



## Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness

### ICHH Accomplishments

Massachusetts has received national recognition for its efforts to prevent and end homelessness. The innovations stemming from the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness have been highlighted by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness and the National Alliance to End Homelessness on several occasions, and it has been noted as one of the most active and productive interagency councils in the country.

Achievements under Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray's leadership as Chair of the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness:

- 1 The model system of ***Regional Networks to End Homelessness*** convenes state agencies, local government, business and faith communities, and non-profit housing and service providers in order to improve coordination and access to resources for those who are homeless, and is recognized as a "best practice". The innovative public-private partnership with the Paul and Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation ensured statewide scale and rigorous evaluation.
- 2 The ***Article 87*** transition of the shelter system to the Department of Housing and Community Development, designed to provide more seamless access to housing resources for those who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, has accelerated housing placements and ensured more effective resource targeting.
- 3 Through the state budget process, ***cohesive low-income housing investments*** have been directed to homeless and at-risk households, marking the first significant re-investment in these programs in many years.
- 4 The ***ICHH Advisory Board*** harnesses the expertise of leaders from 24 statewide organizations most highly respected in the fields of housing, homelessness, and service delivery to at-risk populations. This group has successfully launched initiatives to improve access to child care for homeless families; to improve service delivery and housing opportunities for older adults who are homeless; to improve awareness of youth homelessness and the policies and practices to best support this population; and to

improve the ability for homeless families to access education, training, and job placement.

Signature Initiatives:

*Regional Networks to End Homelessness* – In 2009 Lt. Governor Murray announced the creation of ten Regional Networks to End Homelessness covering every community in the Commonwealth. These Networks established integrated, collaborative efforts to end homelessness by helping individuals and families find housing, as opposed to shelter. Since their inception, hundreds of partners from every corner of the state have prevented thousands of households from becoming homeless, and helped thousands more exit homelessness and find stable homes in their communities.

*Family Shelter System Reforms* – Through the state budget process and in partnership with the Department of Housing and Community Development, the ICHH has helped redesign the approach to serving homeless families. Emergency shelter and rapid rehousing resources are now being strategically targeted to families experiencing homelessness, while additional housing-based prevention and diversion programs have grown significantly in order to keep families experiencing instability housed. This initiative built off successes from the Regional Networks to institutionalize a housing continuum of prevention, diversion, rapid rehousing, and stabilization.

*Ending Homelessness for Veterans* – In 2013 Massachusetts became one of only a few states to outline a comprehensive action plan to ensure all veterans have a safe place to call home. The Steering Committee to End Homelessness Among Veterans worked with over 200 stakeholders in the veterans' and housing fields to outline four key goals: (1) rehouse and stabilize veterans who become homeless by implementing a housing strategy, (2) ensure veterans most at risk of homelessness remain housed to prevent homelessness, (3) increase access to benefits and resources for veterans through greater intervention, and (4) align and integrate federal, state, and community resources to support veterans through effective partnerships. Each goal is supported by a detailed action plan to accomplish the objectives by the end of 2015.

*Ending Homelessness for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault* – Lt. Governor Murray charged the ICHH and the Governor's Council to Address Sexual and Domestic Violence with establishing a joint steering committee. This committee has initiated an action plan that will lead us toward our vision that survivors of domestic and sexual violence who are homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to the formal and informal supports they and their families need to live and thrive securely in their communities.

## **Action Steps for 2013-2014**

- Together, with the Department of Housing and Community Development and our partners in the Regional Networks to End Homelessness and the advocacy community, continue to drive reforms of the family homelessness system in order to foster rapid rehousing and eliminate use of motels.
- Achieve full implementation of the *MA Integrated Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness Among Veterans*, ensuring those who have served our Commonwealth and our nation have access to the housing and services necessary to achieve stability and success.
- Stemming from the work of the joint steering committee of the ICHH and Governor's Council to Address Sexual and Domestic Violence, implement an Integrated Task Force comprised of staff from the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Transitional Assistance, the Department of Public Health, and key statewide advocacy leaders. The Integrated Task Force will implement the full recommendations of the Steering Committee in order to build on community efforts and ensure the Commonwealth's resources are best deployed to enable homeless or at-risk survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence to live securely within their own communities.
- Building off our ongoing and collaborative stakeholder engagement strategies, work with the ICHH Advisory Board and Regional Networks to End Homelessness to advance our key initiatives throughout the entire Commonwealth.
- Partner with the Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Commission to conduct a statewide count of youth who are experiencing homelessness, and will use our findings to inform the development of supportive housing and services for this population.
- Through the Supportive Housing MOU Steering Committee, work to meet the Administration's goal of developing 1,000 units of supportive housing by 2015.
- Under the leadership of the Executive Office of Administration and Finance and the Department of Housing and Community Development, launch the Social Innovation Finance initiative that will provide housing and services for 500 chronically homeless adults. This innovation will also launch a systemic reform that begins to formally shift state shelter resources for homeless individuals to housing.
- Through the newly formed Homeless Older Adults Working Group, develop and implement a core set of policy and practice recommendations designed to enhance access to the housing, healthcare, and services that meet the unique needs of this population.
- Coordinate with the Interagency Council on Substance Abuse and Prevention on reducing substance abuse, particularly opiate abuse, among those who are homeless.