

Committee to End Homeless Draft Strategic Plan 2015-2018 SCA Summary and Request For Feedback

The Committee to End Homelessness (CEH) Governing Board is scheduled to take action on the CEH **Draft Strategic Plan** 2015-2018 at their April 22, 2015 meeting. The plan can be found at <http://cehkcstrategicplan.org/>.

SCA is asking cities to provide their feedback on the draft plan to SCA staff by March 1 so an SCA position can be considered by the SCA Public Issues Committee at meetings on March 11 and April 8, 2015. The SCA Board is anticipated to adopt a final position at its April 15, 2015 meeting. For more information, contact Doreen Booth, SCA Policy Analyst, Doreen@soundcities.org or Mark Putnam, CEH Director, at Mark.Putnam@cehkc.org.

Key aspects of the CEH draft Strategic Plan:

Three goals: (1) that Homelessness is **Rare**; (2) that when it occurs Homelessness is **Brief and One-Time**; and (3) that we have **A Community to End Homelessness**. Strategies are proposed to address the causes of homelessness, realignment of funding and programs, and changes to decision-making.

The **draft Strategic Plan** focuses on what works. Strategies proposed are built on a decade's worth of data and experience to exit people from homelessness, experience gained both in Seattle and nationally. For example, "rapid re-housing" is the practice of focusing resources on helping families and individuals quickly move out of homelessness and into permanent housing, which is usually housing in the private market. CEH anticipates 2,600 additional people would be housed with such realignment in the short term, even without additional financial investments. However, a gap in housing for homeless people would still exist. The gap is estimated to be 10,000 permanent and affordable housing beds when adding in newly homeless people each year.

The **draft Strategic Plan** anticipates stable homeless funding, with investments better aligned towards proven strategies. It will highlight that state and federal government must reverse disinvestment over the past decades in affordable housing, and safety net funding for the plan to succeed. The Committee to End Homelessness is holding a day-long retreat for its Governing Board, Interagency Council, Consumer and Funder members on March 16, 2015 to finalize the direction of the Strategic Plan and to identify leads for each of the strategies.

The Role of Cities:

Cities are key partners in the efforts to end homelessness. Some strategies in the draft Strategic Plan have been identified as cities' responsibilities, while other strategies with no defined partners will likely need city support. Cities are asked to provide feedback on the strategies, and suggested amendments or changes to the draft Strategic Plan.

- Cities may want to provide feedback on the timing of the adoption of the draft Strategic Plan. It is planned to be adopted on April 22, 2015, yet many of the strategies do not have identified lead partners and none of the strategies have costs identified. Identification of lead partners is expected to occur at the March 16 CEH Retreat, an expectation that may be unrealistic. The proposed timeline may not include an opportunity for cities to review a final draft of the plan prior to CEH Governing Board action.
- Some cities have raised objections to **Strategy 1.2.A** – "Repeal or mitigate local ordinances that criminalize people for being homeless." No one wants to criminalize people for being homeless. But some cities have reported the need to have tools available (no camping, civility ordinances, etc.) to address chronic problems with homeless populations that affect other residents, other homeless people, businesses and potentially, public safety. Some cities have also expressed interest in strategies addressing chronic homeless people who repeatedly refuse services.
- **Strategy 1.4.A**, "Close the gap of xx,xxx housing units in King County available to households below 30% Area Median Income (AMI)" asks all partners to advocate for aggressive affordable housing goals, creative policy and land use regulations. Cities may wish to provide feedback on how to define "aggressive," which strategies for creating affordable housing are most effective, and how units should be funded. Under Countywide Planning Policy H-2, cities are required to address the need for affordable housing: "Address the need for housing affordable to households at less than 30% AMI (very low income), recognizing that this is where the greatest need exists, and addressing this need will require funding, policies and collaborative actions by all jurisdictions working individually and collectively." All cities in King County have a deficit of housing affordable to households at less than 30% AMI; cities are required to have such housing for 12% of their population, see: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/property/permits/codes/growth/GMPC/CPs.aspx>.

- Another strategy relates to land use decisions is **Strategy 2.1.B**, “Support non-traditional shelter models that create pathways to housing – shared housing, host homes, boarding houses, SROs”. Cities may or may not allow such models now and may want to consider the benefits/costs of such models if they are not currently permitted.
- **Strategy 1.5.A**, “Support investment of local resources in communities where the need and opportunity for gain is greatest, working with the Health and Human Service Transformation Initiative, Communities of Opportunity.” Several communities in South King County already provide substantial amounts of affordable housing at the 30-80% of AMI. Those communities have inadequate support services for the low-income residents they already have and may be reluctant to become a focus for additional investment unless more services can be provided. Conversely, cities that are not in the geographic areas targeted may wish to see greater emphasis on addressing the needs of the homeless population in their own cities as well.
- **Strategy 2.1.A**, “Ensure shelter capacity meets the need of the community” has a potential role for cities as zoning needs to be available to site needed shelters. Cities may or may not allow shelters under current zoning regulations.
- **Strategy 3.1.A**, “Establish a single, consolidated, inclusive leadership committee”, is very important. There is no specific committee structure defined yet; cities have an opportunity to help set the future direction of the CEH by ensuring that cities’ voices are heard clearly on the new leadership committee. This is especially important as cities, as well as other philanthropic and funding partners, will be asked to enter into agreements and make commitments. See **Strategy 3.1.B** “Establish MOUs among local governments, philanthropy and funders to align funding and commit to community-level outcomes.”

Background:

The previously adopted **10-Year Plan to End Homelessness** (2005-2015) focused on 6 Principal Action Areas, to:

- Prevent Homelessness
- Coordinate Leadership and Initiatives to End Homelessness Countywide
- Build and Sustain the Political Will and Community Support to End Homelessness
- Secure 9,500 Units of Housing for Homeless Persons
- Deliver Flexible Culturally Competent Services to Support Stability and Independence
- Measure Success and Reporting Outcomes

The **10-Year Plan** had some successes: it led to the coordinated leadership structure of CEH; it resulted in 5,700 more housing units being dedicated to homeless people and to 36,000 people exiting homelessness; new funders joined CEH and a coordinated funding application was created; and it led to data collection and reporting improvements.

The **10-Year Plan** also had some areas where it was not as successful: policy, funding, and investment decisions are still not coordinated; the number of housing units for homeless people was only 60% of the target 9,500 units needed to be secured; the full community did not engage in plan implementation; there were issues of system accountability; and funding and programs were sometimes misaligned with homeless peoples’ needs and strengths. Some outside factors that negatively affected the work of CEH were the recession; declining state revenues for safety net services; increasing rents; and growing income inequality.