

Chicago's Plan 2.0 Update – Background Information

How is Chicago's Plan to End Homelessness being updated?

As Chicago's Plan to End Homelessness enters its ninth year of implementation, it is time to update our community's plan. Many components are part of Chicago's Plan Update including examining progress and challenges to date; reviewing system-wide data and Plan Evaluation results; and soliciting feedback and expertise from the community. Chicago is organizing an efficient process to update the plan, overseen by a Steering Committee convened by the Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness and the City of Chicago Department of Family and Support Services, and facilitated by the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH).

What is the public feedback process or the community charrette?

To ensure robust participation and feedback from the community - represented by the Chicago Alliance Constituency Groups and Commissions - the Steering Committee has decided to engage CSH to organize and deliver a condensed community process, known as a CSH community planning Charrette. The CSH charrette takes what is typically a long-term planning process, and focuses our community-wide energy on key issue areas. There are three phases to this process detailed in the table below. With guidance from a steering committee, CSH works closely with the community to identify key issue areas, review data, and prepare for the charrette week. Community conversations and developing recommendations take place during a one-week "intensive", resulting in a final framework for action that will shape the next version of Chicago's Plan to End Homelessness or "Plan 2.0".

Charrette Week Process

Phase	Activities	Timing
1: Pre-Planning & Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Solicit input on key issues from constituency groups• Analyze data and information for charrette week• Identify and invite key local & national experts• Prepare for charrette week with Steering Committee	Oct-Dec 2011
2: Charrette Week	One week of intense community process including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold two days of expert fishbowls & community feedback• Release initial recommendations & community feedback• Release Charrette report detailing process and results	January 24-31, 2012
3: Plan 2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete an updated Plan to End Homelessness in Chicago, informed by data and community expertise	Spring 2012

What happens during charrette week?

- **Expert Fishbowls:** Fishbowls are issue-focused panels that will be open to all constituency groups and stakeholders in Chicago. National and local experts will engage in a dialogue that encourages thinking of new systemic and programmatic responses to ending homelessness in their particular topic area. The community will observe the panel during this process. Once the panel has completed its discussion, the community reacts and provides their input on the issue area. Note takers record the results of the conversations. The fishbowls are January 24th and January 25th and all who are interested are strongly encouraged to attend as many sessions as possible.

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- **Feedback Loops:** After the fishbowls, staff will compile the information and feedback into initial recommendations. Constituency groups will receive a copy of the recommendations, and provide additional input in a series of feedback loops.
- **Final Charrette Week Report:** Within 7 days from the start of the charrette week, CSH will publish a final report detailing the week's activities and results.

Why this process?

The CSH Charrette is specifically designed to help communities address key issues in ending homelessness at the local level. Similar to a traditional architectural charrette, the CSH Charrette provides a fast-paced but thorough exploration of the critical aspects of developing plans and action steps. The process capitalizes on local and external expertise as well as the community organizing principle of engaging stakeholders in a dynamic process. Chicago's Plan is renowned for its inclusivity, comprehensive scope, and pragmatism. This charrette will capture the local need for balanced representation and draw on the deep technical knowledge and investment of the community. Chicago also has incredible information, evaluations, data, and expertise in place from eight years of implementation, practical experience, and a formal Plan Evaluation. This process will provide a concentrated effort to talk through the 'gnarly' issues, but also a quick, decisive way to distill the incredible information and expertise into a concise Plan to move forward. The intense facilitated sessions, expertise from across the country and Chicago area, and insightful community comment and feedback loop will build and sustain the process and create a strong updated Plan.

Can this process really work?

Charrettes serve as a way of quickly generating a solution while integrating the interests of a diverse group of people. A successful charrette promotes joint ownership of solutions focused on areas of action and implementation. The Chicago Planning Council and its Steering Committee for this effort believe this process will result in a successful Plan 2.0. To date, CSH has successfully conducted charrettes in Seattle, the State of Oregon, and Baltimore County.

What other information will inform the Plan Update?

In addition to the results of Charrette week, other multiple sources of data – including the Evaluation of the Plan -- are informing the Plan 2.0. The Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness and Department of Family and Support Services are working closely with CSH to use this data and information to guide final recommendations for action under the next Plan. To do this we will review key documents and information such as HMIS, point-in-time count, and DFSS program data; engage in discussions with local staff and key stakeholders; work with the Steering Committee; align the recommendations with Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act performance measures and the Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness, Opening Doors; and prepare the draft Plan 2.0.

When will the Plan Update be completed?

The Plan update (also known as Plan 2.0) will be completed by Spring 2012.

Where can I find out more information?

Updates on charrette week will be posted in the Chicago Alliance's bi-weekly e-newsletter and online at www.thechicagoalliance.org. To be added to the Alliance's distribution list, please e-mail naming@thechicagoalliance.org.

Chicago's Plan 2.0 Update – Charrette Week Issue Areas

Background. The charrette focuses in on the “gnarly issues” – issues that we as a community consider extremely difficult and challenging for our work moving forward, and for which there is not a clear consensus of approach or efforts already under way to address the issue. Issues such as lack of resources and the increased need for affordable housing will be covered in the Plan 2.0, but will not be the focus of the charrette week, as it is understood that there are basic foundational issues that need to be addressed and which we would all agree are core to the successful implementation of the Plan.

The Charrette Steering Committee has met over the last three months and through feedback and information gathering has chosen the proposed eight issue areas briefly described below. The community will discuss six of these issue areas during charrette week, as outlined earlier in this document. More detailed data and information on the final issue areas will be available prior to charrette week.

How to Provide Feedback. The Steering Committee asks constituency groups, commissions, and committees to provide written feedback on the issue areas to inform the charrette week sessions. Each group is asked to:

1. Read the brief descriptions of the issue areas outlined below
2. Narrow down the issues list from eight to six to be discussed during charrette week
3. Suggest any issue areas that might be missing and should be considered for inclusion in the week
4. Provide additional questions/information on any of the issue areas
5. Provide additional data to inform Plan 2.0 on these particular issue areas
6. Send any model or pilot project information related to an identified issue area so we can highlight them in the Plan 2.0 write-up and use them to inform our work during charrette week
7. Discuss how your group will be involved in charrette week

Each group should provide their written feedback directly to Nicole Amling of the Chicago Alliance, namling@thechicagoalliance.org by November 23, 2011.

Table 1: Overview of Issues Areas Identified for Discussion during Charrette Week

Front Door		Interventions		Back Door		Special Populations	
1	Entry points	3	Interim Housing	6	Permanent Supportive Housing (access and supply)	7	Youth
2	Prevention/Diversion	4	Employment			8	Ex-Offenders
		5	Meeting the Needs of Children in Families				

Chicago's Plan 2.0 Update – Charrette Week Issue Areas

Issue Area 1: Front Door – Entry Points

Ensuring simple, clear, and available access points to our prevention, shelter, and housing systems is critical to our Plan's success. Chicago currently has a no-wrong-door approach with multiple entry points into homeless shelter and services – through DFSS Service Centers, street outreach and engagement teams, the Prevention Call Center and 311, homeless service and housing providers, and others. This fluid approach has presented challenges with applying consistent interventions and practices to ensure consistent services. The HEARTH Act calls on our community to 'reduce the number of new episodes of homelessness' and 'reduce lengths of homeless episodes'. The charge of our work in our Plan Update is to ensure that we are reaching those who need services and that each entry point is making the match between client needs and what we have available in our community.

Questions to examine for our Plan 2.0 may include:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current system?
- Could Chicago benefit from and implement coordinated intake?¹
- How do Chicago's entry points (DFSS Service Centers, outreach teams, Prevention Call Center, 311, providers, and others) connect to longer-term solutions such as housing and services?
- What other systems affect the way our entry points function and how could their work become more integrated in creating a coordinated system?
- How have other communities been successful?
- What is missing? What works well?

Issue Area 2: Prevention/Diversion

Chicago's Plan calls on us to "expand the range and availability of prevention strategies, increase their immediate accessibility, and improve their long-term effectiveness". Prevention's design is to target those at imminent risk of homelessness with one-time or short-term rent assistance, legal programs, and housing placement services to restore stability and eliminate entrance into shelter. Diversion is a form of prevention but is provided more literally "at the front door", by targeting those who are actively seeking shelter. This may include assisting a household seek a non-shelter, safe location for the night or week, while a provider secures prevention resources and a housing placement. At the time of the original plan, \$3 million in resources was available for homeless prevention, and diversion was not a concept outlined in the original plan. Since then, prevention services have expanded to include medium-term assistance (up to 18 months), legal services, and housing relocation.

Questions to examine for Plan 2.0 may include:

- What are Chicago's current prevention strategies and is there a better way to amplify them and take them to scale?
- What lessons have we learned from the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing (HPRP) program?
- How could Chicago implement system-wide shelter diversion and rapid rehousing strategies?

¹ *In a coordinated system, each system entry point ("front door") uses the same assessment tool and makes decisions on which programs families are referred to based on a comprehensive understanding of each program's specific requirements, target population, and available beds and service.*

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- How should Chicago target its limited prevention resources to support the goals of reducing annual instances of homelessness?
- What strategies work best for prevention and diversion?
- What is missing? What works well?

Issue Area 3: Interventions – Interim Housing

Chicago's Plan called for a Housing First approach. The Plan states, "For Chicago, this approach requires a fundamental shift in its shelter strategy, away from its current tiered system of care to an Interim Housing model in which short-term housing is provided for the minimum time needed to access permanent housing, with services focused on an immediate and comprehensive needs assessment, resource acquisition and housing placement." To date over 3,000 beds of interim housing exist in Chicago's system. As each continuum of care moves to HEARTH Act standards, HUD is looking for communities to reduce the overall annual number of people experiencing homelessness and reduce their time spent homeless.

Questions to examine for Plan 2.0 may include:

- How does interim housing fit into Chicago's system? What are the pros/cons of interim housing over traditional transitional housing models?
- What lessons about rapid re-housing are there from HPRP and the Stable Families Initiative that can inform the interim housing model?
- What network of interventions can Chicago bring to scale to achieve the interim housing goal?
- What are the national best practices for similar models? How do the HEARTH performance measures impact interim housing in Chicago?
- Whom do these interventions serve well? Who is left out?
- What is missing? What works well?

Issue Area 4: Interventions – Employment

Chicago's Plan emphasizes the need to ensure "households have access to a full range of resources and services to protect the stability of their housing...accomplished through the implementation of a wraparound services approach." Included in these wraparound services is employment. Employment strategies assist households in remaining stably housed, the key performance measure essential to our Plan's success and a household's success. Identified as one of the key issues and needs for clients in Chicago's Plan Evaluation, Chicago must make the connections to jobs in order to foster housing stability.

Questions to examine for Plan 2.0 may include:

- What are the main hurdles for homeless services providers in connecting participants to employment services and jobs?
- What connections to the employment sector need to be established or expanded? What is the systems integration work necessary to see further investment of the traditional workforce development sector in our population?
- What could be instituted and fostered for this population to provide alternative educational and employment services models?
- What is missing? What works well?

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Issue Area 5: Interventions – Meeting the Needs of Children in Families

Chicago has made progress in serving families and implementing programs and leveraging resources to meet the needs of the whole family. There is an intention within the provider network to assess the needs of children and connect homeless children with all available resources afforded to them through Title I of the Department of Education McKinney Vento program. While these integrated resources for families need to be brought to scale – such as Family Assertive Community Treatment services, prevention, early intervention services, daycare, etc. - systemic interventions and coordination of services for families with children have not been addressed as in other issue areas.

HEARTH asks continuums of care to take the educational needs of children into account when families are requesting shelter. This may mean that families are located into a shelter in closer proximity to their home school or that providers assign families prevention/diversion to keep them near school. This strategy and coordination is not happening consistently in our system, and therefore the on-going service needs for kids –health, mental health and early intervention – are not understood until much later, if at all.

Questions to examine for Plan 2.0 may include:

- How best do we capture information about children at the time of shelter entrance?
- What lessons has Chicago learned from successful programs and models? What have we learned from the Englewood pilot and FACT project that Chicago should take to scale?
- What are the systems integration issues and how does our community foster that integration? What is working in coordination with Chicago Public Schools? What needs improvement?
- What are the prevailing service needs of children that we have learned from our system to date?
- What interventions for families with children will best support the goals of the HEARTH Act?

Issue Area 6: Back Door – Permanent Supportive Housing Access & Supply

For a portion of persons who are homeless in Chicago, permanent supportive housing (PSH) provides the key to remaining stably housed – affordable housing, coupled with tailored supportive services. Chicago has a robust supply of supportive housing (over 7,000 units), many created under the current Plan and its focus on expanding housing options. People who are homeless face many, many barriers to housing – and some affordable housing providers or housing systems themselves create barriers that keep the most vulnerable people out of their units. Barriers are not always visible and can come from the cumulative effects of multiple systems setting their own priorities and application procedures. Additionally, the time from approval to housing placement can be long.

Questions to examine for Plan 2.0 may include:

- What targets should the system set for new PSH production and targeting? What percentage of our housing options needs to be PSH or permanent housing with short-term support or affordable housing? Does Chicago have a mismatch between supply and population that needs PSH?
- What strategies could Chicago put in place to coordinate funding to develop and operate PSH?
- What strategies need to be in place to ensure equal access to PSH in Chicago?
- What administrative barriers of PSH funders and programs can be changed to facilitate faster entry and placement into permanent supportive housing?
- What works well? What is missing?

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Issue Area 7: Special Populations - Youth

A 2007 Chicago Coalition for the Homeless study showed that housing and supportive services succeed in helping youth overcome homelessness. In the study, 87% of the youth who exited homeless youth programs moved into stable, safe housing. Yet, programs and shelters across the city turn away youth every night, due to an insufficient number of shelter beds or diversion strategies. Community consensus on the interventions to encourage stable housing is needed and necessary in Chicago.

Bi-annual point-in-time counts may not accurately capture the demand for homeless services, especially for homeless youth. Homeless youth over 18 can access adult shelters, but advocates report youth do not feel safe or that adult shelters cannot meet their specific needs.

- What interventions does Chicago need to provide to youth who are homeless? How much do we need? What barriers has the system created for youth accessing housing and services?
- Should interventions in Chicago differentiate by age? Population characteristics? If so, how? How are the interventions provided developmentally appropriate?
- What best practices from around the country could inform our efforts?
- How can we leverage the existing system of beds to reconfigure for capacity for youth? How do we conduct outreach to ensure youth access resources available in our system?
- What works well? What is missing?

Issue Area 8: Special Populations – Ex-Offenders

The National Alliance to End Homelessness estimates that ex-offenders have a one in eleven chance of experiencing homelessness. Supportive services, permanent supportive housing, and employment can help ex-offenders escape a vicious cycle of homelessness and involvement in the criminal justice system. Moreover, a subset of this population often has chronic health conditions, including mental illness, substance use and other persistent health challenges, and communities end up spending taxpayer dollars on services that only bounce people between shelters, hospitals, jails and prisons—with limited positive human outcomes. Integrating the systems and resources of criminal justice, behavioral health, and housing agencies is one component to ensuring access to housing and services for ex-offenders; connecting persons to employment opportunities is another. Both are critical to housing success.

Questions to examine for Plan 2.0 may include:

- What barriers still exist for ex-offenders related to housing and employment?
- What can systems do jointly to integrate their resources and policies?
- What are providers doing on the ground in Chicago and other communities that Chicago could take to scale?
- What are the advocacy needs? How can we leverage existing efforts to ensure access and availability of housing and services?
- What works well? What is missing?