

# *The Iowa Council on Homelessness*

## MINUTES

Friday, March 15th, 2024, 10:00 a.m. – Noon

### IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL

**Meeting Minutes & Other Resources:** <https://www.iowafinance.com/homelessness/homeless-service-agencies/iowa-council-on-homelessness/>

Tim Wilson, chair, opened the meeting at 10:02 a.m. A quorum of members was present.

**Attendance was reported through this link:** <https://tinyurl.com/March2024ICH>

- **Introductions (member list)**

- **Voting members:**

- Ben Brustkern
- Crissy Canganelli
- Marilieg Fisher
- Rachel Geilenfeld
- David Hagen
- Mary Ingham
- Dennis Lauterbach
- Hope Metheny (vice-chair)
- Ashley Schwalm
- Tim Wilson (chair)
- Vacant

- **Non-voting members (state agencies)**

- Eugenia Kendall (DHHS)
- James Pender (DHHS)
- Karen Hyatt (DHHS)
- Lori Miller (Attorney General)
- Katrina Carter (Corrections)
- Tyler Navin (Education)
- Terri Rosonke (IFA)
- John Ralls (Veterans Affairs)
- William Berning (Workforce Development)

- **Approval of Agenda (*Action Item*)**

- Motion: Ashley
- Second: Ben
- Unanimously approved

- **Approval of January 2024 meeting minutes (*Action Item*)**

- Motion: Hope
- Second: William
- Unanimously approved

- **Public Comment Period:** A public comment period for the full meeting will be held at this time to accommodate visitors. This period is limited to 2 minutes per person and 10 minutes in total.

- Jennifer Husmann with the Iowa Alliance Coalitions of Change shared that they are a group of coalition leaders and other partners from across the state working together on state and local issues. She reported that they are beginning to work on a policy around alcohol to reduce the increase in alcohol-involved deaths and illnesses. Jennifer stated that Iowa has ranked as high as 2<sup>nd</sup> in the country on excessive drinking rates and we have the highest rate of new cancers in the Midwest. They believe that raising the minimum price on hard liquor could cut down on consumption.

# *The Iowa Council on Homelessness*

- Angie Arthur stated that Gregg Colburn who wrote Homelessness is a Housing Problem will be speaking at Iowa State University on April 18 at 5pm.

- **Committees**

- Executive Committee:
  - Tim provided an update on the bills introduced to reduce the boards and commissions. He reported that SF2385, approved by the committee, has not been voted on. HF2574, a version that leaves the council and many other boards and commissions intact, has been placed on the calendar. He reported that there are no other updates on the bills at this time. Tim also stated that the Homeward housing gap analysis is available for review.
- Nominating Committee:
  - Ben reported that there are no updates.

- **Legislative Updates**

- Eviction expungement legislation
  - Angie reported that the eviction expungement legislation did not make it to the funnel meeting. She stated that it was pulled from the committee meeting last week and did not get put back on. The intent is to see if any language can be added to another bill.
- Bills to reduce boards and committees
  - Tim provided an update during the Executive Committee update.
- Failed attempt to undermine Housing First and criminalize homelessness
  - Tim reported that the model bill that was introduced by The Cicero Institute, like legislation in other states, would redirect state funds to short term solutions and criminalize homelessness. The bill was dismissed; however, Tim believes that they will come back with similar legislation. The Cicero Institute is a nonprofit based in Texas. Cicero is a nonprofit based in Texas.

- **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Updates, Institute for Community Alliances (ICA)**

- Overview from January 2024 Point in Time Count
  - Suzie shared a PowerPoint outlining the PIT numbers. She reported that the final numbers are not due to HUD until 4/20 so numbers shared are preliminary. A more comprehensive PowerPoint will be shared during the May ICH meeting. Suzie stated that the unsheltered count in Polk County was 144 and no children were experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. In the Balance of State, 270 persons were unsheltered and there were 5 children.

- **Highlights from February 21 Day on the Hill**

Courtney Guntly

1. Courtney reported that the Day on the Hill was originally scheduled for January 9; however, due to weather, the event was rescheduled for

# *The Iowa Council on Homelessness*

2/21. She stated that they did not have space in the rotunda but was able to gather in a meeting room in the Capitol. The HMIS team put together data for the house and senate district and were able to leave information for legislatures. Courtney reported that there were about 18-20 individuals in attendance and were able to discuss how to end homelessness in Iowa.

- **Continuum of Care (CoC) Updates, as available**
  - Iowa Balance of State CoC (96 counties)
    - Courtney reported that they are preparing for the NOFO. She stated that they are currently looking for grant reviewers. The BoS is hoping to have more resources for youth homelessness through the Youth Homelessness System Improvement Grant. They are also preparing for the next round of the YDHP. It has not been released yet but historically it is released in the spring/summer. Courtney reported that new members were approved by the board. They are planning for their annual meeting in May at the Ames Public Library on 5/16. The meeting will be in-person only. They are preparing for their next Diversity Equity Inclusion training in April.
  - Homeward (Polk County)
    - Angie reported that they are preparing for the NOFO and states she is pleased it will be a two-year process. She stated that she believes that the legislation from Cicero will be coming back so urges everyone to work with our senators and legislatures to help educate them on homelessness and evidence-based practice. Angie stated that they continue to work in the community to make action items from the gap analysis. She reported they partnered with the BoS and are waiting on a response for the Youth Homelessness Systems Improvement grant with a 7/1 start date. Angie concluded her update by stating they are trying to be clear about the challenges with homelessness and having conversations with local elected officials and those in the community.
  - Siouxland Coalition to End Homelessness (Woodbury County)
    - Clara reported they are using HOME-ARP funds for two housing projects. One will have three PSH units and the other will have five. They are looking at applying for a grant to run a homelessness awareness campaign to bring more awareness to their community on panhandling, the face of homelessness, and success stories. Their Public Awareness committee is planning to do a presentation to the public on their PIT count from the last five years. Clara reported that their unsheltered count was 21. Last year the unsheltered count was 19 and the year before was 17. Finally, this spring they are hoping to have all local shelters reporting in HMIS.
  - Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless (Pottawattamie County)
    - Jason reported that he started as the Executive Director less than two years ago. MACCH implemented a new program approach on 1/1 for the CoC and reworked the priorities for Coordinated Entry to move more resources to

# *The Iowa Council on Homelessness*

marginalized communities. He stated that they changed the approach to their Rapid Rehousing program due to an increase in need in the 55 and older population increase. Jason stated that the chronically homeless population increased from 32% to 40%. He reported that they are ending the first quarter with their new priorities and will see if the resources are being used more efficiently. MACCH is hiring a new coordinator to assist with developing a community street outreach strategic plan that will coordinate with local government and law enforcement agencies. Jason stated that they are sponsoring a training on diversion and utilizing a human centered approach at intake. Additionally, they have partnered with an agency that utilized the train-to-train model that offers training by those with lived experience.

- Jason reported that they have applied for the Youth Systems Improvement grant and have also applied for YHDP. He stated that they are focusing on the NOFO and are pleased with the two-year grant cycle. Jason stated that they had a bill in their legislature to make encampments a third-degree misdemeanor. The Cicero Institute came to testify on behalf of the bill; however, the bill was unsuccessful. They are exploring the possibility of a pilot program to utilize the Douglas County Sheriff's Department to problem solve and assist with mediation or the expungement of evictions and or misdemeanors or minor offenses.

- **State Agency Representative Updates**

- Department of Health & Human Services (*Eugenia Kendall, James Pender, Karen Hyatt*)

James reported that the Public Health Division has done an outstanding job of strengthening their public facing portal that provides a lot of information that can be useful in work with community partners. He stated that the Iowa Public Health Tracking Portal has a lot of information about illnesses, disease, and has evidenced based information to utilize when working with local partners.

Eugenia reported that they are expanding the Aging and Disability Resource Center and removing the requirement that ADRC's can only be area agencies on aging. Through the alignment, they are designating the administrative service organizations across the seven mental health districts to be the administer the ADRC's. There will be an RFP process where someone could apply to be an ADRC at the district level and then they would coordinate services with member ADRC agencies. There is currently legislation that would remove the requirement that they can only be an area agency on aging. Eugenia stated that they are now the Aging and Disability Services Division. She reported that there is also going to be funding moved for mental health and disability services to be aligned with the Aging and Disability Services Division. Eugenia informed the council that they are going to be out in the community sharing resources. Additionally, they have started their multi-sector plan for gaining. They put together a 40-member steering committee that involves multiple departments and community partners to look at what it is to age across the lifespan to ensure that there is enough coordination in place so that they can meet the needs of individuals aging in the community. They have identified five

# *The Iowa Council on Homelessness*

main topics of discussion around aging including affordability, caregiver focus, living better longer, healthy aging, and social engagement. There will be opportunities for the larger community to participate in subcommittees to receive input. A press release should be coming in the next month.

- Office of the Attorney General (*Lori Miller*)
  - Lori reported that they are facing a 40-41% cut in the VOCA grant which is the largest funding source they receive for victim services. It assists with funding homeless shelters, victim services, domestic violence programs, sexual assault programs, and coalitions. Lori is putting together information that will show the impact of the cut in funding.
- Department of Corrections (*Katrina Carter*)
  - Not present
- Department of Education (*Tyler Navin*)
  - Tyler reported that they are currently working on the McKinney-Veto subgrant application. They hope to have that approved by the end of March. He reported that they are trying to spend the ART funds. There is advocacy to push the obligation deadline back a year as there are a lot of school districts and state agencies that have not been able to expend their funds.
- Finance Authority (*Terri Rosonke*)
  - Terri reported that the Homelessness Programs team transitioned to the Housing Strategic Initiatives team effective today. Additionally, the IFA board of directors approved a \$50,000 grant to the Institute for Community Alliances on behalf of the Balance of State Continuum of Care to complete a statewide homelessness systems modeling and gaps analysis study. Courtney Guntly is the point of contact for that and is gathering proposals. Ifa continues to work with the two pilot programs that were funded through the federal ERA2 funding allocation. The first is the Iowa Rapid Rehousing Project that focuses on persons experiencing homelessness. The expenditure deadline for all ERA2 programs is September 2025. Terri reported that IFA is currently amending budgets across the 14 regional contracts as they are expending all their original award amounts. There is currently \$22.3 million obligated under contract. Through the pilot, approximately 41% of those funds have been expended on rapid rehousing, homelessness prevention, and housing stability service activities. IFA continues to track data under the ERA2 RRH pilot. The data shows that the funds were skewing towards assisting more rural, female head of household, and Hispanic households than traditional HUD programs in the state. Terri is hopeful that the pilot program results will drive future state policy in a positive direction. The second ERA2 funded pilot program is Refugee Resettlement Assistance. There is approximately \$3.5 million under contract with resettlement agency partners. About a third of those funds have been expended and have assisted more than 450 refugee households to date from at least 27 different countries of origin. Finally, the iCare Reentry Opportunity Program, which is in partnership with Community Solutions of Eastern Iowa and Fountain of

# *The Iowa Council on Homelessness*

Youth program in Dubuque is up and running. The first reentry client has been successfully housed with a few more expected to be moving into housing in the community over the next couple of months. Megan Marsh is the point of contact for that program. Finally, Terri is working on a new Iowa Permanent Supportive Housing Fund proposal that will initially focus on providing operating deficit relief to qualified permanent supportive housing projects. IFA will be using the definition of permanent supportive housing that the statewide PSH advisory committee has agreed upon. Terri hopes to take that to the IFA board in April for consideration. The funding source for that program will be a variable funding source so it will not be something that PSH providers can budget for annually but would be a tool to utilize following an operating deficit.

- Department of Veterans Affairs (*John Ralls*)
  - Not present
- Workforce Development (*William Berning*)
  - William reported that they are transitioning from focusing their efforts from individuals experiencing temporary seasonal layoffs to upcoming career fairs. The Iowa Works Mobile Workforce center is up and running. There are forms available on the Iowa Workforce Development website to request the mobile unit at different events. William stated that they are working with Perry and John Deere to support individuals by connecting them with benefits, training, or job opportunities.
- **Old Business**
  - None
- **New Business**
  - Tim informed that council that he will not be applying to renew his membership with the council. He reported that he is relocating out of state.
- **Next Meeting:** Tuesday, May 15 10:00 a.m.
- **Adjourn**
  - Motion: Dennis
  - Second: David
  - Unanimously approved; meeting adjourned at 11:04 a.m.

*Meeting minutes submitted by Mollie Brees*