



IOWA COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS (ICH)

FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

2021 - 2026



STRATEGIC PLANNING BACKGROUND

The strategic planning process included four phases:

1

April-May
2021

Discovery

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

3

June-July
2021

Strategic Goals and Planning

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

2

May-June
2021

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

4

July-August
2021

Implementation

- Development of strategic plan
- Implementation tracker development

DISCOVERY

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 eliminate 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.

RESEARCH AND VALIDATION

S.W.O.T. analysis of the Iowa Council on Homelessness

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 emerged across the following areas:

MISSION

- Establish a clear mission
- Create a Statewide Strategy

POLICY

- Monitor policy at the state and local levels
- Strengthen ICH's reputation as a leader on homelessness policy issues

COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

- Develop and improve internal and external communications systems

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Pursue more advocacy
- Ensure engagement from decision-makers
- Increase administrative support for the ICH

OPERATIONS

- Invest in better data and data sharing
- Expand communications focus through public awareness activities

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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



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.

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.

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).

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.



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.

