2023 Annual Report



Prepared by CoC Staff



Table Of Contents

Letter from the CoC Director

Meet Our Board

Vision And Mission

Investment By Programs (CoC & Rural Funding)

Data

Coordinated Entry

Youth

Equity & Diversity

Barriers

Success

Looking Forward

Contact Us

Letter from the CoC Director

It's hard to believe we're nearing the end of 2023 and all the incredible work that has happened over the last year. The Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care continues to support our neighbors experiencing homelessness across our 96-county area. While there has been an increased need for our services over the past year, new partnerships and additional programming are worth celebrating. Our housing providers continue to receive exceptionally high numbers of households seeking housing or prevention assistance, and with pandemic funds drawing to a close, the strain on the housing system is real. Through it all, CoC partners have come together to make an impact. Some highlights of our work over the past year include:

- Securing nearly \$5 million over three years to address homelessness in rural areas. Awards for these projects were announced in April and included seven new projects in the IA BoS CoC. In addition to these funds, five Public Housing Authorities accepted 27 new Stability Vouchers, which can be used to help households previously experiencing homelessness maintain stable housing. More information on the rural housing projects can be found on page 6.
- Three new housing projects were awarded from Tier 2 in the FY22 competition. These new housing projects will assist those in Eastern Iowa and Linn/Benton/Jones regions get connected with permanent housing.
- The CoC took steps to create a more equitable assessment process for the Coordinated Entry system through 12 separate **focus groups** throughout the BoS CoC. In addition, CoC and CE staff participated in the national Coordinated Entry **Equity Mini-Labs** throughout the summer, gaining insight from other communities about how to infuse equity into the assessment process.
- CoC staff presented at several conferences to **share our work with other systems** of care, including public housing providers, school districts, General Assistance, and mental health providers.
- A virtual **C3 De-escalation training** by Brandy Waller in early 2023 brought the free training to over 200 participants across the state.
- The CoC hosted our **second Annual Meeting in Ames**, bringing together homeless providers and community partners from across our geography to discuss serving youth, the importance of data, and partnering with the mental health regions.
- Our **Youth Action Board**, made up of youth and young adults interested in ending youth homelessness continued to meet in person in Ames. The CoC applied for Youth Homeless Demonstration Program funding for the third year in a row, bringing together even more partners in the work to reduce youth homelessness. More information on this work can be found on page 11.
- The **Data/HMIS Task Group** was launched in April 2023, ensuring that the CoC has data at the forefront of the decision-making process. CoC staff and HMIS staff conducted a training for case managers to better understand the life cycle of data in August 2023, which led to greater understanding about the importance of accurate information.
- Finally, we lost two great partners in our work to end homelessness across the Balance of State this year—Mark Sertterh of Shelter House and Dave Nelson of Institute for Community Alliances. Both Mark and Dave have been involved in the work of the CoC for many years and they are missed.

The need for our services and collaboration continues to grow. The staff and Board of Directors of the Iowa Balance of State CoC are committed to the work of ending homelessness across the Balance of State and this work will continue in 2024. Together, we can make an impact.

Courtney Guntly

Meet the CoC Board

The Board of Directors serves as the primary decision-making body for the Continuum of Care and helps guide efforts to prevent and end homelessness. The Board is made up of 15 individuals from across the Balance of State's geographic area and across the spectrum of services. Our current Board includes:

Ben Brustkern Jeannette Archer-Simons

CoC Vice-Chair, Membership Task Group Chair

Friends of the Family

Jerry Anthony

Housing & Homeless Advocate

Luke Barongan

Sarah Whitmore

SafePlace

Cassie Gerst The University of Iowa, School of Planning & Public

Grant Competition Task Group Co-Chair

Affairs

Burlington Community School District

Linda Langston

Crissy Canganelli Langston Strategies Group Strategic Planning Task Group Co-Chair

Shelter House

Data/HMIS Task Group Chair & Housing & Homeless

Darlene Terrill Advocate

Westcare- Family Alliance for Veterans of America

Monalisa McGee
Helen Booker
The Salvation Army

Housing & Homeless Advocate

Hope Metheny Veteran Affairs

Coordinated Services Regions Task Group Chair

Youth Shelter & Services Stephanie Pickinpaugh

Jan Heidemann

CoC Board Chair, Executive Task Group Chair

Tamara Nunez

Mental Health/Disability Services of East Central Equity & Diversity Task Group Co-Chair

Region Alcohol Drug Dependency Services of Southeast Iowa

We would also like to recognize our previous members that completed their term on the CoC Board:

KarLee Kearns Robin Pfalzgraf Scott Dahlke

Institute for Community Alliances Habitat for Humanity Marion County Muscatine Center for Social Action

The IA BoS CoC encourages all those interested to apply to become a Board member or join one of our Task Groups. To learn more about becoming a Board member or how to join one of the CoC's Task Groups, please connect with <u>Courtney Guntly</u>.



Mission, Vision, & Values

Mission: The Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care's (IA BoS CoC) mission is dedicated to ending homelessness through community collaborations, data-driven strategies, and best-practice housing interventions.

Vision: IA BoS CoC's vision is to end homelessness in the Balance of State.

Values:

Housing First & Person-Centered
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
Collaboration across the Continuum
Data-Informed & Results-Based Decision Making
Continuous Improvement

The IA BoS CoC purpose includes:

- Providing leadership to the Continuum with the purpose of ending homelessness in the Balance of State.
- Ensuring sufficient and effective delivery of data-driven strategies and best practice housing interventions to all people experiencing homelessness.
- Coordinating the planning, implementation, and enhancement of the housing response system that uplifts all people experiencing homelessness.
- Allocating funding for efforts by providers to rehouse all people experiencing homelessness rapidly while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to those experiencing homelessness as well as communities as a consequence of homelessness.
- Promoting access to and effective use of mainstream programs to all people experiencing homelessness.
- Meeting the educational and training needs of our community partners.
- Collaborating with advocates for system changes and leveraging resources to benefit those we serve.

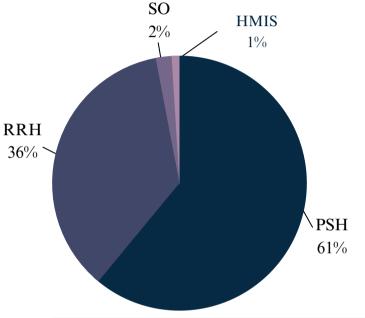
The IA BoS CoC is also responsible for:

- Coordinating, or being involved in the coordination of, all CoC-funded housing interventions for persons experiencing homelessness within the IA BoS CoC.
- Designating and overseeing the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) within the IA BoS CoC.
- Establishing and operating the coordinated entry assessment to be used within the IA BoS CoC.

Funding for Rural Homelessness Total Investment: \$4,999,502

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released a first-of-its-kind package of resources to address unsheltered homelessness, including funds set aside specifically to address homelessness in rural communities in late 2022, and announced awards in spring 2023. Projects will implement coordinated approaches grounded in Housing First to reduce unsheltered homelessness and improve services, health outcomes, and housing stability by partnering with health and housing agencies. This was a challenging competition and the fact that the BoS was awarded speaks to the quality of the applications we had for Rural funding.





Listed below are the Rural Funded partners across the IA BoS CoC.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

- Central Iowa Shelter & Services serving Wapello County
- Friends of the Family serving Cerro Gordo County
- The Bridge Home- serving Boone County

Rapid Rehousing (RRH)

- Upper Des Moines Opportunity serving Buena Vista, Calhoun, Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Hamilton, Humboldt, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, Sac, Webster, and Wright Counties
- Muscatine Center for Social Action serving Muscatine County

Street Outreach (SO)

• Central Iowa Shelter & Services - serving Appanoose, Davis, Iowa, Jasper, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lucas, Mahaska, Marion, Monroe, Poweshiek, Van Buren, Wapello, and Wayne Counties

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

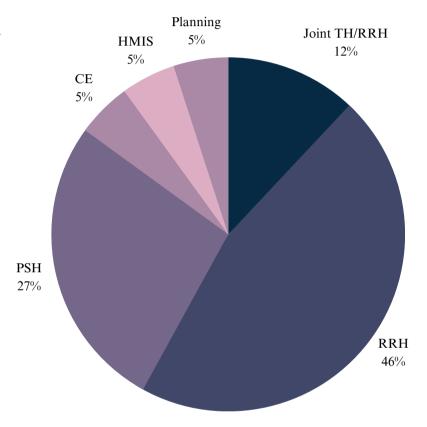
• Institute for Community Alliances - serving the 82-county rural IA BoS CoC region. www.iaboscoc.org

Annual CoC Competition Funding Total Investment: \$6,323,773

Annually the CoC holds a competition for Continuum of Care funding provided through the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). Through this competitive process, projects have the ability to renew or apply for new funding. The FY 22 investment CoC funded partners are shown below.

Rapid Rehousing (RRH) & Joint Transitional Housing-Rapid Rehousing (Joint TH-RRH)

- · Area Substance Abuse Council Clinton & Linn
- Central Iowa Shelter & Services Appanoose,
 Davis, Iowa, Jasper, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lucas,
 Mahaska, Marion, Monroe, Poweshiek, Van
 Buren, Wapello, Warren, & Wayne
- Community Solutions of Eastern Iowa -Delaware & Dubuque
- Crisis Intervention & Advocacy Center Adair, Adams, Clarke, Dallas, Decatur, Guthrie, Madison, Ringgold, Taylor, & Union
- Friends of the Family Allamakee, Benton,
 Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro
 Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware,
 Dubuque, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Grundy,
 Howard, Jones, Linn, Mitchell, Tama,
 Winneshiek, & Worth
- Hawkeye Area Community Action Program -Benton, Black Hawk, Buchanan, Cedar, Delaware, Dubuque, Iowa, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Linn, & Washington
- Humility Homes & Services, Inc. Scott
- Shelter House Johnson & Washington
- · Willis Dady Benton, Jones, & Linn
- Youth Shelter & Services Boone, Greene, Hardin, Marshall, & Story
- YWCA Clinton Clinton & Jackson



Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

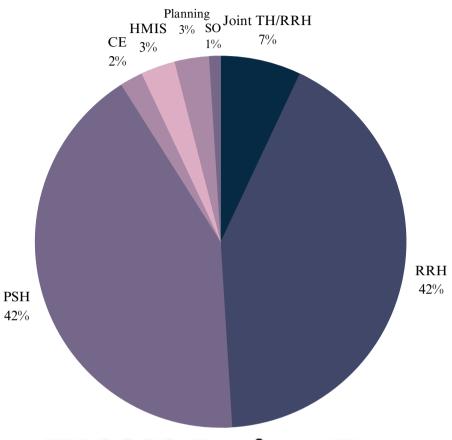
- Community Housing Initiatives Black Hawk
- Friends of the Family Allamakee, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard & Winneshiek
- Humility Homes & Services, Inc. Scott
- Shelter House Johnson & Washington
- The Bridge Home Boone, Greene, Hardin, Marshall, & Story
- · YWCA Clinton Clinton & Jackson

HMIS, Coordinated Entry, & Planning

• Institute for Community Alliances - CoC wide

Investment By Program Total Investment: \$11,323,275

The overall Rural Funding and Annual CoC Competition process has provided a great outcome for our homeless response system. The overall investment and program coverage is laid out below.



FY 2022 Project Type



The IA BoS CoC utilizes the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and the Domestic Violence Information System (DVIMS) to collect and report on the CoC's data. We also utilize Stella which is a data visualization of a dataset to help show how our homeless response system has been performing on critical performance

The data provided covers October 1, 2021-September 30, 2022. Check out more data:

- Iowa BoS Data Dashboard
- · Point In Time Dashboard

measures.

• Iowa BoS Demographic Report



Data

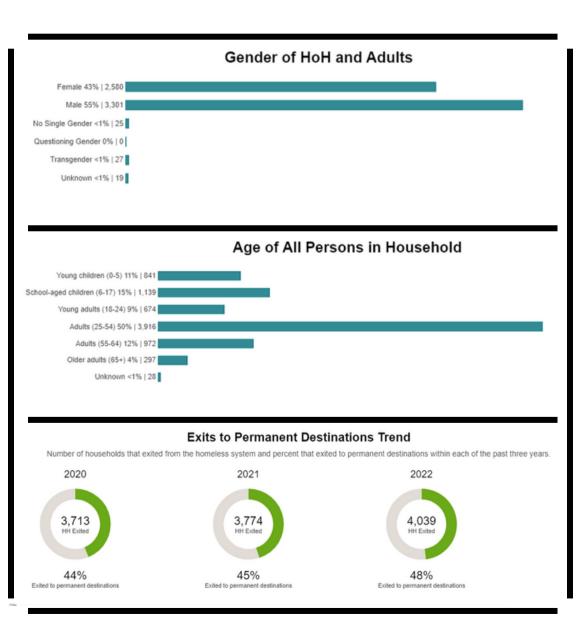
5,564 Households Served

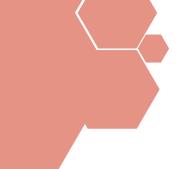


7,849 People Served



48% Exited to Permanent Destinations





Coordinated Entry

Coordinated Entry is the process used to assess and assist in meeting the housing needs of people at-risk of homelessness and people experiencing homelessness. The data below reflects from October 1, 2021-September 30, 2022.

The Coordinated Service Regions (CSR) Task Group leads the implementation of Coordinated Entry and required training to ensure consistency of services across the Coordinated Entry regions.

This year the CSR Task Group has focused on training, provider participation, provider and participant feedback, data quality, updating policies and procedures, and standardization across the 14 Coordinated Service Regions.

To focus on standardization across the CoC, the CSR Task Group has worked collaboratively with the Equity & Diversity Task Group to focus on the assessment process for Coordinated Entry and created the Equitable Intake Work Group. This collaboration focused on reviewing the assessment and intake process to ensure our Coordinated Entry System is as equitable as possible. In the Summer of 2023, focus groups were held with each Coordinated Service Region to gain feedback and input from providers and people with lived experience on the assessment process.

After focus groups were completed, information and feedback were compiled to note trends and areas of concern in the current assessment process. The Equitable Intake Work Group has reconvened and is currently working on the creation of a new assessment process for

Coordinated Entry.



Use the links to learn more about your region or visit the Coordinated Entry Dashboard.

- Balance of Counties
- Black Hawk/Tama/Grundy
- · Eastern Iowa
- Johnson/Washington
- Linn/Benton/Jones
- North Central Iowa
- Northeast Iowa www.iaboscoc.org

- · Northwest Iowa
- · Quad Cities Bi-State
- · Rolling Hills
- South Central/West
- · Southeast Iowa
- Two Rivers
- · <u>Upper Des Moines</u>



3,357 Individuals experiencing literal homelessness



1,075 families experiencing literal homelessness



135 individuals & families served through Permanent Supportive Housing



1,134 individuals & families served through Rapid Rehousing

Youth



On a single night in 2023 in Iowa



128 youth were homeless



26 of those youth were unsheltered and living on the streets or not in a place meant for habitation

The IA BoS CoC is committed to preventing and ending youth and young adult homelessness in its 96-county region. The CoC submitted its third Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) application in June 2023. Although unsuccessful in gaining additional youth funding, many new statewide partnerships were formed and the CoC will continue to grow prevention and Housing First awareness for youth and young adults at risk or experiencing homelessness.

Goals ahead for Youth Work in the IA BoS CoC.

- Continue growing the Ames Youth Action Board (YAB) membership
- Fundraising to support lived experience compensation, professional development opportunities, YAB meeting supplies, and YAB activities
- YHDP Work Group to continue partnerships with statewide entities and systems of care
- Begin work on a coordinated community plan specific to ending youth homelessness
- Create additional YAB locations by mid-2024

To learn more about the YAB and how you can get involved or provide support today, <u>visit the YAB Task Group Page</u>.

The IA BoS CoC is currently focusing fundraising efforts toward our YAB. Donations will compensate youth to attend meetings and make it possible to participate in leadership and team-building activities. To donate, <u>please click here</u>, or to donate by check, add a memo note for IA BoS CoC, and mail it to the Institute for Community Alliances, 1111 9th Street, Suite 380, Des Moines, IA 50341.

CALL TO ACTION: WHAT YOUR DONATION CAN DO!

\$15



Pays for one youth to attend an hour meeting focused on preventing and ending homelessness \$50



Pays for an adult sponsor to travel & facilitate a YAB meeting \$100



Pays for one youth to attend a leadership development opportunity **\$125**



Provides a meal for the Youth Action Board (YAB) Meeting \$250



Pays for YAB dinner out and group activity Use our QR Code to learn more about YAB



Equity & Diversity

The IA Balance of State CoC is committed to infusing equity, diversity, and inclusion into all CoC work. To that end, several committees are reviewing disparities in housing funding, systems of care partnerships, access to housing referrals, and access to supportive services.

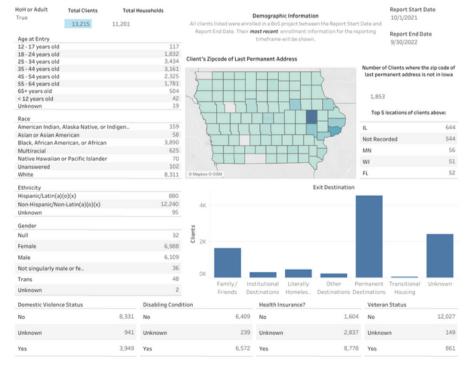
The E&D Task Group 2023 initiatives led to many insightful conversations on the next steps for the CoC.

- In-person focus groups gathered feedback on disparities in the Coordinated Entry system
- 2023 Local CoC Competition questions gauged a project's ability to provide training opportunities to their front-line staff for serving diverse populations while designing program resources for those with the highest barriers
- Continual updates to the CoC's equity dashboards as listed on the CoC and ICA websites
- Created an action plan for DEI training provided to the CoC at no cost
- Improve the diversity of the IA BoS CoC homeless system by partnering with outside partners and creating work plans in collaboration with other CoC Task Groups

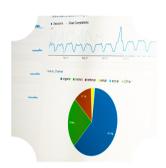
Goals for 2024

- Continue to expand lived expertise participation in our CoC's decision-making bodies
- Continue monitoring CoC-funded projects for their efforts to increase equitable housing services
- Analyze HMIS for trends in client data
- Create a new CE assessment tool to be piloted across the CoC

The data provided below covers October 1 2021-September 30, 2022.



Check out more information on dashboards and training below.at:



Iowa BoS Equity
Dashboard



Racial Disparities

<u>Dashboard</u>



CoC Training & Events

Barriers

The Iowa Balance of State is comprised of passionate and impactful providers that provide a variety of housing and services for people experiencing homelessness within the geography of the CoC. Below are some barriers encountered in our homeless response system and some steps the CoC has been focusing on to address these barriers.

Barrier: Rural Homelessness- Lack of Visibility, Transportation, and Services **Goal & Action Steps:** Expand and/or create services in rural areas to address the listed barriers.

- 1. Work with projects funded through Rural Funding to focus on these top barriers.
- 2. Engage with providers on the possibility of expanding or creating services to underserved/rural areas of the CoC.
- 3. Provide support and engagement with local systems of care to provide education about homelessness and the need for services.
- 4. Collaborate with the Coordinated Entry Lead to engage community partners and provide education about the Coordinated Entry process.





Barrier: Quality Affordable Housing- Housing Cost Burden, Lack of Engagement, Lack of Moving On Programs.

Goal & Action Steps: Education for local communities and partners on collaborations on housing initiatives.

- 1. Collaborate with the Coordinated Entry Lead to engage community partners and provide education about the Coordinated Entry process.
- 2. Engage with providers and community partners in the creation of the communication toolkit focused on creating connections with Public Housing Authorities and Landlords/Property Owners.
- 3. Engage with providers, Public Housing Authorities, and Landlords/Property Owners to provide education about collaboration on housing initiatives.

Barrier: Re-Entry & Discharge Planning- Lack of System Engagement, Criminal Records, Youth Aging Out Goal & Action Steps: Collaborations across systems of care for a consistent discharge planning process.

- 1. Collaborate with systems of care on re-entry from institutionalization or on discharge from services.
- 2. Provide training, education, and toolkits for systems of care regarding the CoC and Homeless Response System.
- 3. Determine the possibility of piloting simple data-sharing efforts and conducting frequent user system engagement studies demonstrating system costs.





Success

The IA BoS CoC housing projects provide housing first, client centered services to those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Below are some success stories and videos shared from across the CoC.



Shelter House worked diligently with the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics to advocate for the inclusion of a housing instability screening question in the Emergency Department's triage. This question was added in December 2022; now individuals are identified and referred to the project because of this advocacy.

Friends of the Family's Rapid Housing Initiative of North Iowa program has had 100% successful exits this grant year, with 12 people (adults + children) exited to Section 8.

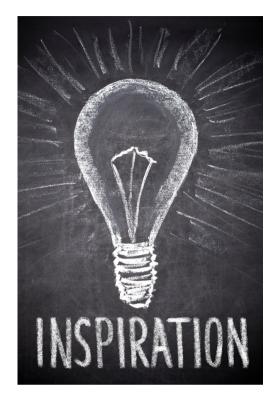




Before entering Friends of the Family programming she was unemployed, homeless, was struggling with substance abuse due to the death of her husband, her child was removed from her care after an OWI and was placed in family care by DHS. After entering the program she obtained employment fulltime, took classes to get her license back, obtained housing, completed steps required by DHS to have unsupervised visits with her child in her home and soon should return home permanently, has completed courtordered counseling/group counseling and now voluntarily continues to attend counseling for support, has paid court debts, and is completing tasks pertaining to her husband's death benefits to financially better her situation.

Success

The IA BoS CoC housing projects provide housing first, client centered services to those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Below are some success stories and videos shared from across the CoC.



The Bridge Home encountered a woman at the library while meeting another participant. She relied on crutches due to having only one leg, shared that she had a blood clot disorder. She hitchhiked from the East Coast and ended up staying in Ames longer than intended. As winter approached, she expressed the increasing difficulty of sustaining her living arrangements in a tent. In a moment of vulnerability, she confided that she had limited time left to live. She had left her home on the East Coast to face her final days alone, sparing her family from witnessing her suffering. We connected her and her boyfriend with Coordinated Entry and engaged them in one of our Supportive Housing scattered-site programs. She assumed a motherly role for families residing near her apartment. Her compassionate nature and ability to empathize with others have played a crucial role in her becoming an influential figure. By genuinely caring for those around her, she has established deep connections and earned the trust and respect of her neighbors. Her willingness to actively engage with the community, particularly with families and children, has also contributed to her influence. By offering support, guidance, and a nurturing presence, she has become a role model and a source of inspiration for others.

A young woman and survivor of domestic violence was pulled into Friends of the Family's (FoF) transitional housing program. At the time, she had fled her abuser and was living on the streets, staying in abandoned buildings. She was struggling with her mental health and addiction, and this had unfortunately led to her newborn daughter being removed from her care by Child Protective Services. She was dealing with untreated physical health problems, like malnutrition and anemia, which often lead to fainting spells. Once an intake was conducted, FoF was able to immediately get her access to safe housing, complete with all the basic furniture and necessities. For the first months in safe housing, she struggled to get out of the cycle of addiction, but now that she had a safe, consistent place to stay, she could begin focusing on recovering. FOF connected her with people in the community who could support her recovery and help her treat mental and physical health concerns. Over the next 6-12 months, she worked hard to accomplish her goals. She gained employment, purchased a home, found a life partner, and had a baby girl. She successfully graduated from FoF's program and is remaining successful, continuing to achieve her personal goals and improve her well-being. She said the safe place the program gave her to stay made it, so she didn't have to remain reliant on people that prevented her from moving forward. Housing was the foundation that she needed to improve her quality of life.



Looking Forward

Point in Time (PIT) Count & Housing Inventory Count (HIC):

The PIT & HIC are counts of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night. Counts are held annually in January and July to bring awareness and attention to homelessness. Organizations and community members can provide local support by volunteering for the count. Volunteer for the January 24, 2024 count in your area. For more information reach out to your local Coordinated Entry Specialist by <u>clicking here</u>.





Board & Task Group Recruitment for 2024: Recruitment is focused on ensuring the representation of the CoC with diversity, skills, and expertise. Board members serve 3-year terms, must live or work in the Balance of State (96 counties across Iowa excluding Polk, Pottawattamie, & Woodbury), and be passionate about the work of preventing and ending homelessness.

Task Group members must commit to attendance at monthly group meetings, participation in group work, and serving as a representative and voting member of the group. To learn more, connect with Courtney Guntly.

Day On The Hill:

Join Day on the Hill to advocate to prevent and end homelessness in Iowa. On January 9, 2024 an Iowa Homeless Coalition is hosting Day on the Hill from 7:30-11:30 am at the Iowa State Capitol. Save the date now and sign up for the CoC mailing list for further details. To be added to our mailing list, please <u>click here</u> and complete the survey and be sure to select the Monthly Update.





Equity & Diversity-Focused Training:

The Equity & Diversity Task Group is proud to partner with Iman Consulting to provide a 6-part Diversity & Inclusion series provided to CoC grantees and Coordinated Entry access points at no cost. Training sessions will be held virtually from November 2023 through mid 2024.

Looking Forward



2024 Annual Meeting: Join the CoC for the Annual Meeting. To stay updated on the Annual Meeting, <u>click here</u> and be sure to select the Monthly Update.

Equitable Intake- Coordinated Entry Process: The CoC will be reviewing and revising the current assessment process for Coordinated Entry.

2024 CoC Grant Competition Process: The CoC will be releasing new training materials for providers interested in the requirements needed to acquire CoC funding. To stay updated on the annual CoC Grant Competition process, click here and select the Local CoC Grant Competition Process.



Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Special Notice of Funding

Opportunity (NOFO): HUD will be releasing a special NOFO focused on PSH development. HUD has received \$75 million from Congress to provide capital costs which include acquisition, rehabilitation, and new construction of units for PSH. To stay updated on the special NOFO, <u>click here</u> and ensure to select the Monthly Update.

ENGAGEMENT IMMERSE INVOLVE INTERACT

Youth Action Board (YAB) & Lived Experience Board:

The CoC plans to continue work focused on engaging with people with lived experience by expanding the YAB and creating a Lived Experience Board. If you know of any youth age 14-24 interested in participating in YAB, please connect with Rachel Falahpour. If you know of any people with lived experience interested in helping create a Lived Experience Board, please connect with Courtney Guntly. The CoC provides compensation for people with lived experience in their work with the CoC.

Stay updated with the CoC by joining the mailing list:

The CoC has exciting things happening to stay aware of all the upcoming opportunities, events, training, and more, join our mailing list. To be added to our mailing list, please <u>click here</u> and complete the survey.



Connect with the IA BoS CoC







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