



Creating and Sustaining State Interagency Councils on Homelessness

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) encourages every U.S. state and territory to establish a state interagency council on homelessness (ICH). This document provides:

- An overview of state interagency councils' goals; establishment models; members, leaders, and staff; and lived experience involvement
- Guidance for navigating political transitions
- A [state-by-state chart](#) of information about currently active ICHs
- Spotlights on select innovative and impactful ICHs in [Arizona](#), [California](#), [Maine](#), [Maryland](#), and [Minnesota](#)

Goals

A state interagency council is crucial for driving a coordinated, statewide strategy to prevent and end homelessness. USICH encourages alignment of state and local strategies with [All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#). State interagency councils focus on a wide range of strategic priorities, such as:

- Creating a state plan to prevent and end homelessness that assesses overall needs, coordinates resources, and promotes national best practices
- Fostering development of local plans to prevent and end homelessness—and aligning plans, funding, policies, and data with local homelessness and housing agencies
- Promoting a research-driven, performance-based, results-oriented plan and implementation strategy
- Recommending changes in policy, regulations, and resources to accomplish the goals of the state plan
- Maximizing resources to reduce and prevent homelessness
- Ensuring accountability and outcomes of the state plan and report progress
- Creating a statewide partnership with local stakeholders and local elected officials through Continuums of Care and planning councils
- Sustaining a nonpartisan, coordinated, and unified approach

Establishment Models

A state interagency council can be established in one of three ways:

- Executive order of the governor
- Legislative action
- Executive order and legislative action

The most common establishment model is an executive order that identifies membership, meeting frequency, functions, and timeframe. While some state ICHs are funded, others are unfunded and led by existing staff of departments leading and/or participating in the council (such as housing or human services). ICHs that were not mandated often rely on volunteers who are deeply committed to the mission of ending homelessness.

Leaders, Members, and Staff

Most ICHs are led by directors of housing or human services departments. They are typically appointed by the governor or elected by the ICH members. Many ICH chairs and vice chairs are term-limited to one or two years.

Among its members, state ICHs should have representation from Cabinet-level agencies and departments (e.g., housing, health care, behavioral health, human services, labor, criminal justice). Some ICHs include nonprofit or private stakeholders. There are three membership models:

- State officials only
- State officials and advisory group of stakeholders who meet separately
- State officials and stakeholders who meet as a single group

While some ICHs have full-time staff hired specifically to carry out the work, most ICHs run with the help of existing employees of larger departments (e.g., housing or human services) who dedicate part of their time to the ICH. Having dedicated full-time staff ensures the work to end homelessness is a priority.

Lived Experience Involvement

People who are or who have experienced homelessness must be involved in the planning and implementation of homelessness strategy at all levels of government. Their participation should be meaningful, compensated, and representative of a state’s population of people experiencing homelessness. People with lived experience have a robust understanding of the reality of the work to prevent and end homelessness and can inform ICHs

about problems and identify solutions. However, while some ICHs explicitly allow or appoint people with lived experience to be ICH members, many do not require lived experience involvement.

Navigating and Sustaining Leadership Transitions

Homelessness is a life-and-death public health crisis, and the efforts to prevent and end homelessness should never be put on hold due to leadership transitions. If state ICHs are not established by legislation, they risk being dissolved after new governors and/or lieutenant governors are elected. Even if a governor dissolves a state ICH, it is possible for significant, collaborative, interagency work to continue. Some ICHs obtained funding from statewide nonprofits or philanthropy to hire full- or part-time employees to carry out the functions of the ICH. In these cases, the leaders and members volunteer or are hired by a nonprofit. To ensure a state ICH survives leadership transitions, implement the following strategies:

- Obtain a new executive order reauthorizing the ICH during a transition
- Seek new executive appointments to lead the ICH
- Maintain continuity of the work through changes of administration
- Highlight the impact of the ICH
- Emphasize community partnership over political partisanship
- Prioritize practical evidence-based solutions and best practices

State-by-State List of Interagency Councils on Homelessness*

This chart was last updated in May 2024. If any information is outdated, please reach out to your [USICH Regional Advisor](#).

State	Establishment Model	Leaders	Staff Structure	Website
Arizona	Executive Order	Chair: Governor Vice Chair: Housing Department Director	No Full-Time Employees (FTEs) Housing Department	N/A
California	Legislative Action	Co-Chair: Business, Consumer Services and Housing Secretary Co-Chair: Health and Human Services Secretary	50 FTEs Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Department	https://www.bcsb.ca.gov/calich/
Connecticut	Executive Order	Chair: Housing Commissioner	TBD (August 2024)	Governor Lamont

State	Establishment Model	Leaders	Staff Structure	Website
				Announces Formation of the Connecticut Interagency Council on Homelessness
District of Columbia	Legislative Action	Chair: ICH Executive Director	5 FTEs Independent Entity	https://ich.d.c.gov/
Florida	Legislative Action	Chair: Ability Housing Director	No FTEs Department of Children and Families	https://www.myflfamilies.com/service/public-assistance/homelessness/council-homelessness
Guam	Executive Order	Chair: Lieutenant Governor [REDACTED]	No FTEs Homeless Assistance and Poverty Prevention Office	https://governor.guam.gov/ohapp/ichp/
Hawaii	Legislative Action	Chair: Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness	1 FTE Homelessness and Housing Solutions Office	https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/hich/
Illinois	Executive Order	Chair: State Homelessness Chief	1 FTE Human Services Department	https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=138563
Kentucky	Legislative Action	Chair: TBD Vice Chair: Mental Health Division Program Manager	12 FTEs from Homeless and Housing Coalition; 3 from AmeriCorps	https://www.hhck.org/
Louisiana	Legislative Action	Chair: Housing Corporation	No FTEs Housing Corporation	https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/Law.aspx?d=1336043

State	Establishment Model	Leaders	Staff Structure	Website
Maine	Legislative Action	Chair: Retired Administrator/CEO of Community Concepts and Community Finance Corporation	No FTEs Continuum of Care	https://www.mainehomelessplanning.org/statewide-homeless-council/
Maryland	Legislative Action	Chair: Housing and Community Development Director	No FTEs Housing and Community Development Department	https://dhcd.maryland.gov/HomelessServices/Pages/ICHSymposium.aspx
Michigan	Executive Order	Chair: Housing Development Authority Vice Chair: Human Services Department	1 FTEs Housing and Development Authority	https://www.michigan.gov/mcteh/governance/integracy-council-on-homelessness
Minnesota	Legislative Action	Chair: Lieutenant Governor Vice Chairs: Human Services Commissioner and Housing Finance Commissioner	5 FTEs Housing Finance Agency	https://mich.mn.gov/
Missouri	Volunteer Collaborative No Longer State-Appointed	Chair: HMIS Director	No FTEs Service Provider Volunteers	https://www.endhomelessnessmo.org/
Nebraska	Executive Order	Chair: Southwest Nebraska Community Betterment Corporation Executive Director Vice Chair: University of Nebraska-Lincoln Center on Children, Families, and the Law Senior Project Director	No FTEs Economic Development Department	https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/nchh/
Nevada	Executive Order	Chair: Governor's Homeland Security Advisor	No FTEs Welfare and Supportive Services Division	https://dpbh.nv.gov/Programs/ClinicalBHSP/IACH/

State	Establishment Model	Leaders	Staff Structure	Website
New Hampshire	Executive Order	<p>Co-Chair: Health and Human Services Department</p> <p>Co-Chair: Business and Economic Affairs Department</p> <p>Co-Chair: Community Development Finance Authority</p>	<p>No FTEs</p> <p>Health and Human Services Department</p>	https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/about-dhhs/advisory-organizations/council-housing-stability
New Jersey	Legislative Action	<p>Chair: Office of Homeless Prevention Director</p>	<p>No FTEs</p> <p>Community Affairs Department</p>	N/A
Oregon	Executive Order	<p>Chair: Governor</p> <p>Vice Chair: Director of Oregon Department of Housing and Community Development</p>	<p>No FTEs</p> <p>Council Member Agencies</p>	https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policies/pages/interagency-council-on-homelessness.aspx
Texas	Legislative Action	<p>Chair: Cornerstone Assistance Network President/CEO</p>	<p>No FTEs</p> <p>Housing and Community Affairs Department</p>	https://www.tdhca.texas.gov/programs/texas-interagency-council-homeless
Utah	Legislative Action	<p>Co-Chair: Public Sector</p> <p>Co-Chair: Private Sector</p>	<p>1 FTE</p> <p>Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness</p> <p>Office of Homeless Services</p>	https://endutahhomelessness.org/state-homeless-coordinating-committee/
Vermont	Executive Order	<p>Co-Chair: Children and Families Secretary</p> <p>Co-Chair: Housing and Community Development Director</p>	<p>No FTEs</p> <p>Human Services Agency</p>	https://humanservices.vermont.gov/about-us/boards-commissions/vermont-council-homelessness

State	Establishment Model	Leaders	Staff Structure	Website
Washington State	Legislative Action and Executive Order	Chair: Commerce Department Policy Director	No FTEs Commerce Department	https://www.commerce.wa.gov/about-us/boards-and-commissions/homeless-councils/
West Virginia	Executive Order	Chair: Health and Human Resources Deputy Commissioner of Programs, Planning, and Policy for Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities	No FTEs Behavioral Health and Health Facilities Bureau	https://wvich.org/
Wisconsin	Legislative Action	Chair: Lieutenant Governor	1 FTE Governor’s Office	https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/AboutDOA/ICH.aspx

**The following states do not have an ICH or have an inactive ICH: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Georgia, Kansas, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, Wyoming*

SPOTLIGHT ON ARIZONA

Overview

In 2023, Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs reinstated the Governor’s Arizona Commission on Homelessness and Housing as the Governor’s Interagency and Community Council on Homelessness and Housing. The mandated members of the council include the departments of Housing, Economic Security, Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry, Health Services, Veteran’s Services, Juvenile Corrections, and the state’s Medicaid program (Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System). Members also include at least 10 governor-selected representatives from a wide range of stakeholders, including people with lived experience; Continuums of Care; shelter or housing providers; and business, philanthropic, nonprofit, and faith-based communities. Council meetings are held quarterly, and funding for members’ travel is provided by local philanthropies.

Lived Experience Involvement

People with lived experience are prioritized to serve on the council and either chair or serve on workgroups or advisory councils. The outreach workgroup is currently led by a person with lived experience. Also, the workgroup meetings are public, allowing anyone with lived experience to inform and design strategies and policies.

Galvanizing Action

The governor has set three goals for the council: 1) Produce the housing affordability Arizona needs. 2) Rehouse and shelter more Arizonans. 3) Boost the economic wellbeing of Arizonans. The council has developed a draft action framework that will be finalized by June 2024.

Sustaining Progress

The council regularly convenes four workgroups—each of which will help implement the forthcoming framework—on the following topics: 1) data and accountability, 2) public and nonprofit finance, 3) outreach, and 4) leading and innovative practices. The governor’s policy advisor as well as chief executive officers and support staff from the leading agencies organize and support the council and workgroup meetings. Each workgroup must be grounded in data and work toward policy, benchmarks, and outcomes.

Innovative Practices

The Arizona Department of Housing (ADOH) used the council to hold listening sessions around the state to inform how and where the \$150 million [Housing Trust Fund](#) would be spent to cover shelter, housing, transitional housing, and other needs. ADOH established funding opportunities in response to the needs identified during its feedback sessions.

Examples of Impact

The listening sessions resulted in new strategies to include rural and tribal feedback and an expansion of the interventions funded by the Housing Trust Fund.

SPOTLIGHT ON CALIFORNIA

Overview

The [California Interagency Council on Homelessness \(Cal ICH\)](#) was created in 2017 to oversee the implementation of Housing First policies, guidelines, and regulations to reduce the prevalence and duration of homelessness in California. The council is made up of Cabinet secretary or director-level representatives from 18 state agencies and two legislative-appointed representatives of community organizations. Council meetings occur quarterly and are open to the public in-person and virtually. Cal ICH is led by a governor-appointed executive officer and regularly seeks guidance from an Advisory Committee that reflects the racial and gender diversity of people experiencing homelessness.

Lived Experience Involvement

Cal ICH created an 11-member Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB) to inform the council and its members' decisions. LEAB members are reimbursed for their participation in official duties, and they work in coordination with the Advisory Committee and with Cal ICH workgroups.

Galvanizing Action

Cal ICH's [Action Plan](#)—which was developed with input from more than 60 community entities, public agencies, and nonprofits—identifies five action areas: 1) Strengthening systems to better prevent and end homelessness; 2) Equitably addressing the health, safety and services needs of Californians experiencing unsheltered homelessness; 3) Expanding communities' capacity to provide safe and effective sheltering and interim housing; 4) Expanding and ensuring equitable access to permanent housing; and 5) Preventing Californians from experiencing the crisis of homelessness.

Sustaining Progress

Cal ICH reports annual progress made toward the Action Plan via its [Annual Implementation Progress Report](#).

Innovative Practices

[Homekey](#): Administered by the California Department of Housing and Community Development, Homekey is an opportunity for state, regional, and local public entities to develop a broad range of housing types for people experiencing homelessness, including but not limited to: single-family homes, multi-family apartments, adult residential facilities, and manufactured housing. This is achieved in part by converting commercial, mostly

vacant properties and other existing buildings (such as hotels and motels) to permanent or interim housing for people experiencing homelessness.

Encampment Resolution Funding: A competitive grant program to help local jurisdictions ensure the wellness and safety of people experiencing homelessness in encampments by providing services and supports that address their immediate physical and mental wellness and result in meaningful paths to safe and stable housing.

Homeless Data Integration System: A statewide warehouse of data from the 44 local homelessness response systems that can be filtered by location, time experiencing homelessness, veteran status, age, race, gender, and other demographics. This enables the state to analyze statewide data about people experiencing homelessness, the services they are receiving, and the impacts being achieved. It also enables the state to work with local communities to more deeply analyze and understand their data.

Examples of Impact

As of December 2023, Homekey had **funded 14,652 housing units** via 240 projects.

The Encampment Resolution funds have **invested more than \$750 million** over three years.

In addition, every year after the state budget is adopted, Cal ICH publishes an updated version of [“Putting the Funding Pieces Together: Guide to Strategic Uses of State and Federal Funds to Prevent and End Homelessness.”](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON MARYLAND

Overview

The Maryland Interagency Council on Homelessness (MD-ICH) was established in 2014. While half of the council is appointed by the governor, the other half are representatives of 13 state agencies. The council also includes people with lived experience, advocates, and Continuum of Care representatives.

Lived Experience Involvement

Of its 25 members, the council currently has one person with lived experience of homelessness. The statute states that the governor appoints “one community representative who has personally experienced homelessness.”

Galvanizing Action

MD-ICH brings together state agencies, homeless service providers, and advocates to coordinate policy and programs, improve data collection, increase the availability of affordable housing, and improve access to services.

Sustaining Progress

MD-ICH produces an annual homelessness report to measure current and sustain future progress.

Innovative Practices

Move Up Initiative: Launched in 2020 by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, this initiative allows Continuums of Care in jurisdictions where the state is the housing authority to transition some clients from permanent supportive housing to Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers. This “move-on” strategy frees up permanent supportive housing to help more people exit homelessness.

Homelessness ID Project: Supported by the state Health Department’s Behavioral Health Administration, this project provides funding for Maryland birth certificates and state IDs for people who are experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness and who have a mental illness or co-occurring substance use disorder.

Assistance in Community Integration Services Pilot: Part of Maryland’s federally approved 1115 HealthChoice Demonstration Waiver, this pilot funds the expansion of services for permanent supportive housing by letting local government entities request matching federal funds to serve up to 600 high-risk, high-utilizing Medicaid enrollees.

Examples of Impact

During the pandemic, Maryland’s Department of Housing and Community Development and Department of Emergency Management educated Continuums of Care and local governments across the state about the availability of Federal Emergency Management Agency public assistance funding for establishing non-congregate shelters for people experiencing homelessness who were either exposed or infected with COVID-19. More than 47,000 Maryland residents were provided a safe place to quarantine through September 2021.

The Maryland Department of Labor secured \$400,000 to establish a **pilot workforce program** for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

The governor signed the **Minor’s Right to Consent to Shelter and Services Act**, which authorized unaccompanied minors to receive shelter and supportive services without parental consent.

SPOTLIGHT ON MAINE

Overview

Maine's Statewide Homeless Council (SHC) was established in 2004 and serves as an advisory committee to the governor, the legislature, and the council's members, which include the state's Housing Authority, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Corrections, and Bureau of Veteran's Affairs. The council is led by a governor-appointed chair and consists of 14 members nominated by regional homeless councils. Six of the members are appointed by the governor (two from each of the state's three Regional Homeless Councils) and three of the members are appointed by the state Senate president and state House speaker. The council meets monthly and offers a virtual quarterly meeting open to the public.

Lived Experience Involvement

The council currently has two members who have experienced homelessness. Each of the three Regional Homeless Councils appoints board members, and one of the councils consistently appoints people with lived experience.

Galvanizing Action

The SHC weighs in on Maine Housing Authority's [five-year strategic plan](#). The council also helps legislators introduce and defend bills. Most recently, it prepared a lawmaker's statement to successfully lobby for legislation that would increase funding for low-barrier shelters, considering the state only has six such shelters.

Sustaining Progress

The SHC recently streamlined many of its processes to create an executive committee that meets monthly. Every quarter, other committees join the executive committee for a larger conversation about what the SHC can accomplish during the upcoming quarter.

Innovative Practices

To streamline and improve messaging, SHC is in the process of creating a communications committee to prepare press releases, cultivate media relationships, and distribute materials for city/town councils or other groups.

Example of Impact

Four years ago, 2% of Maine’s homeless population was reported as unsheltered; now, the number is roughly 15%. Because the SHC monitored that data in real-time, it was able to acquire more funding so Portland (Maine’s largest city) could temporarily expand the homeless service center by 50 beds and create a new 130-bed shelter for asylum-seekers who occupy 75% of current shelter space.

SPOTLIGHT ON MINNESOTA

Overview

The [Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness \(MICH\)](#) is a cabinet-level body made up of 13 state agency commissioners as well as the chair of the Twin Cities’ Metropolitan Council. The council meets in-person quarterly with a virtual option for the public.

Galvanizing Action

In October 2023, MICH committed to implementing [Crossroads to Justice: Minnesota’s New Pathways to Housing, Racial, and Health Justice for People Facing Homelessness](#). The plan was created during the pandemic and after the murder of George Floyd, which inspired the plan’s focus on justice and urgency. *Crossroads to Justice* focuses on five bold goals: 1) Collaborate and co-lead with impacted communities that have been historically oppressed and excluded. 2) Homelessness is prevented whenever possible, and services and supports are provided to ensure no one returns to homelessness. 3) A robust crisis response geared toward housing outcomes supports people staying outside, in emergency shelters, and in community. 4) People facing homelessness have access to housing options that meet their needs and honor their choices. 5) Homelessness is treated as a crucial health and public health crisis wherever it occurs.

Lived Experience Involvement

The development of *Crossroads to Justice* was co-led by 10 paid justice consultants who have lived experience of homelessness representing different experiences and parts of the state. In Spring 2024, 14 implementation consultants will onboard to support the council agencies’ implementation of the plan. The consultants are paid \$60 an hour and work 25 hours a month on average. MICH contracts with a nonprofit that supports the consultant team. Furthermore, *Crossroads to Justice* commits all council agencies to collaborate and co-lead

with people who have faced homelessness, and each agency has named specific actions they will take to do this work.

Sustaining Progress

MICH is responsible for achieving the goals of *Crossroads to Justice* and will monitor two primary metrics: 1) The number of Minnesotans experiencing homelessness, according to the annual Point-in-Time Count (Goal: 15% reduction by December 2026); 2) A reduction in the inequities of who experiences homelessness, according to the annual Point-in-Time Count and American Community Survey. In addition to the overall metrics, each goal has a specific metric to track progress. More on metrics can be found on [MICH's website](#).

Innovative Practices

Significant Investment of State Resources: In 2023, the governor signed a historic \$2.6 billion housing stability package that increases prevention assistance, shelter capacity, rental assistance, housing development, and services and supports people need to find and keep their housing.

Housing Infrastructure Bonds: The largest state source of capital for housing development over the last 10 years, this program provides loans and grants for the development of permanent supportive housing, preservation of existing housing, senior housing, single family homes, and manufactured home park infrastructure.

Tribal Nations Aid: This is new annual direct aid (\$35 million) for Minnesota's 11 federally recognized tribal nations—and tribes determine how to use it. Half of the funds will be divided equally among participating governments, and half based on the proportion of enrolled members of participating governments.

Homeless Veteran Registry: This connects former military members experiencing homelessness with housing and services in their community, and it helps programs and partners coordinate efforts. It targets state resources to veterans who may not be eligible for federal resources. 85 of Minnesota's 87 counties have effectively ended veteran homelessness.

Examples of Impact

Minnesota's recent investment in housing stability will support the **creation and preservation of 4,720 homes**, apartments, and manufactured home community lots. They will contribute to \$800 million in total development costs and support 7,000 annual jobs.

The legislature approved \$100 million for the **brand-new Emergency Shelter Facilities Capital Program** to acquire, renovate, plan, design, construct, and/or renovate emergency homeless shelters. Statewide, this funding is anticipated to add nearly 600 shelter beds and preserve, maintain, or improve nearly 700 shelter beds.

The legislature recently **tripled the available resources for the Homeless Youth Act**, and the increased funding is helping to expand shelter and transitional and supportive housing programs.