



## CHICAGO STRATEGY MEMO

Through a generous grant from the Polk Bros. Foundation, All Chicago engaged CSH to perform a SWOT analysis and identify strategies to strengthen All Chicago's ability to support implementation of Plan 2.0. During this process, CSH conducted 24 stakeholder interviews, electronically surveyed 8 additional stakeholders, and hosted two in-person community discussions. The resulting analysis synthesizes the common themes and reflects the general consensus of the stakeholder community as well as CSH's recommended next steps.

### **Community Defined Strategies to Strengthen Implementation of Plan 2.0**

#### **Overview**

Throughout the community discussions, there was a general acknowledgment that the key to success of the Ending Veteran Homelessness Initiative (EVHI) was the shift of all activities and efforts toward permanent housing placements. Political leaders, funders, providers, and advocates galvanized around a process improvement effort that readily identifies homeless veterans, connects them to a permanent housing resource, and rapidly navigates them to move-in and long-term stability through service connections. Very practically, having high level leadership (system-level power brokers) from various sectors at the table meant as implementation needs were presented in real-time and with the use of data, leadership was able to immediately react to align resources and activities. Among many examples that stand out are:

- The EVHI Leadership team recognized early on the need for more permanent housing options beyond what was available through the Veteran specific programs HUD-VASH and SSVF. With Chicago Housing Authority and DFSS at the leadership table they were able take this case to the CHA Board of Directors and DFSS Commissioner to set aside an additional 450 units of housing and increase rapid rehousing funding.
- The EVHI Leadership team with direct connection to the Mayor's Office was able to activate the Mayor's political will and overcome one of the biggest implementation challenges, finding available housing units. The Mayor sent a letter to every landlord in the city asking them to help identify units for Veterans. This resulted in a data base of available housing units and a complimentary \$100,000 Emergency Fund for Veterans and Landlords to cover damage, pay utility arrears, cover move-in costs and ultimately accelerate housing placement rates.

These examples exemplify the rapid success that can be achieved with effective governance and implementation infrastructures that are focused on permanent housing placements. It was repeatedly noted that the broader homeless response system lacks that same focus and commitment for other subpopulations

and instead tends to fixate on funding competitions, representation, and advocacy. While each of these activities were identified as important, in isolation they lack the ability to achieve the collective goal of ending homelessness. With this in mind, the community discussions yielded the following strategies to harness the community's strengths and organize them in a way to mitigate weaknesses and capitalize on opportunities, particularly those that will produce more access to permanent housing options and mimic the activities of the Ending Veteran Homelessness Initiative at a scale necessary to successfully implement Plan 2.0.

## **1. Organize as an implementation infrastructure to amplify action and execution of Plan 2.0**

- a. Organizing around and leveraging collective impact initiatives (like the EVHI and the Youth Collaborative) enables the CoC and City to develop an implementation infrastructure that supports collective alignment, action oriented decision-making, and mutually reinforcing activities aimed at achieving common goals. It creates appropriate mechanisms to engage all levels of stakeholders in targeted decision-making and moves the system from theoretical discussions to practical experimentation and coalescence of practice. Making such an intentional shift in orientation and infrastructure will prevent implementation from being fragmented (occurring outside the collective efforts of the CoC and City) and ultimately ensure all activities will have a direct and collective impact on ending homelessness.
- b. CSH Recommended Next Steps
  - i. All Chicago, in partnership with DFSS and the CoC, should lead a process to produce an implementation organization chart that details how existing and new work groups form an integrated network of activities that work to accelerate and amplify implementation of Plan 2.0 and short-term crisis response efforts. The organization chart should be presented to the community for comment and consultation and ultimately the CoC Board for adoption. This document should be used to understand how existing and new groups contribute to implementation activities, policy-making and funding alignment and to define and enhance communication and connectedness in support of permanent housing placements and Plan 2.0.
  - ii. All Chicago, in consultation with high level system brokers, should identify and assign project leads based on expertise and skills while also identifying any capacity gaps. These leads should be All Chicago staff and individuals from other organizations that can function as dedicated implementers.
  - iii. All Chicago, on behalf of the CoC, should prepare a proposal to fill the project management capacity gaps either permanently or temporarily and share with funders and the CoC Board.
  - iv. Funders and the CoC Board should determine how to fill those project management capacity gaps and execute to fully realize the new implementation structure.

## **2. Empower All Chicago to be the backbone organization for implementation of Plan 2.0**

- a. At the heart of a solid implementation infrastructure is a dedicated staff of project managers and technical experts leading each line of implementation activities, driving action and

experimentation among providers on the ground, synthesizing various activities to create policy, delivering new policy to the governing body for approval, and supporting the alignment of activities and resources to achieve collective impact goals. Central to this work is the use of data to drive implementation activities. Through this backbone role, the agency is ultimately responsible for packaging and delivering data to compel action and maintain focus on the critical measures of collective success. Finally, the backbone of implementation rests in holding and communicating the vision for all stakeholders and creating a culture of transformative learning, evaluation, and adaptive programming. It is more than completing tasks as assigned by any single governing body or performing CoC mandated activities as the collaborative applicant. It must be an empowered entity responsible for and leading an intentional change process that is supported by a balanced governance and implementation infrastructure. All Chicago, in partnership with DFSS, already fulfills the duties of the collaborative applicant and is therefore well positioned to enhance its role and become the backbone organization driving a collective impact initiative. To meet these new expectations, All Chicago, DFSS, the CoC, and its partners will need to utilize a strengths-based approach and work in tandem to create an infrastructure that maximizes capacity and works to reinforce the goals of collective impact and implementation of Plan 2.0.

b. CSH Recommended Next Steps

- i. The CoC Board, City, and Funders should affirm that All Chicago is the lead agency and clearly define its role, in partnership with DFSS, as the backbone for the collective impact initiative to end homelessness.
- ii. All Chicago and the CoC should amend the current lead agency MOU annually to clearly articulate this expanded role and proposed annual activities.
- iii. All Chicago, in partnership with DFSS, should re-examine and maximize its staffing capacity to lead and drive the implementation process. This would include identifying which capacities could be met in house and which would be best supported by infused expertise from within the broader homeless response system and technical assistance provider community. Leading implementation would include project management; change management; data collection and analysis; regulatory and compliance support; subject-matter expertise; procurement, contracting, and fiscal management; and communications. Decisions to outsource or expand capacity should be made relative to the strengths of the lead entities and implementation needs at that time and evolve as the needs shift. Such analysis should be completed as part of the capacity gaps proposal referenced above and all project management should be overseen and guided by All Chicago/DFSS.
- iv. All Chicago, in partnership with DFSS, should develop a one year action plan and individual work plans for all lines of activities and train and coach project leads on driving phased implementation within a collective impact model.
- v. All Chicago and DFSS should begin leading/co-leading implementation activities which includes maintaining phased implementation work plans and actively facilitating the change process.
- vi. All Chicago should expand its data analytics and dashboard capacity to articulate progress and impact effectively and in real-time whenever possible.

- vii. All Chicago should develop formal and informal communication strategies to ensure all stakeholders have regular access to progress updates, are participating in a culture of learning and adaptive programming and continue to understand and inform the system vision in light of implementation challenges. This will require joint leadership from All Chicago, CoC Board, City Leadership, and Funders.

### **3. Use the CoC Governing Board to approve policies and align resources and activities in support of implementation.**

- a. A critical compliment to an implementation infrastructure is a governing board that positions system-level power brokers to approve functional shifts in policy and practice and then alignment of their resources and activities accordingly. Such ease of alignment and decision-making positions leaders to be nimble and responsive to implementation needs, provides the cover to take risks and experiment in real-time, and allows for more predictable operational funding for the homeless rehousing system. Appropriate checks and balances are essential to good governance, and as such, no board should be devoid of critical voices and perspectives but the governing board is where policy is approved and not created. Thus those voices should only serve to meet that balance. The concentration of those voices should be activated within the implementation infrastructure to inform the creation of policy and practice in real time.
- b. CSH Recommended Next Steps:
  - i. CoC Board should move and possibly reshape all Board committees within the implementation infrastructure and formally acknowledge the implementation oversight groups responsible for providing leadership, monitoring progress, and barrier busting for each collective impact initiative. This may also include modifying the LEC to ensure its members and voice are present throughout the entire implementation infrastructure rather than concentrated on the governing body.
  - ii. CoC Board should reexamine Board membership to seat system-level power brokers that will transition the Board to function as the primary table for the alignment of all homeless response and rehousing activities regardless of funding source. These power brokers will be essential to overcoming significant implementation barriers, creating shared accountability and success across all funders and associated sectors, and bringing additional resources to bear in response to data-driven progress and needs. This board will reinforce the work of the implementation infrastructure under a collective impact model and engage in implementation workgroups as a participant whenever appropriate.
  - iii. CoC Board and All Chicago should reexamine meeting agendas to include the approval of policy created within the implementation infrastructure, examination of system-wide performance data, and general monitoring and funding decisions to support the creation of a healthy and functional system. In addition, this body will tackle complex implementation obstacles and use the power of their positions to overcome policy and funding barriers identified within the implementation work groups.

### **4. Amplify Political Will to Align Leadership, Set Concrete Targets, and Expand Housing Inventory**

- a. The Mayor has made a clear commitment to end homelessness among veterans, signaled a desire to reduce the unsheltered homeless population, and empowered Commissioner Morrison Butler to lead the alignment of city activities and investments to achieve these goals through an effective interagency task force. A more robust and functional community governance and implementation infrastructure would offer a platform to complement and amplify this political will to achieve greater impact, broader alignment among public and private partners, and further define concrete targets and priorities particularly related to the expansion of permanent housing options.
- b. CSH Recommended Next Steps
  - i. The City should activate the Mayor and Task Force to create a committee dedicated to identifying, funding and managing the expansion of permanent housing and housing stabilization options to end homelessness. This includes understanding the scale necessary to realize the desired collective impact and using political will to bring a wide array of strategies and players to the table to achieve that scale. This likely includes leaders from the City's Interagency Task Force, Chicago Housing Authority, Healthcare and Criminal Justice Sectors Developers, Property Owners/Managers, Municipal Planning Districts, and other elected officials.
  - ii. All Chicago, the CoC Board, the City and Funders should unite to set concrete targets and milestones and deliver to the Mayor along with regular progress reports. This should be coupled with a broader marketing campaign to help rally support for and message the collective impact initiative in response to a public health crisis, its success and challenges as well as humanize the issue with the help of the LEC.
  - iii. The City should align planning, management, and distribution of new and existing revenue streams to permanent housing expansion strategies and other implementation activities to catalyze or accelerate collective impact results of Plan 2.0.