
Chicago Plan 2.0 Community Charrette

Initial Recommendations

January 27, 2012



Overall Recommendations for Plan 2.0

- A. Embody consumer choice at every possible level and component of the system – from street outreach to housing placement and follow up.
- B. Maintain and expand cultural competency throughout the homeless service system.
- C. Make resources available to ensure access to the homeless system for people who speak languages other than English, including resources for interpreter services, site enhancements, and training and technical assistance. This work should be monitored on a regular basis to ensure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- D. End any discriminatory activities in the system and advocate to end them in other mainstream systems that people are accessing or need to access.
- E. Apply evidenced-based models where appropriate and ensure there is adequate training for strong implementation.
- F. Monitor and modify caseload sizes to ensure strong outcomes for programs and people.
- G. Ensure all providers understand re-entry into the community and help advocate for people with criminal backgrounds.
- H. Use data to identify system gaps, blockages, and other issues that need to be addressed.
- I. Create appropriate data and performance measures connected to the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act.
- J. Create an open Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), able to connect with multiple data systems to reduce provider time entering data and provide quality reports to the community.
- K. Decide on lead implementers for Plan 2.0 to ensure action is taken on accepted recommendations.
- L. Tell the story of the Plan to all of Chicago – share outcomes, successes, and other stories to build community support for preventing and ending homelessness.

Initial Recommendations for Employment

- A. Implement a system-wide, standard employment assessment that leads to appropriate employment programs or resources.
- B. Fund employment navigators to connect households to employment resources, referrals, and services.
- C. Redirect current employment services funding in interim housing/shelters toward post-employment supports or to fund employment navigators within the system.
- D. Expand Transitional Jobs programming.
- E. Leverage and package multiple funding streams for employment services, including the Department of Labor, Veterans, Education, Medicaid, and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).
- F. Apply for available waivers for programs like the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to encourage more programming directed to homeless populations.
- G. Change state childcare assistance eligibility for homeless families to allow subsidies while searching for employment.
- H. Integrate with Cook County Works planning process.
- I. Sustain and increase funding for job retention services.
- J. Establish a micro-lending program for homeless/formerly homeless entrepreneurs.
- K. Improve and promote the Property Management Curriculum offered at the City Colleges and encourage residents to attend and be hired by housing programs.
- L. Explore opportunities to rehabilitate foreclosed properties and provide job training.
- M. Connect employers to prevention resources to quickly respond to an employee's housing instability issues if needed.
- N. Explore adoption of Work Connect System in New York City that allows all identification records to be centrally stored and accessed.
- O. Use legal expungement and clemency options to expand employment opportunities for ex-offenders.
- P. Expand the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance to disallow discrimination based on criminal history.

Initial Recommendations for Permanent Housing Access and Supply

- A. Create Integrated Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) that provides access to a wider range of people experiencing homelessness.
- B. Reinstate the housing locator system to help people with income or in need of market rate housing exit homelessness.
- C. Create flexible capital funding to reduce the development timeline for PSH and Integrated Housing.
- D. Implement a central referral system for PSH and connect it to other assessment systems for prevention, emergency shelter, interim housing, and rapid rehousing.
- E. Implement coordinated funding applications and initiatives for City agencies funding housing.
- F. Implement “Moving-On” efforts to assist people in PSH to move to affordable housing in the community when appropriate.
- G. Provide training to PSH providers on the connection between benefits and employment.
- H. Sponsor a landlord hotline for immediate needs/questions on PSH partnerships.
- I. Create youth Permanent Supportive/Integrated Housing developments, in diverse neighborhoods, with space for co-location of drop-in centers.
- J. Develop additional scattered-site housing options for youth using both the master-lease and co-sign lease models to help reduce rental barriers for young adults and bring housing options to scale.
- K. Continue the development of supported employment programs for permanent housing residents.
- L. Create career opportunities for residents in housing developments as possible.
- M. Work with the CHA to establish a special designation for homelessness on the CHA waiting list.
- N. Create a presumptive eligibility policy for documentation needed to move into PSH.
- O. Create a foreclosure-focused PSH initiative with capital, operating, and service resources.
- P. Develop eviction prevention programs to ensure housing stability.

Initial Recommendations for Systems Integration

- A. Ensure Plan 2.0 has dedicated systems integration staff.
- B. Fundraise for System Improvement Planning Grant opportunities that create incentives for systems to come together to plan and implement changes.
- C. Have stakeholder agencies (public health, seniors, mental health, homeless, etc.) convene grantees to foster coordination and solutions to integration barriers.
- D. Advocate with all systems to simplify eligibility criteria.
- E. Direct funding, or leverage Medicaid, to fund positions for SSI Outreach Access to Recovery (SOAR) to drastically increase enrollment in SSI, which could connect to enrollment in Medicaid.
- F. Integrate PSH and homeless programs into emerging Care Coordination Entities under healthcare reform.
- G. Leverage Medicaid-eligible services while protecting funding that covers services not reimbursable by Medicaid.
- H. Integrate with the VA on appropriate screening and referral and in-reach to the homeless system for immediate connection to available resources for veterans. Allow homeless service providers to determine veteran status prior to referral.
- I. Integrate prevention efforts for veterans by partnering Supportive Service for Veteran's Families programs with other prevention screening measures like the Homeless Prevention Call Center.
- J. Work with the Illinois Department of Corrections to implement its own Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP) connected to its reentry and recidivism prevention efforts.
- K. Enforce implementation of SSI and Medicaid upon release.
- L. Fund mobile case management staff for homeless students, beginning in the Chicago Public School (CPS) regions and schools with high concentrations of homeless students.
- M. Request that CPS fund distinct staff to serve as liaisons for the Students in Temporary Living Situations programs and enhance training for those staff on homeless and prevention resources.
- N. Create liaisons in the City Colleges similar to those in CPS to assist with the special needs of homeless students.
- O. Require the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to report to each homeless system and track subsidized adoptions that result in abandonment and homelessness.

Initial Recommendations for Coordinated Access and Prevention

- A. Direct persons seeking help during daytime hours to regional centers, i.e. DFSS Community Services Centers or community-based sites where a community-based organization is co-located to do prevention/diversion assessments and placement to shelter as needed.
- B. Connect all shelter request calls from 311 after business hours to an entity for a prevention/diversion assessment and shelter intake. Provide capability for the entity to use real-time bed management for placement.
- C. Ensure client assessment information transfers from coordinated intake to next provider for continuity of service.
- D. Co-locate public benefits screening and facilitate tight coordination/data sharing with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) agency to obtain benefits quickly.
- E. Assign coordinated case management at front end to follow person through the system.
- F. Implement eviction-prevention curriculum for all permanent housing (including PSH) that is supported by flexible resources in order to implement proven practices preventing eviction.
- G. Increase use of hotline or other social media communication tools to provide support for youth in crisis.
- H. Develop 24/7 drop-in centers on the west and south sides to ensure youth in each area of the city have access to services.
- I. Replicate family mediation and support groups for parents and caregivers to be able to respond to their child's expression of sexual orientation and other issues such as mental health, drug use, sexual activity, etc. that could lead to running away or asking the child to leave.

Initial Recommendations for Interim and Rapid Rehousing

- A. Refocus the goals of shelter and interim housing to achieve system-wide benchmarks of reducing the duration of homelessness by equipping these programs with the financial resources to deliver rapid rehousing assistance.
- B. Test and assess performance-based contracting or other financial incentive models to move from current interim model to a rapid rehousing-focused program. Take to scale based on the outcomes of the pilot.
- C. Establish that interim housing programs should no longer maintain waiting lists, but instead will assess and document all turnaways for prevention and diversion.
- D. Close sites with substandard living conditions and repurpose funding for rapid rehousing or other rental assistance.
- E. Ensure all shelter and interim housing programs support family preservation both for children of all ages and genders as well as partners.
- F. Reinststate the housing locator system to help people with income or in need of market rate housing exit homelessness.
- G. Provide aftercare services for people exiting interim housing to family or friends to assist with future stability.
- H. Emphasize job retention services in case management practices.

Initial Recommendations for Youth

- A. Affirm the goal that youth homelessness will not lead to adult homelessness.
- B. Utilize the City of Chicago Task Force on Homeless Youth as the key decision making body, as well as youth consumers, to inform interventions, policies, and investments.
- C. Connect homeless youth to a menu of options and interventions related to services, family mediation, shelter/housing, and focus on safety through drop-in centers.
- D. Integrate cultural competency for youth regarding gender and sexual orientation into all actions, decisions, and programs that serve homeless youth.
- E. Triple the number of low-demand youth shelters beds or units by 2016.
- F. Ensure new programs are available in each area of the city – north, west, and south sides.
- G. Ensure all youth and homeless providers are using positive youth development in their service delivery.
- H. Provide cross-trainings on positive youth development and other developmental needs of youth that impact homelessness.
- I. Adopt and integrate the runaway youth curriculum developed by the National Runaway Switchboard.
- J. Connect pregnant and parenting youth to appropriate and adequate housing and service options that take into account the developmental needs of both the parent and the child.
- K. Increase the focus and training of providers on family mediation/reunification when possible.
- L. Improve use and targeting of Family Unification vouchers for youth transitioning out of care from DCFS.
- M. Create employment opportunities for peer mentors at schools and service agencies.
- N. Create year-round youth employment programming and options, not limited to seasonal/summer job programs.
- O. Engage the Chicago Transit Authority on fare-card reductions for homeless youth who are working or in school.