



Please Continue the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH)

Congress needs to extend the sunset date of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) from 2017 to 2020 while maintaining its current funding level of \$3.6 million. Specifically, the Appropriations committees are expected to make the decision of putting language in their bills to extend the sunset date, and are expected to consult with the authorizing committees (Senate Banking, House Financial Services).

Without USICH, federal coordination of plans to end homelessness of veterans, families, and youth lose the organizational structure necessary to link national and state strategies.

What is USICH?

USICH “promotes services integration and systems change to end homelessness.”¹ Through the coordination of federal responses to homelessness across 19 federal agencies, and the creation and promotion of partnerships between the private sector and local governments and non for-profits, USICH plays a pivotal role in preventing and ending homelessness nationwide.

How does USICH help to prevent and end homelessness?

- **Promotes coordination and collaboration**
 - USICH’s “coordinated federal leadership can send a strong message to communities to prioritize multisector collaboration”, bringing nonprofits, business leaders, and philanthropy to the table as full partners.”¹
- **Increases communication and reduces fragmentation**
 - “USICH provides an infrastructure that brings federal agencies together to ensure those dollars fulfill their purpose without unnecessary duplication or gaps.”¹
- **Improves cost effectiveness, both locally and federally**
 - By organizing national plans on ending homelessness, numerous regions have declared the end of veteran’s homelessness, reducing the variety of costs like emergency room visits, police arrests in favor of less-expensive housing strategies.

¹ Gillespie and Cunningham, 2016

- **Increases accountability**
 - “USICH is perceived as an expert resource to federal agencies and communities and a vehicle for **holding federal actors accountable to results.**” ¹
- **Promotes resource maximization** of federal resources by “clarifying the role of federal programs” to best serve people experiencing homelessness. ¹

Key successes and accomplishments

- **Creation of *Opening Doors*:** This was the nation’s first comprehensive strategy to prevent and end homelessness
- **Improving programs by applying research to practice:** USICH pushed to adopt housing first models as best practice
- **Reduction in the use of inefficient and ineffective strategies**
- **Virtually ending veteran homelessness**
- **Provision of guidance regarding the best use federal resources**

If USICH was not continued, the costs of termination ...

- **Federal Costs** ¹
 - Value of collaboration could decrease and results could subsequently decline
 - Reduction in urgency and focus
 - Agencies lack the capacity to fill the role played by USICH
 - Would send the signal that ending homelessness is not a federal priority
- **Local Costs** ¹
 - Decreases the efficiency and urgency with which local and community groups use federal funds and implement strategies

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