

Iowa Council on Homelessness

Orientation Guide

Thank you!

Thank you for your interest in the Iowa Council on Homelessness! The Council is a 38-member governor-appointed planning and advisory board, first codified in 2008. As a volunteer-driven board, it relies on the active participation of committed members to fulfill its duties.

About this Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide a brief orientation to the Iowa Council on Homelessness and to its many available resources.

The Iowa Finance Authority provides staff assistance and administrative support to the Iowa Council on Homelessness. Information regarding all aspects of the Council is available online from the Iowa Finance Authority web site.

The main page for the Council may be found here:

- [*Iowa Council on Homelessness*](#)

This guide will provide brief introductory information, plus the locations of more detailed information from this main page above.

Board Meetings

Regular Council board meetings are held from 10 a.m. to noon on the third Friday of every other month, in January, March, May, July, September, and November. Meetings may be joined in one of three ways: 1) in person from the Iowa Finance Authority, 2015 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa, 50312; 2) from one of several scheduled Iowa Communications Network (ICN) videoconferencing sites around the state; or 3) by conference call at (866) 685-1580; code 515-725-4942. Availability varies for ICN locations; lists for each meeting are published in advance.

Meeting agendas, resources, minutes, and ICN locations are available here:

- [*Council Agendas and Minutes*](#) *(click on link at the right of page)*

Members of the public are always welcome and encouraged to join Council meetings as non-voting participants.

Duties of the Council

By Iowa Statute and Administrative Code, the duties of the council are as follows:

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1. Develop a process for evaluating state policies, programs, statutes, and rules to determine whether any state policies, programs, statutes, or rules should be revised to help prevent and alleviate homelessness.
2. Evaluate whether state agency resources could be more efficiently coordinated with other state agencies to prevent and alleviate homelessness.
3. Work to develop a coordinated and seamless service delivery system to prevent and alleviate homelessness.
4. Use existing resources to identify and prioritize efforts to prevent persons from becoming homeless and to eliminate factors that keep people homeless.
5. Identify and use federal and other funding opportunities to address and reduce homelessness within the state.
6. Work to identify causes and effects of homelessness and increase awareness among policymakers and the general public.
7. Advise the governor's office, the Iowa finance authority, state agencies, and private organizations on strategies to prevent and eliminate homelessness.
8. Make annual recommendations to the governor regarding matters which impact homelessness on or before September 15.
9. Prepare and file with the governor and the general assembly on or before the first day of December in each odd-numbered year a report on homelessness in Iowa.
10. Assist in the completion of the state's continuum of care application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Committees

There are three official standing committees (the first three listed below) and additional informal working groups. Members of the Council generally participate on at least one committee. Committees typically meet in between full Council meetings. Committees include:

- **Executive Committee:** This committee is made up of nine members, including the chair and vice-chair of the Council (both elected by the Council), the immediate past chair of the Council, and six additional members appointed by the chair. The Executive Committee carries out the business of the Council between regular Council meetings.
- **Nominating Committee:** Made up of six members, three that are representatives of state agencies and three that are representatives of the general public, plus the chair of

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the Council. Reviews member applications and makes recommendations to the Council. Also reviews member attendance.

- [**Continuum of Care Committee**](#): Most directly involved with the annual Continuum of Care (CoC) Program competition for funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Reviews new and renewal internal project applications and makes recommendations to the Council regarding which projects should be included in the joint Consolidated Application to HUD, and for what amounts of funding.
- [**Policy & Planning Committee**](#): Also has acted recently as the State Planning Advisory Committee, in partnership with the State Public Policy Group, to conduct special projects funded through legislative appropriation. Active in coordinating planning to end homelessness, including a 2015 HUD technical assistance initiative called Vets@Home.
- [**Public Awareness Committee**](#): Helps organize events such as the annual legislative Homelessness Awareness Day on the Hill. Also helps formulate annual recommendations to the governor regarding matters impacting homelessness.
- [**Research & Analysis Committee**](#): Works closely with the state lead agency for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), the Institute for Community Alliances. Helps plan the annual Point In Time Count, which is a 24-hour count in January of all sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons at the state. Reviews performance of participating service agencies.
- [**Coordinated Entry Committee**](#) (ad-hoc): Leads the effort to design a coordinated entry system for the Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care.

Committee meeting agendas, resources, and minutes are available at these links for each committee above, or here:

- [**Committee Agendas and Minutes**](#) *(click on link at the right of page)*

Continuum of Care

Federal laws and regulations govern how states and communities must plan and coordinate homeless assistance programs and resources. These include the 2009 Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act and regulations from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

According to these sources, the Continuum of Care (CoC) is the group composed of representatives of relevant organizations that plan for and provide a system of homeless

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outreach, engagement, and assessment; emergency shelter; rapid re-housing; transitional housing; permanent housing; and prevention strategies.

One of the primary functions of the Council is to serve as the decision-making body for the Iowa Balance of State CoC. This CoC covers most of the state, with the exception of Polk County, Pottawattamie County, and Woodbury County, which have their own independent CoCs.

HUD typically holds a competition annually for funds through the federal Continuum of Care Program. The Council oversees the local selection process to determine which programs in the Iowa Balance of State CoC may apply for funds through this competition.

Information about the Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care and the annual competition is available here:

- [Continuum of Care Information](#)

Member Information

Information regarding Applications, Membership, Governance, and Planning is available here:

- [Board Member Information](#)

- Applications: There are 38 total members on the Council: 26 members of the general public and 12 representatives (or alternates) of state agencies. The Council recommends new members for the governor's review and approval. The Council strives to maintain a balanced membership (geographic representation, gender, political affiliation, etc.), according to its governing code and rules, as well as the expectations of HUD for the Continuum of Care governing body (more information above). Members serve renewable two-year staggered terms.

Interested general public applicants submit an application through the governor's OpenUp system; additional information is requested through the ICH Nomination Form. State agency representatives (and alternates) are designated by their agency directors.

- [Open Up Iowa System](#)

- Membership Information:
 - A current member roster with contact information and committee membership is available online in this section of the Board Member Information page.
 - The *Iowa Gubernatorial Appointee Handbook* is also available; this is the packet that the governor's office mails to new appointed members of the general

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public. It contains generic information common to boards and committees of all types in Iowa, such as conflict of interest provisions, equal opportunity policies, open meetings laws, and a brief guide to parliamentary procedure.

- The State of Iowa travel rules and travel reimbursement form are available here. Members may be reimbursed for travel necessary to perform Council duties at the state rate of 39 cents per mile.
- **Governance**: There are several documents that govern how the Council conducts its business. These include, in this section:
 - *Iowa Code Chapter 16.100A*: The basic law or statute that governs the Council.
 - *ICH Administrative Rules*: The rules adopted by the Iowa Finance Authority on the Council's behalf that detail how the basic law will be carried out.
 - *Chapter 21 Open Meeting Law*: The Council must follow open meetings and open records laws, such as posting agendas in advance, publishing minutes, and more.
 - *Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care Governance Charter*: Details the responsibility of the Council to act as decision-making authority for the Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care, for HUD's Continuum of Care Program.
 - *Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement*: All Council members should submit a completed statement at the beginning of their term, and any time there are material changes.
- **Planning**: This section includes various planning documents adopted by the Council.

Special Projects

The Council has at times engaged in special projects using state legislative appropriation funds. For example, during the 2013, 2014, and 2015 state fiscal years, the Council used \$50,000 annual appropriations to contract with the State Public Policy Group to develop and implement "Iowa Quality Standards" for homeless programs. Information and resources related to special projects such as this are available here:

- [**Special Projects**](#)

Contacts

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- Vice-Chair, July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2018: Karin Ford, Karin.Ford@idph.iowa.gov

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