

Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

VISION *No one should experience homelessness—
no one should be without a safe, stable place to call home.*

- GOALS**
- ▶ *Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness in 5 years*
 - ▶ *Prevent and end homelessness for families, youth, and children in 10 years*
 - ▶ *Prevent and end homelessness among Veterans in 5 years*
 - ▶ *Set a path to ending all types of homelessness*

THEMES **Increase Leadership, Collaboration, and Civic Engagement**

OBJECTIVE 1: Provide and promote collaborative leadership at all levels of government and across all sectors to inspire and energize Americans to commit to preventing and ending homelessness

OBJECTIVE 2: Strengthen the capacity of public and private organizations by increasing knowledge about collaboration, homelessness, and successful interventions to prevent and end homelessness

Increase Access to Stable and Affordable Housing

OBJECTIVE 3: Provide affordable housing to people experiencing or most at risk of homelessness

OBJECTIVE 4: Provide permanent supportive housing to prevent and end chronic homelessness

Increase Economic Security

OBJECTIVE 5: Increase meaningful and sustainable employment for people experiencing or most at risk of homelessness

OBJECTIVE 6: Improve access to mainstream programs and services to reduce people's financial vulnerability to homelessness

Improve Health and Stability

OBJECTIVE 7: Integrate primary and behavioral health care services with homeless assistance programs and housing to reduce people's vulnerability to and the impacts of homelessness

OBJECTIVE 8: Advance health and housing stability for youth aging out of systems such as foster care and juvenile justice

OBJECTIVE 9: Advance health and housing stability for people experiencing homelessness who have frequent contact with hospitals and criminal justice

Retool the Homeless Crisis Response System

OBJECTIVE 10: Transform homeless services to crisis response systems that prevent homelessness and rapidly return people who experience homelessness to stable housing



A summary of the HEARTH Act Impact on Communities from the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness:

As providers and stakeholders across the country, we are all aware that [the HEARTH Act](#) enacted by Congress in 2009 is, in many ways, **a game changer**. It gave the federal government the charge to create the first federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, setting forth the vision that no one in this country should be without a safe and stable place to call home. This strong statement by the federal government foregrounds the work of implementing the HEARTH Act in communities across the country. Perhaps most importantly, **HEARTH moves governments and local stakeholders from a focus on individual program outcomes to a focus on how all programs work as a system to achieve results for an entire community**. Implementation of the HEARTH Act is critically important to all of the goals in Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, especially **Objective 10: to re-tool the homeless crisis response system to more effectively prevent homelessness and rapidly return people who experience homelessness back into stable housing**.

HUD's recently released [Notice of Funding Availability \(NOFA\) for the Continuum of Care program](#) is a further indication of just how serious the federal government is about reaching the goals in Opening Doors. The Continuum of Care has always been a competitive grants program, and this NOFA essentially highlights the word "competitive" for Continuums this year. The NOFA makes it clear that communities cannot assume funding of all renewals and must therefore prioritize carefully. **Because of the tight fiscal environment at all levels of government, all investments in ending homelessness must be smart investments**. We cannot afford "business as usual" programming and practices if they are not getting the results needed to meet the goals in Opening Doors. The next step is taking a tough but necessary look at what's working and what could be modified for greater results in your community.

To help aid program changes for CoCs, HUD is providing greater flexibility to be thoughtful and strategic with federal dollars to fit the needs of particular communities. Communities now have more flexibility to reallocate resources to ensure a better system-wide response while being assured (as long as the new project meets threshold criteria) they will not lose their renewal amounts because of reallocations. HUD is awarding points to CoCs that do a thoughtful analysis of their system (see NOFA Section V.A.2.j). Communities are encouraged to repurpose existing programs that are not the most cost-effective to more cost-effective interventions, for example, repurposing a traditional transitional housing program into permanent supportive housing. Communities are also encouraged to reallocate resources away from a program or provider that is underperforming to a more effective program or provider.

The HEARTH Act makes clear that **communities are expected to show how they're making progress in ending homelessness**. The Act introduced key indicators for communities to show

their progress, including reducing the number of people who experience homelessness, the length of time people remain homeless, and the rate at which people who exit homelessness but later experience homelessness and return to shelter. Now is the time for communities to use their data to drive to better results system-wide. An analysis of where your community is now and where your community needs to be is critical to success, not just in this funding cycle but also in the years ahead.

As communities do this thoughtful analysis, there are many questions to consider:

- How can your CoC use HMIS and PIT data to measure system and program performance then use this data to allocate resources? How can your local CoC approach system design strategically?
- Does your system have the right balance of interventions (rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing) to respond to local needs?
- Is the system reducing the overall numbers of people experiencing homelessness? Is the system ensuring that no one is unsheltered?
- Are resources targeted effectively to those with the greatest needs, including those who are unsheltered?
- Are you exiting people from homelessness to permanent housing quickly and using the right size of intervention based on their needs?
- Can existing resources be reallocated and repurposed to get better results? (e.g. Do large investments in transitional housing still make the most sense, or could some of these resources be more effective if repurposed to another intervention?)

These are questions every community must ask themselves, and in every community the answers may be different. There is not a one-size-fits-all way to move your community from a collection of individual programs to a coordinated system. During this time of transition, it is important to recognize that communities across the country are having these same sorts of challenging discussions. **No community is alone in this work and no community has figured it all out.**