



November 21, 2014

The Honorable Terry Branstad
Governor, State of Iowa
1007 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50319

Dear Governor Branstad,

This letter is sent on behalf of the Iowa Council on Homelessness, pursuant to *Iowa Code Sections 16.100A(9)(a) and 16.100A(8)(g)*, which direct us to advise the Governor's Office and make annual recommendations regarding strategies to prevent and eliminate homelessness in Iowa.

The Iowa Council on Homelessness is committed to ensuring all Iowans have access to safe, decent, and affordable housing, as well as to reducing and ending homelessness. Those affected include veterans, domestic violence victims, individuals suffering from mental illness, persons experiencing a loss of income, and those suffering from other tragedies that create homelessness.

As a state, we are moving in the right direction and making measurable progress in reducing homelessness, however, the most recent report by the Institute for Community Alliances indicates a slight increase in the number of homeless households over the past year. So, there is still work to be accomplished.

Iowa's service providers work daily with public and private partners in the community to best utilize the limited resources that are available to prevent and reduce homelessness.

We rely heavily on our collaborative relationships with our colleagues from the Iowa Finance Authority and Institute for Community Alliances for their support and dedication. We are deeply grateful for the professionalism, administrative support, technical and financial assistance, and partnership provided by the Iowa Finance Authority.

We thank you for your leadership and your administration's investment in improving coordinated service delivery to Iowa's homeless. In the past year, *Standards for Homelessness Programs* was written and approved by the Iowa Council on Homelessness (ICH) in an effort to outline consistent expectations for operations, services and performance of Iowa's homeless shelters, housing programs, outreach services, and prevention programs. (Please see enclosure for a copy of the *Standards for Homelessness Programs*.) The creation of these standards was possible due to your support and the ICH partnerships with the Iowa Finance Authority and the State Public Policy Group (SPPG). Through your ongoing support, we are in the process of implementing the next phase of this project. The next phase is the creation of a written manual, supportive material and technical assistance to guide homeless service organizations in implementing the recommended standards.

Theresa Armstrong
Iowa Department of Human Services

Blair Avitt
Consumer Representative

Allan Axeen, Immediate Past Chair
Retired

Zebulon Beilke-McCallum
Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence

David Binner
Wells Fargo

Julie Bockenstedt
Humility of Mary Housing/Shelter

David Boss
Northeast Iowa Community Action Corp.

Bill Brand
Iowa Department of Human Rights

Anne Brown
Iowa Department of Corrections

Ben Brustkern, Vice-Chair
Cedar Valley Friends of the Family

Christina Canganeli
Shelter House

Jamie Cashman
Iowa State Association of Counties

Chris Coleman
Iowa League of Cities

Carrie Dunnwald
Cedar Valley Friends of the Family

Jane Erickson
Iowa Department on Aging

Marileigh Fisher
Community Housing Initiatives

Karin Ford
Iowa Department of Public Health

Donna Grgurich
Iowa Economic Development Authority

David Hagen
Hawkeye Area Community Action Program

Kristine Harris
Consumer Representative

Ann Hearn
Linn County Community Services

Sandra Johnson
Iowa Department of Education

Rhonda Jordal
Family Alliance for Veterans of America

Barb Kellogg
North Iowa Community Action Organization

Tom Lampe
Iowa Department of Public Safety

Dennis Lauterbach
Lutheran Services in Iowa

Scott Mather
Iowa Workforce Development

Stefanie Munsterman-Robinson
Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission

Wes Peterson
Iowa Finance Authority

Donna Phillips, Chair
Iowa Office of the Attorney General

Amy Rawhouser
Consumer Representative

Nancy Schulze
Heartland Family Service

Ashley Schwalm
Family Resources

Michelle South
Consumer Representative

Bob Steben
Iowa Department of Veteran Affairs

Anthony Timm
Central Iowa Shelter & Services

Roberta Wahl
Des Moines Area Community College

Tim Wilson, Secretary
Willis Dady Emergency Shelter

Amber Lewis, Coordinator
Iowa Finance Authority

800.432.7230
515.725.4900

2015 Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50312



In addition, ICH members continue to participate in planning and working committees with a focus on the following: (1) creation and implementation of a coordinated community intake and process to streamline the process for Iowans who are homeless or potentially homeless seeking shelter, housing and services; (2) raising awareness on homelessness, needs of Iowans who are homeless; and how to end homelessness, and (3) creation and submission of an annual coordinated Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care application package to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for funding for supportive housing and services. This application shows the communitywide commitment to ending homelessness and provides funding for these efforts. All of the working committees demonstrate efforts by ICH members to improve the response, resources and services provided to Iowans who are homeless or on the brink of becoming homeless.

To continue to assist Iowans who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless, the Iowa Council on Homelessness has four recommendations for your consideration:

- secure adequate funding and resources to address domestic violence and mental illness, which are leading contributors to homelessness;
- add a check-box option to Iowa Income Tax 1040 form, asking individuals if they would like to contribute to homeless services in their region;
- continue to provide leadership in convening key agencies and individuals to assess federal funding opportunities and possibly increase state funding for homeless programs; and
- increase availability of housing units and provide rent assistance for low-income households.

Homeless service providers in our state address the needs of some of our most vulnerable Iowans. Together we help men, women and their families to get back on their feet and move beyond homelessness - keeping children in school; getting adults back to work; providing access to health services and resources for veterans, the disabled and elderly; and helping move individuals and families into their own homes. Homeless service providers strive to not only improve the quality of life of the individuals and families that come through their doors, but also to improve the community as a whole.

On behalf of the Iowa Council of Homelessness, I thank you for your continued funding and investment in homeless services for all Iowans especially some of our most vulnerable. Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information or concerns related to the work of the Iowa Council of Homelessness at (515) 242-5121 or by e-mail at Donna.Phillips@Iowa.gov.

Sincerely,

Donna J. Phillips,
Chair, Iowa Council on Homelessness

Enclosure

Cc: Iowa Finance Authority
Institute for Community Alliances
State Public Policy Group
Iowa Council on Homelessness Members