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**To:** U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development & Technical Assistance Providers  
**From:** Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness, on behalf of the Chicago Continuum of Care  
**Date:** 6/13/2012  
**Re:** Submission of the Final Action Plan

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Chicago approached the CoC Check-up Process with enthusiasm as we had already begun a similar process on our own. The format of the process assisted us in carrying out a more in-depth and broad analysis than we could have done without the tools HUD provided through the portal.

The surveys were completed by several groups and individuals in order to get the broadest representation of Chicago stakeholders, and the results were analyzed by both the CoC Lead Agency (Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness) and CoC Governing Body (Chicago Planning Council on Homelessness). The Preliminary Action Plan was drafted by the Chicago Alliance and committee of the Planning Council.

We distributed the preliminary action plan widely among our stakeholders, and entertained feedback from them, as we do with most of our planning processes. This helps ensure the greatest ideas are garnered from throughout Chicago, and helps create buy-in among the majority of stakeholders.

Our Final Action Plan is being uploaded today and we are excited to begin working on our action items.

If HUD or any technical assistance providers have questions about any of the items in the Action Plan, please feel free to contact our CoC Lead Person, Nicole Bahena at [nbahena@thechicagoalliance.org](mailto:nbahena@thechicagoalliance.org) or (312) 379-0301 x 28.

Thank you.

# Chicago Continuum of Care Final Action Plan

*Created in response to the CoC Check-up Process*

## Section I – CoC Governance and Structure

HUD recommends that the CoC governance and structure is inclusive of all stakeholders in the community, and that the structure is clear and understood throughout the CoC.

Chicago CoC survey responses for this section indicated that the governance structure of the CoC is not fully understood by or representative of all stakeholders. Furthermore, survey respondents demonstrated that several of the CoC processes and governance components are not formalized. Therefore, the strategies in this section seek to define and formalize our structure, increasing representation throughout the CoC Governance and improving how information is communicated CoC-wide.

Goal A: Ensure a diverse set of stakeholders are involved and participating in CoC governance, committees and working groups		
Strategy	Action Steps	Responsible Entity
A1. Ensure stakeholders are representative of the CoC	A1.1 - Assess sectors represented in current structure, establish membership targets , and develop an action plan for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inviting and supporting new sectors to get involved, and</li> <li>• ensuring diverse membership among committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• <b>Planning Council Membership Committee</b></li> </ul>
	A1.2 - Establish membership responsibilities and expectations for all governing body and standing committees to ensure high-level representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• <b>Planning Council Membership Committee</b></li> </ul>
	A1.3 - Outreach to sectors not currently involved and support participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• <b>Planning Council Membership Committee</b></li> </ul>
A2. Improve CoC-wide communications	A2.1 - Hold focus group among stakeholders to determine effective way for communicating with stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> </ul>
	A2.2 - Meet with Dept. of Family and Support Services (DFSS) and other large funders (if determined necessary) to coordinate communication on CoC efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• DFSS</li> <li>• Others (if necessary)</li> </ul>
	A2.3 – Distribute CoC communications at least quarterly to share system-wide performance outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• DFSS</li> </ul>
	A2.4 - Hold an all-CoC meeting at least once a year to share system-wide performance outcomes, goals, and how they relate to Chicago’s Plan to End Homelessness (the Plan), the Federal Strategic Plan (FSP), and HEARTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• DFSS</li> <li>• Planning Council</li> </ul>
A3. Continually support and build consumer engagement	A3.1 - Hold focus groups with consumers to determine effective recruitment and engagement efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• Consumers Commission</li> <li>• <b>Planning Council Membership Committee</b></li> </ul>
	A3.2 - Undertake recruitment and engagement with consumers throughout CoC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• Consumers Commission</li> </ul>
	A3.4 – Explore cross training opportunities with partner agencies that specialize in consumer engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumers Commission</li> </ul>
	A3.3 - Provide leadership training, or other assistance as needed to ensure engagement continues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• Consumers Commission</li> </ul>

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## Section I – CoC Governance and Structure (continued)

Goal B: Ensure CoC governance, structures, and processes are formalized and transparent		
Strategy	Action Steps	Responsible Entity
B1. Define CoC Governance Structure	B1.1 - Assess current CoC governance structure to gauge effectiveness of implementing the Plan, and responding to HEARTH and FSP goals	• <b>Planning Council Governance Committee</b>
	B1.2 - Pursue pro-bono legal counsel to develop bylaws	• <b>Planning Council Governance Committee</b>
	B1.3 - Assess lines of accountability, tensions, and continuity throughout CoC	• <b>Planning Council Governance Committee</b>
	B1.4 - Formally adopt changes to current CoC governance structure based on assessments in B1.1 and B1.3	• <b>Planning Council Governance Committee</b>
	B1.5 - Establish roles and responsibilities for CoC governing body and committees/working groups	• <b>Planning Council Governance Committee</b>
B2. Formalize CoC Governing Practices	B2.1 - Establish written agreements that establish lines of accountability, and are renewed annually, between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CoC Lead Agency and CoC Governing Body</li> <li>• HMIS Lead Agency and CoC Governing Body</li> </ul>	• <b>Planning Council Governance Committee</b>
	B2.2 - Formalize relationships of CoC governing body to its committees and working groups, ensuring continuity of membership and information throughout CoC governance structure	• <b>Planning Council Governance Committee</b>
	B2.3 - Establish written conflict of interest policy for CoC Governing Body	• <b>Planning Council Governance Committee</b>
B3. Communicate governance model and structure CoC-wide	B3.1 - Ensure website is dedicated to the CoC Governing Body that clearly outlines the CoC governance structure, and allows accessibility to related documents (ie. Conflict of Interest policy, meeting minutes, etc.)	• Alliance • <b>Planning Council Governance Committee</b>
	B3.2 - Hold CoC Orientation training annually, and post webinar on website for people to access at any time	• Alliance • <b>Planning Council Governance Committee</b>
	B3.3 – Ensure governance model and structures are communicated to Consumers	• Alliance

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## Section II – CoC Plan and Planning Process

HUD recommends that CoCs have a strategic plan that mirrors HEARTH and the goals in the [Federal Strategic Plan](#) (FSP), and that the plan is created through an inclusive and transparent process. The plan should guide activities in the CoC to prevent and end homelessness.

Chicago survey responses showed that we are currently in the process of re-developing our plan to end homelessness to be in line with HEARTH and FSP. The strategies in this section seek to ensure that the new Plan lays out a path for Chicago to meet HEARTH and FSP goals, and that the Plan has the resources necessary for successful implementation. This includes intentional and frequent Plan review and setting annual performance goals for all CoC projects and the system.

Goal C: Ensure Chicago’s Plan is in line with HEARTH and the Federal Strategic Plan		
Strategy	Action Steps	Responsible Entity
C1. Redevelop Chicago’s Plan to End Homelessness	C1.1 - Include performance measures in line with HEARTH performance measures	• Plan 2.0 Steering Committee
	C1.2 - Include coordination with other systems and resources	• Plan 2.0 Steering Committee
	C1.3 – Include strategies related to various subpopulations (chronically homeless, veterans, families, youth, etc.)	• Plan 2.0 Steering Committee
C2. Ensure Plan redevelopment is inclusive of all stakeholders	C2.1 - Ensure existence of multiple opportunities for public input and discussion throughout process	• Plan 2.0 Steering Committee
	C2.2 - Provide additional support to ensure robust consumer involvement	• Alliance

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## Section II – CoC Plan and Planning Process (continued)

Goal D: Ensure Chicago's Plan and HEARTH are successfully implemented in Chicago		
Strategy	Action Steps	Responsible Entity
D1. Assign responsibility for Plan Implementation	D1.1 - Dedicate staff person(s) to Plan implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• DFSS</li> </ul>
	D1.2 - Commit staff person(s) to undertake systems change to meet Plan and HEARTH goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• DFSS</li> </ul>
D2. Create implementation documents	D2.1 – Assess appropriate documents needed for successful Plan implementation (implementation schedule, program models chart, etc).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan 2.0 Steering Committee</li> </ul>
	D2.2 – Create and maintain implementation documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• DFSS</li> </ul>
	D2.3 – Evaluation implementation documents annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• DFSS</li> </ul>
D3. Ensure annual goals and Plan benchmarks are reviewed and updated as necessary	D3.1 - Increase CoC capacity to undertake regular data analysis and/or research to inform goal setting and Plan implementation progress, using HMIS and other available data sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dedicated research staff</b></li> </ul>
	D3.2 - Measure baseline performance against HEARTH measures, once HUD publishes HEARTH performance measure methodologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dedicated research staff</b></li> </ul>
	D3.3 - Set annual system-wide performance benchmarks based on Plan 2.0 objectives and HEARTH act performance measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Council</li> </ul>
	D3.4 - Administer annual point-in-time count for sheltered and non-sheltered, that ensures broad coverage of all populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• DFSS</li> <li>• <b>Dedicated research staff</b></li> </ul>
	D3.5 - Increase HMIS data quality (refer to F3 below for specific action steps)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• DFSS</li> </ul>
	D3.6 - Progress on goals are documented and communicated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dedicated Plan Staff</b></li> </ul>
D4. Evaluate and monitor CoC projects to ensure compliance with Plan and HEARTH goals	D4.1 - Redesign Evaluation for HUD SHP projects to be in line with new Plan and HEARTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• Planning Council</li> </ul>
	D4.2 - Explore expanding evaluation components beyond HUD SHP projects (ie. Shelter Plus Care, Emergency Solutions Grant, Prevention etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• Planning Council</li> <li>• DFSS</li> </ul>
	D4.3 - Regularly monitor and evaluate all CoC projects to ensure compliance with Plan goals and HEARTH outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• DFSS</li> </ul>
D5. Communicate Plan to CoC on a regular basis	D5.1 - Hold annual CoC-wide meeting to announce Plan and HEARTH performance for previous year, and goals for future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dedicated Plan Staff</b></li> </ul>
	D5.2 - Issue semi-annual progress report on Plan and disseminate widely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dedicated Plan Staff</b></li> </ul>

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## Section III – CoC Infrastructure and Administrative Capacity

HUD’s goals in this section are to ensure that the CoC has both a lead agency and HMIS agency with adequate capacity to meet HEARTH requirements and Plan implementation.

Responses to this section in the survey largely indicated that the Alliance has adequate capacity to do what it is currently doing, but the staff dedicated to serving the CoC will need to expand. Therefore you will see strategies to assess the CoC staffing patterns in light of HEARTH, Plan 2.0, and prepare to become a Unified Funding Agency (UFA). Additionally, survey responses indicated that the HMIS project is significantly understaffed and under-resourced. Strategies for this section largely relate to the technical assistance Chicago is already receiving from HUD to transition the project from the Dept. of Family and Support Services (DFSS) to the Alliance. Additionally, you should note an expansion of staff dedicated to the HMIS project to help address each strategy.

Goal E: Ensure CoC Lead Agency has adequate capacity to meet HEARTH requirements and support Plan 2.0 implementation		
Strategy	Action Steps	Responsible Entity
E1. Fully support the activities of the CoC Governing Body	E1.1 - Evaluate staffing patterns in light of CoC Action Plan, Plan 2.0 and HEARTH	• Planning Council
	E1.2 - Identify ideal staffing pattern for CoC	• Planning Council
	E1.3 - Determine funding for staffing CoC	• Planning Council
E2. Develop local capacity to become a UFA	E2.1 – Re-visit UFA selection, after agency consolidation	• Planning Council
	E2.2 – Based on results of E2.1, increase capacity of agency to monitor projects (fiscal)	• Alliance • Planning Council
	E2.3- Undertake professional development of CoC staff	• Alliance
E3. Increase training and technical assistance capacity of CoC Lead agency	E3.1 - Assess training and technical assistance needs of CoC (best practices, HEARTH, fair housing, homeless definition, fiscal management, project management, HMIS, etc)	• Alliance
	E3.2 - Determine funding source for training entity	• Alliance
	E3.3 - Launch training and technical assistance	• Alliance

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**Section III – CoC Infrastructure and Administrative Capacity (continued)**

<b>Goal F: Ensure HMIS Project has adequate capacity to inform HEARTH and Plan Implementation</b>		
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Responsible Entity</b>
F1. Complete HUD Technical Assistance Process to Transition HMIS Lead Agency	F1.1 - Hire Director for HMIS Project at Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• HUD TA</li> </ul>
	F1.2 - Work with HUD TA providers to complete technical assistance work plan and transition HMIS project from DFSS to the Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• DFSS</li> <li>• HUD TA</li> <li>• HMIS Committee</li> <li>• <b>HMIS Project Director (Alliance)</b></li> </ul>
F2. Increase participation in HMIS CoC-wide	F2.1 - Outreach to homeless projects currently not contributing data and support participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dedicated HMIS Staff (Alliance)</b></li> </ul>
	F2.2 - Ensure HMIS has the capacity to comply with additional funders requiring its use (ie. VA, PATH, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HMIS Project Director (Alliance)</b></li> </ul>
	F2.3 - Create user group to support user participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HMIS Project Director (Alliance)</b></li> <li>• HMIS Committee</li> </ul>
F3. Increase HMIS data quality and knowledge of privacy and security standards of participating agencies	F3.1 – Ensure HMIS privacy and security protocols satisfy agency users (HIPPA, mental health code, other local laws)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HUD TA</li> <li>• HMIS Committee</li> <li>• Alliance</li> </ul>
	F3.2 - Create and implement data quality plan for CoC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HMIS Project Director (Alliance)</b></li> <li>• HMIS Committee</li> <li>• DFSS</li> </ul>
	F3.3 – Begin to include privacy and security standards in HMIS training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HMIS Project Director (Alliance)</b></li> </ul>
	F3.4 – Establish written agreements between all agencies and HMIS Lead to ensure adherence to data quality plan, and privacy and security standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HMIS Project Director (Alliance)</b></li> </ul>
F4. Increase tools and resources for agencies to use HMIS	F4.1 - Increase training capacity of HMIS Lead Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HMIS Project Director (Alliance)</b></li> <li>• <b>Dedicated Training and TA staff (Alliance)</b></li> </ul>
	F4.2 - Ensure all end users receive required training prior to data collection and as required by HUD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dedicated Training and TA staff (Alliance)</b></li> </ul>
	F4.3 - Increase access to technical assistance and tools necessary to troubleshoot and increase data quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dedicated Training and TA staff (Alliance)</b></li> </ul>
F5. Increase usefulness of HMIS to agencies and other funders	F5.1 - Hold focus groups to identify customizations necessary to improve usefulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HMIS Project Director (Alliance)</b></li> <li>• HMIS Committee</li> </ul>
	F5.2 - Meet with funders to identify potential uses for meeting reporting requirements other than HUD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HMIS Project Director (Alliance)</b></li> </ul>
	F5.3 - Create customizations necessary based on focus groups and funder meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HMIS Project Director (Alliance)</b></li> <li>• <b>Dedicated System Admin staff (Alliance)</b></li> </ul>
F6. Ensure HMIS project receives sustainable and diverse source of funding	F6.1 - Explore funding sources beyond HUD SHP and models for generating income to operating HMIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HMIS Project Director (Alliance)</b></li> <li>• HUD TA</li> </ul>

**Section IV – CoC Housing and Services (to be updated upon release of Plan 2.0)**

## Chicago Continuum of Care Final Action Plan

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HUD recommends that CoCs focus on developing an adequate quantity and various types of housing and services needed for the homeless system, and that the CoC work to improve coordination throughout the system.

Plan 2.0 will contain projections and goals for the housing and services needed in Chicago, and therefore you can expect Goal H to expand upon release of the Plan. Survey responses for this section indicated that individual agencies are effectively coordinating with each other, mainstream resources and other systems of care, but that a larger, systemic effort to do so is missing. Also, respondents indicated that accessing housing and services is difficult to navigate. While it is expected that Plan 2.0 will address these items, we have included two strategies to help address the main deficits pointed out in the survey under Goal G.

<b>Goal G: Improve Chicago's ability to operate as an integrated system</b>		
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Responsible Entity</b>
G1. Develop a coordinated access system	G1.1 - Research best practices nation wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Council</li> <li>• <b>Dedicated Plan Staff</b></li> </ul>
	G1.2 - Establish tool/assessment to help target appropriate housing interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Council</li> <li>• <b>Dedicated Plan Staff</b></li> </ul>
	G1.3 - Convene stakeholders around planning for a coordinated access system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Council</li> <li>• <b>Dedicated Plan Staff</b></li> </ul>
	G1.4 - Integrate with current infrastructure (Homeless Prevention Call Center, and pilot projects such as the Centralized Referral System and Permanent Housing with Short Term Supports system)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Council</li> <li>• <b>Dedicated Plan Staff</b></li> </ul>
G2. Improve integration with other systems of care	G2.1 - Dedicate full-time staff to systems integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• DFSS</li> </ul>
	G2.2 - Continue improving discharge planning activities and policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• <b>Dedicated System Integration Staff</b></li> </ul>
	G2.3 - Actively coordinate with Chicago Public Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• <b>Dedicated System Integration Staff</b></li> </ul>
	G2.4 - Actively coordinate with entities that provide other housing opportunities (ex. Encourage prioritization of CHA vouchers for people experiencing homelessness)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• <b>Dedicated System Integration Staff</b></li> </ul>
	G2.5 - Actively coordinate with entities that administer mainstream resources (ex. Health Care, Medicaid expansion to cover services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance</li> <li>• <b>Dedicated System Integration Staff</b></li> </ul>



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## Section IV – CoC Housing and Services (to be updated upon release of Plan 2.0) (continued)

Goal H: Ensure Housing and Services meet community needs, and Plan 2.0 and HEARTH goals		
Strategy	Action Steps	Responsible Entity
H1. Implement Plan 2.0	H1.1 - Develop new units, and/or repurpose existing programs to be in line with HEARTH and Plan 2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Council</li> <li>• <b>Dedicated Plan Staff</b></li> </ul>
	H1.2 - Create new service dollars, and/or better coordinate with existing services to be in line with HEARTH and Plan 2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Council</li> <li>• <b>Dedicated Plan Staff</b></li> </ul>
	H1.3 - Develop priorities for new housing and service dollars that are in line with HEARTH and Plan 2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Council</li> <li>• <b>Dedicated Plan Staff</b></li> </ul>
	H1.4 - Develop priorities for new prevention dollars that are in line with HEARTH and Plan 2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Council</li> <li>• <b>Dedicated Plan Staff</b></li> </ul>
	H1.5 - Develop strategy to better coordinate with landlords throughout Chicago	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Council</li> <li>• <b>Dedicated Plan Staff</b></li> </ul>