homelessness and which interventions would effectively serve this special population. Now, Chicago has a robust community of homeless youth providers and active youth advocates who are helping to bring our successful, evidence-based services to scale and to widen their reach to more neighborhoods throughout the city. Chicago's next Plan must focus on creating a comprehensive, developmentally-appropriate menu of services for youth who experience homelessness in order to prevent our future from becoming the next generation of homeless adults.

The charrette session on youth covered the questions listed below:

- How do we create a comprehensive coordinated community response to youth who are homeless or at risk of being homeless?
- What interventions does Chicago need to provide to youth who are homeless? How much do we need? What barriers has the system created for youth accessing housing and services?
- Should interventions in Chicago differentiate by age? Population characteristics? If so, how? How the interventions are provided developmentally appropriate?
- What best practices from around the country could inform our efforts? How can we infuse youth informed best practices throughout our youth provider system?
- How can we leverage the existing system of beds to reconfigure for capacity for youth? How do we conduct outreach to ensure youth access resources available in our system?
- How can Chicago institute a developmentally appropriate continuum of care for youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness?
- As a community, how will we define success in ending youth homelessness? What metrics or benchmarks will demonstrate the efficacy of our services?

Recommendations/Action Items

Overall

- A.** Affirm the goal that youth homelessness will not lead to adult homelessness. Increasing the focus on aftercare services for youth who have left the system should assist youth when they are in crisis and prevent future episodes of homelessness.
- B.** Utilize the City of Chicago Task Force on Homeless Youth as the key advisory body, as well as youth consumers, to inform interventions, policies, and investments.

- C. Integrate cultural competency for all youth into all actions, decisions, and programs that serve homeless youth.

Prevention

- D. Adopt and integrate the runaway youth curriculum developed by the National Runaway Switchboard into Chicago Public Schools.
- E. Improve crisis intervention services for homeless minors by increasing collaborations with Comprehensive Community Based Youth Services (CCBYS) agencies, the state-funded providers of family reunification for minor youth.
- F. Increase the focus on evidence-based and preventative family intervention services when possible.

Housing

- G. Triple the capacity of the youth housing system by 2016. Youth housing should be available in each area of the city and should include both low-demand shelter beds and developmentally-appropriate transitional housing.
- H. Ensure all housing programs that serve homeless youth are using positive youth development, harm reduction, and trauma-informed frameworks in their service delivery. Provide cross-trainings on these evidence-based practices. Explore the possibility of placing youth specialists within adult shelters. Chicago should focus on outcome measures such as involuntary exits from programs and decreasing barriers to services to ensure homeless youth are being appropriately served.
- I. Explore proven alternatives to traditional institutional housing programs for youth, such as host home programs, Home Sharing, or roommate matching.
- J. Explore and maximize all housing opportunities for youth transitioning out of care through the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), including the Family Unification Program (FUP) and the Youth Housing Assistance Program.

Comprehensive Services

- K. Provide a comprehensive array of services and interventions, as well as a safe alternative to the street, at 24/7 drop-in centers on the north, south, and west sides of the city.
- L. Connect pregnant and parenting youth to appropriate and adequate housing and service options that take into account the developmental needs of both the parent and the child.
- M. Increase resources for homeless youth within Chicago Public Schools to maximize educational opportunities, including, but not limited to, restored Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) staff, enhanced training for school-based liaisons, subsidized internships, on-site child care, and an extended age limit for high school.

- N.** Help ensure success for homeless youth in college, by creating homeless liaisons within the City Colleges of Chicago, advocating for maintenance of public benefits while in college, and exploring opportunities for college dorms for homeless youth.
- O.** Prioritize more employment opportunities for youth including seasonal, full-time, and part-time employment (including peer mentors at schools and service agencies).
- P.** Implement the plan for Chicago Transit Authority fare-card reductions for homeless youth created by the City of Chicago Task Force on Homeless Youth.

Overarching Recommendations for Plan 2.0

During the charrette, several key overarching themes emerged – from client choice to using data and evidence-based models. The following recommendations are a summary of these themes. It is recommended that these be woven throughout the draft of Plan 2.0 as appropriate.

- A. Embody consumer choice at every possible level and component of the system – from street outreach to housing placement and follow up.** Consumers and providers repeatedly stated their commitment and our community’s need to prioritize consumer choice throughout all housing and services.
- B. Align Chicago’s Plan with the Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness – *Opening Doors*.** *Opening Doors* calls for the country to work ambitiously to end homelessness for persons who are chronically homeless, veterans, youth, and families. Chicago’s new Plan should embrace and implement these goals.
- C. Maintain and expand cultural competency throughout the homeless service system.** Cultural competency in practice implies a heightened consciousness of how clients experience their uniqueness and deal with their differences and similarities within a larger social context. In the charrette, consumers and providers asked that cultural competency be reflected in attitudes, structures, policies, and services.
- D. Make resources available to ensure access to the homeless system for people who speak languages other than English.** This work should be monitored on a regular basis to ensure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In order to prevent litigation and ensure access, language access and cultural competency standards should be incorporated into homeless services contracts. Managing entities (City of Chicago, Chicago Alliance) should ensure compliance. Resources should be made available to ensure access, including resources for interpreter services, site enhancements, and cultural competency training and technical assistance.
- E. End any discriminatory activities in the homeless system and advocate for ending them in other mainstream systems that people are accessing or need to access.** Many comments during the charrette included stories of discrimination within the homeless system or in mainstream systems.
- F. Apply evidence-based models where appropriate and ensure there is adequate training for strong implementation.** Experts and participants referenced many times the need to apply evidence-based models in our work, but to also provide the needed technical assistance for providers to implement the models well.
- G. Monitor and modify caseload sizes to ensure strong outcomes for programs and people.**
- H. Support providers of homeless services by ensuring sufficient training, skill development, and compensation for staff, as well as the long-term sustainability of programs and agencies.**



- I. Ensure community-wide understanding of re-entry and advocate for people with criminal backgrounds.** While not a specific issue area in the charrette, the issue of re-entry, the need for community understanding, and continued advocacy was stated as an important goal under the Plan.
- J. Use data to identify system gaps, blockages, and other issues that need to be addressed.** Particularly a message from the experts, it is recommended that decisions be made based on data. With the Plan Evaluation, evaluation of pilot projects, the Homeless Prevention Call Center, and other system-wide initiatives, Chicago has the data it needs to identify gaps and issues that need attention.
- K. Create appropriate data and performance measures connected to the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act across funding sources.** Federal dollars for homelessness are tied to the HEARTH Act performance measures, and Chicago’s Plan and funding should reflect these measures. Plan 2.0 should address a uniform set of performance measures across funding sources.
- L. Create an open Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) system, able to connect with multiple data systems to reduce provider time entering data and provide quality reports to the community.** Opening the HMIS system, while protecting confidentiality, can increase Chicago’s use and coverage in HMIS. Higher data coverage in an open HMIS will help the community better understand patterns, demand, etc. In addition, a functional bed management system, used at entry, can assist in smoother transitions to housing and services.
- M. Decide on lead implementers for Plan 2.0 to ensure action is taken on accepted recommendations.** As with Chicago’s first Plan to End Homelessness, a robust implementation schedule, with lead staff or responsibility is key to ensuring goals and strategies are reached, tracked, and completed.
- N. Tell the story of the Plan to all of Chicago – share outcomes, successes, and other stories to build community support and raise additional resources for preventing and ending homelessness.** Communication, outreach, and community-engagement were all recommended by participants in the charrette process. One suggestion included quarterly reports on accomplishments and data to ensure accountability and to inform those who are part of the Plan.
- O. Commit the resources needed to fund the Plan.** The issue of resources was mentioned by providers, consumers, and experts throughout the fishbowl, and undergirds the success of Plan 2.0.

*Measures under HEARTH include:
length of time homeless;
recidivism or subsequent
return to homelessness;
access and coverage;
overall reduction in the number of
persons who experience
homelessness;
job and income growth for persons
who are homeless;
reduction in first time homeless;
prevention/independent living for
families with children and youth
defined as homeless under other
federal programs.*

Additional Notes

While the charrette could only focus on six issue areas, specific populations came up throughout the charrette itself. Populations mentioned included (but are not limited to):

- Elder homeless
- Persons living with HIV and/or AIDS
- Families, including families with small children
- Persons exiting corrections or re-entry populations
- Veterans experiencing homelessness
- Persons who are undocumented
- Households who are doubled up

The community requested in its comments that the new Plan include and address the unique needs of these populations.

Appendix: Steering Committee Information

Mission Statement for the Creation of Version Two of Chicago's Plan to End Homelessness

Adopted by the Plan 2.0 Steering Committee on August 11, 2011

The Chicago Continuum of Care aims to prevent homelessness whenever possible and provide an integrated array of housing and services to help families, individuals, and youth progress from homelessness to their highest possible level of self-sufficiency. To achieve these goals in an effective and cost-efficient manner for the greatest number of Chicagoans in need, the Continuum will redevelop its Plan to End Homelessness, originally endorsed in January 2003.

Our planning process will be:

- Inclusive of as many stakeholders as possible including people who are currently or formerly homeless, service providers, policymakers, advocates, funders, and civic leaders;
- Driven by data from the 2009-2011 evaluation of Chicago's Plan conducted by Loyola University of Chicago and the University of Chicago as well as other instructive program and system-level data;
- Attentive to performance measures (including the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009) to ensure that Chicago is deploying its resources in the most efficient manner possible to achieve our goals; and
- Mindful of the current and foreseeable resources, risks, and external opportunities impacting Chicago's homeless system.

Plan 2.0 Steering Committee Members

1. Nicole Amling, Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness
2. Nicole Bahena, Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness
3. Nonie Brennan, Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness
4. Andrea Dakin, HUD McKinney-Vento Committee
5. Ceandra Daniels, Plan Advisory Committee
6. Julie Dworkin, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
7. Matt Fischler, Mayor's Office
8. John Pfeiffer, Chicago Department of Family and Support Services
9. Nancy Radner, Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness
10. Susan Reyna, Chicago Planning Council Executive Committee
11. Debbie Reznick, Funders
12. Alisa Rodriguez, Chicago Department of Family and Support Services
13. Richard Rowe, Consumers Commission
14. Britt Shawver, Chicago Planning Council Executive Committee
15. Mike Simmons, Mayor's Office
16. Dorothy Yancy, Consumers Commission

Appendix: Expert Panelists

Short bios for each panelist are available in the Charrette Study Guide available at www.thechicagoalliance.org.

Topic	Panelists	
Fishbowl: Employment	Sharon Bush, Fry Foundation Jennifer Keeling, Chicago Jobs Council Amy Rynell, Social IMPACT Research Center Shannon Stewart, Inspiration Corporation	Karin Norington-Reeves, County Works Virginia Fraiser, Thresholds Linda Kaiser, Chicago Housing Authority <i>Fishbowl Facilitator: Heather Lyons</i> <i>Community Facilitator: Christine Haley</i>
Fishbowl: Permanent Housing Access and Supply	Mary Howard, Chicago Housing Authority Andy Geer, Enterprise Community Partners Fred Maclin, Housing Opportunities for Women Pete Toepfer, AIDS Foundation of Chicago Debbie Reznick, Polk Bros Foundation	Debbie Thiele, CSH (Formerly City of Seattle) Laura Zielinger, US Interagency Council on Homelessness <i>Fishbowl Facilitator: Liz Drapa</i> <i>Community Facilitator: Heather Lyons</i>
Fishbowl: Systems Integration	Ann Marie Grimberg, Heartland Alliance Joyce Gallagher, Dept of Family & Support Services Brenda Hampton, Division of Mental Health Tony Beltran, Chicago Dept of Public Health	John Fallon, Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) Norm Suchar, National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) Laura Zielinger, USICH <i>Fishbowl Facilitator: Betsy Benito</i> <i>Community Facilitator: Lindsey Bishop</i>
Fishbowl: Coordinated Access and Prevention	Sol Flores, La Casa Norte Kathleen Molnar, Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness Maura McCauley, Heartland Alliance Jennifer Welch, Dept of Family & Support Services Betsy Benito, CSH	Norm Suchar, NAEH Sara Zuiderveen, New York City Lianna Barbu, Community Shelter Board <i>Fishbowl Facilitator: Christine Haley</i> <i>Community Facilitator: Heather Lyons</i>
Fishbowl: Interim and Rapid Rehousing	Ceandra Daniels, Inner Voice Israel Vargas, San Jose Obrero Diana Faust, Franciscan Outreach Eileen Higgins, Catholic Charities Britt Shawver, Housing Opportunities for Women	Laura Zielinger, USICH Sara Zuiderveen, NYC Lianna Barbu, Community Shelter Board <i>Fishbowl Facilitator: Lindsey Bishop</i> <i>Community Facilitator: Christine Haley</i>
Fishbowl: Youth	Jeri Linas, Teen Living Program Joe Hollendoner, AIDS Foundation of Chicago Maureen Blaha, National Runaway Switchboard Crystal Sahler, HELLO	Norm Suchar, NAEH Richard Hooks Wayman, Hearth Connection Debbie Thiele, CSH (Formerly City of Seattle) <i>Fishbowl Facilitator: Heather Lyons</i> <i>Community Facilitator: Lindsey Bishop</i>