

AUGUST 2021



IOWA COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS (ICH)

FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

2021 - 2026



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ABOUT THE IOWA COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS (ICH)

The Iowa Council on Homelessness (ICH) was organized according to 2008 Iowa Acts SF 2161, which also directed the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) to provide administrative support. Governed by Iowa Code Chapter 16.2D, the ICH is made up of representatives of state and local governments, nonprofits, advocates, and individuals with lived experience.

All 38 members of the ICH are appointed by the Governor, with 12 of those seats reserved for members representing relevant state departments, including:

- Iowa Department of Education
- Iowa Economic Development Authority
- Iowa Department of Human Services
- Iowa Department of Justice Office of the Attorney General
- Iowa Department of Human Rights
- Iowa Department of Public Health
- Iowa Department on Aging
- Iowa Department of Corrections
- Iowa Workforce Development
- Iowa Department of Public Safety
- Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs
- Iowa Finance Authority

The remaining 26 seats are comprised of members from the general public who apply for appointment through the Governor's office, with certain seats reserved for members with lived experience of homelessness and representatives of the Iowa State Association of Counties and Iowa League of Cities.

Current members are listed on the [ICH website](#).

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MEMBERS AND COMMITTEES

The ICH has five official standing committees. Each standing committee has at least five voting members, elected or appointed by the ICH. Committees include:

- **Executive Committee:** Carries out the business of the ICH between regular ICH meetings.
- **Nominating Committee:** Reviews member applications, makes member recommendations to the ICH, and reviews member attendance.
- **Policy & Planning Committee:** Considers various policy issues affecting stakeholders. Provides input on the annual statewide Emergency Solutions Grant competition.
- **Public Awareness Committee:** Works to increase the public's awareness about homelessness in Iowa. Coordinates with state and local organizations on awareness events and campaigns.
- **Research and Analysis Committee:** Coordinates and conducts research on evidence based practices to prevent and end homelessness.
- **Ad Hoc Committees:** Established as needed by the ICH depending on priorities.

STRATEGIC PLANNING BACKGROUND

Prior to 2020, the ICH served as both the state interagency council and the decision-making board for the Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC), a federal program administered by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The CoC program required significant focus by the ICH to prepare competitive bids for approximately \$7 million annually in federal funding and to fulfill the program requirements.

Beginning in 2017, the ICH underwent an assessment and restructuring, resulting in the development of a new CoC Board. The ICH voted to officially separate the ICH from the new CoC entity in January 2020, enabling the ICH to redirect its focus to its other mandated duties. The ICH engaged Bronner Group, LLC in early 2021 to facilitate a strategic planning process to guide the ICH's work over the next five years. As a result of this process, the ICH determined its new mission, vision, values, and strategic goals, which are presented in this plan.

The strategic planning process included four phases:



Discovery

- Project kickoff and coordination
- Review of legal and governance documents
- ICH member self assessment



Research and Validation

- ICH member and key stakeholder interviews
- Key stakeholder focus groups on populations and systems impacted by homelessness
- Interviews with national organizations and stakeholders



Strategic Goals and Planning

- 4 half-day, virtual retreats
- Identification of mission, vision, values, and goals, strategies, actions, and priorities



Implementation

- Development of strategic plan
- Implementation tracker development

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS



During the research and validation phase, BRONNER and the ICH solicited feedback from a variety of stakeholders:

- Survey of ICH members (25 respondents)
- 12 ICH member and key stakeholder interviews
- 11 key stakeholder focus groups on populations and systems impacted by homelessness
- 3 interviews with national stakeholders

Member Survey

- Members perceived lower past performance on several mandated activities related to evaluating and advising on policies, programs, statutes and rules and advising the Governor's Office, the Iowa Finance Authority, State agencies, and private organizations on strategies to prevent and end homelessness.
- Among current members surveyed, top priorities for the future strongly favored a focus on increasing the supply of affordable housing and integrating housing and homelessness services systems.

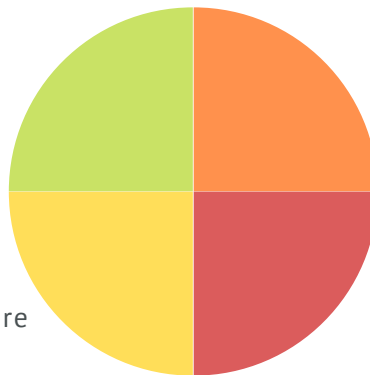
S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

Strengths

- Member engagement
- Provider connections
- Past successes
- Talent and abilities
- Member reach
- Innovation and ideas

Opportunities

- Statewide strategy
- Formalize ICH structure
- Collect data and information
- Increase public awareness
- Enhance reputation



Weaknesses

- Unclear mission and values
- Independence
- Engagement from state agency members
- Membership balance
- Unclear direction

Threats

- Disengagement of state agency members
- Political pressure
- Turnover
- Conflicts of interest

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

	MISSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a clear mission • Create a Statewide Strategy
GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue more advocacy • Ensure engagement from decision-makers • Increase administrative support for the ICH
	OPERATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in better data and data sharing • Expand communications focus through public awareness activities
	POLICY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor policy at the state and local levels • Strengthen ICH's reputation as a leader on homelessness policy issues
COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and improve internal and external communications systems

Feedback from the stakeholder engagement process fit under the umbrella of **three broad themes**, which the ICH considered when developing its mission, vision, and goals for this five-year strategic plan.

UNDERSTAND

- Research evidence-based practices and policies
- Map resources
- Build partnerships
- Combat stigma

COORDINATE

- Integrate systems
- Find more funding for services
- Promote available resources
- Connect service providers

ADVOCATE

- Champion evidence-based practices and policies
- Engage in policy advocacy
- Disseminate information

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

MISSION

The Iowa Council on Homelessness engages cross-sector partnerships to advocate for evidence-based solutions to prevent and end homelessness.

VISION

Every Iowan has a safe, affordable, stable, and healthy home.

CORE VALUES

Equity
Collaboration
Impact
Inclusion
Leadership



OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal 1: Advise. Serve as a trusted advisor to policymakers, media, and the public to develop and evaluate statewide programs and policies.

Goal 2: Educate. Change public perceptions of the experience of homelessness to create increased compassion and shared ownership of solutions to end homelessness.

Goal 3: Connect. Work to eliminate service gaps by building access, trust, and transparency across systems.

Goal 4: Advocate. Advocate for evidence-based approaches and sufficient levels of funding to ensure housing stability.

Goal 5: Sustain. Create an effective, sustainable, accountable governance structure for the ICH.

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GOAL 1: ADVISE

SERVE AS A TRUSTED ADVISOR TO POLICYMAKERS, MEDIA, AND THE PUBLIC TO DEVELOP AND EVALUATE STATEWIDE PROGRAMS AND POLICIES.

STRATEGIES

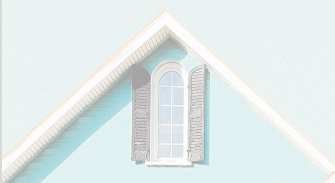
1.1 Develop a research agenda.

1.2 Coordinate research.

1.3 Create a clearinghouse/library for objective information related to homelessness.

1.4 Develop and publish an annual Statewide Action Plan.

1.5 Meet with policymakers to share information and offer evidence-based solutions.



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GOAL 2: EDUCATE

CHANGE PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS TO CREATE INCREASED COMPASSION AND SHARED OWNERSHIP OF SOLUTIONS TO END HOMELESSNESS.

STRATEGIES

2.1 Develop and launch broad public awareness campaigns.

2.2 Develop and launch targeted public awareness campaigns.

2.3 Highlight and publicize proven programs and policies.

2.4 Provide materials and information to homeless service providers to establish standards for service provision.

GOAL 3: CONNECT

WORK TO ELIMINATE SERVICE GAPS BY
BUILDING ACCESS, TRUST, AND
TRANSPARENCY ACROSS SYSTEMS.

STRATEGIES

3.1 Map state-level resources (funding and programs) to identify cross-system gaps, silos, and barriers.

3.2 Identify and focus annually on one or two systems to improve coordination (e.g., housing, healthcare, behavioral health, education, corrections/reentry, workforce development, etc.).

3.3 Improve stakeholder outreach and engagement with the ICH.

3.4 Collect and report on interagency data.

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GOAL 4: ADVOCATE

ADVOCATE FOR EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACHES AND SUFFICIENT LEVELS OF FUNDING TO ENSURE HOUSING STABILITY.

STRATEGIES

4.1 Build relationships with legislative liaisons/intergovernmental affairs staff within state agencies.

4.2 Evaluate existing state policies, programs, statutes, and rules to determine necessary revisions.

4.3 Develop a proactive policy agenda to inform legislative and executive initiatives (see also Strategy 1.5).

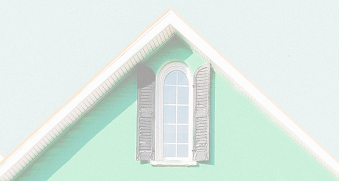
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GOAL 5: SUSTAIN

CREATE AN EFFECTIVE, SUSTAINABLE, ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE FOR THE ICH.

STRATEGIES

5.1 Build governance capacity (internal policies and structure).

5.2 Build internal capacity (ICH staffing and funding).

5.3 Examine and revise committee structure.

5.4 Create a flexible and adaptable structure for the ICH moving forward.

5.5 Develop and implement a plan for incorporating, supporting, and cultivating meaningful engagement with people with diverse, lived experiences representative of homelessness.

5.6 Develop technology to support activities.

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YEAR 1 AND 2 PRIORITIES

The ICH identified the priorities reflected in the list below through a prioritization process during which members considered level of effort, resources needed, contingencies, and additional internal and external factors. This list includes activities that are preconditions to other transformational activities set to take place in years three to five, as well as activities that are new for the ICH and elevated through the stakeholder engagement and planning processes.

The committees listed below, working in collaboration with other committees and members, are responsible for ensuring the timely implementation of these strategies. Each strategy is accompanied by a list of specific actions, which the ICH will monitor internally.

Executive Committee

- Build internal governance capacity within the ICH.
- Build internal capacity (staffing and funding).
- Create a flexible and adaptable structure for the ICH moving forward.
- Examine and revise committee structure.

Nominating Committee

- Develop and implement a plan for incorporating, supporting, and developing meaningful engagement with people with diverse lived experiences of homelessness.

Research and Analysis Committee

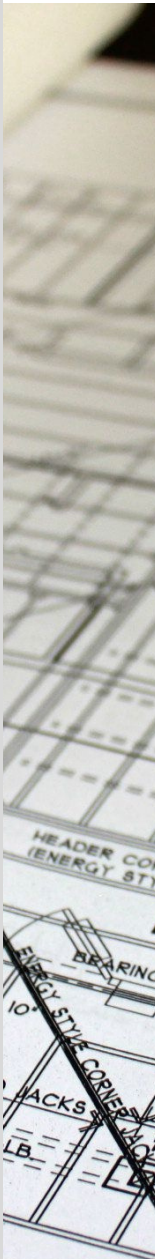
- Develop a research agenda.

Policy and Planning Committee

- Develop a proactive policy agenda to inform legislative and executive initiatives.
- Improve stakeholder outreach and engagement with the ICH.
- Meet with policymakers to share information and offer evidence-based solutions.

Public Awareness Committee

- Develop and launch broad public awareness campaigns.



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CONCLUSION

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Interested in supporting the work of the ICH?



Contact the Iowa Council on Homelessness via email at ICH@iowafinance.com to find out how to get involved.



Visit the ICH website:

www.iowafinance.com/homelessness/homeless-service-agencies/iowa-council-on-homelessness/



Apply to be a board member for the Iowa Council on Homelessness through the Iowa Talent Bank: talentbank.iowa.gov/board-detail/348272afa5ed-4e2c-b67e-b923a2e7f1a6

**The ICH is always seeking applications from people with lived experience.*

APPENDIX

Key Stakeholder Interview List

1. Angie Arthur, Polk County Continuum of Care
2. Ben Brustkern, Friends of the Family, ICH Executive Committee Member
3. Crissy Canganelli, Shelter House, ICH Policy and Planning Committee Chair
4. Beverly Ebersold, Director of National Initiatives, US Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH)
5. David Hagen, HACAP, ICH Research and Analysis Committee
6. Dennis Lauterbach, Retired, ICH Executive Committee Member
7. Amber Lewis, Homeless Programs Manager, Iowa Finance Authority, provides administrative support to the ICH
8. Mindy Mitchell and Christina Miller, National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH)
9. Melissa O'Neill, Central Iowa Shelter
10. Ashley Schwalm, Family Resources, ICH Chair
11. Eric Tars, National Homelessness Law Center (NHLIC)
12. Tim Wilson, Home Forward Iowa, ICH Nominating Committee Chair
13. Iowa State Senator Zach Wahls (D)

Focus Group Topics

1. Homelessness Impacting Families in Iowa
2. Homelessness Impacting BIPOC Persons in Iowa
3. Homelessness Impacting LGBTQ+ Persons in Iowa
4. Homelessness Impacting Older Adults in Iowa
5. Homelessness Impacting Veterans in Iowa
6. Homelessness Impacting Youth in Iowa
7. Chronic Homelessness in Iowa
8. Rural Homelessness in Iowa
9. Homelessness, Education, Employment, and Workforce Development
10. Homelessness and Healthcare
11. Homelessness and Housing
12. Homelessness, Criminal Justice, and Corrections

APPENDIX

ICH Duties (Iowa Finance Authority, §16.2D)

8. The duties of the council shall include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Develop a process for evaluating state policies, programs, statutes, and rules to determine whether any state policies, programs, statutes, or rules should be revised to help prevent and alleviate homelessness.
- b. Evaluate whether state agency resources could be more efficiently coordinated with other state agencies to prevent and alleviate homelessness.
- c. Work to develop a coordinated and seamless service delivery system to prevent and alleviate homelessness.
- d. Use existing resources to identify and prioritize efforts to prevent persons from becoming homeless and to eliminate factors that keep people homeless.
- e. Identify and use federal and other funding opportunities to address and reduce homelessness within the state.
- f. Work to identify causes and effects of homelessness and increase awareness among policymakers and the general public.
- g. Advise the governor's office, the authority, state agencies, and private organizations on strategies to prevent and eliminate homelessness.

9. a. The council shall make annual recommendations to the governor regarding matters which impact homelessness on or before September 15.

- b. The council shall prepare and file with the governor and the general assembly on or before the first day of December in each odd-numbered year, a report on homelessness in Iowa.
- c. The council shall assist in the completion of the state's continuum of care application to the United States department of housing and urban development.

10. a. The authority, in consultation with the council, shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A for carrying out the duties of the council pursuant to this section.

b. The council shall establish internal rules of procedure consistent with the provisions of this section.

c. Rules adopted or internal rules of procedure established pursuant to paragraph "a" or "b" shall be consistent with the requirements of the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §11301 et seq.

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THANK YOU

The ICH would like to thank each and every stakeholder who participated in the creation of this plan. By providing thoughtful and honest feedback, you demonstrated your commitment to the mission of the ICH.

We would also like to thank the ICH Members who dedicated hours of their time to prioritize, refine, and focus the plan to the areas that would most benefit those we serve.

We are grateful for your support throughout this process, and look forward to continuing our work together to create an Iowa where every Iowan has a safe, affordable, stable, and healthy home.

