



## Frequently Asked Questions: ICH Governance and Operations

### **Q: What is the District of Columbia Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH)?**

A: The Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) was established by the Homeless Services Reform Act (HSRA) of 2005 for the purpose of facilitating interagency, cabinet-level coordination with regard to planning, policymaking, program development, system performance monitoring, and budget coordination for the Continuum of Care (CoC) of homeless services. Per the HSRA, the ICH also serves as DC's Continuum of Care Governance Board for the purposes of the federal Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act.

### **Q: Who makes up the ICH?**

A: Under the HSRA (D.C. Official Code §4-752.01), the Council is comprised of:

- The City Administrator
- The Director to End Homelessness (also referred to as the ICH Director)
- The Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services
- The administrative head of the following entities:
  - Child and Family Services Agency
  - Department of Behavioral Health
  - Department of Corrections
  - Department of Employment Services
  - Department of Health
  - Department of Housing and Community Development
  - Department of Human Services
  - Department of General Services
  - District of Columbia Housing Authority
  - Homeless Security and Emergency Management Agency
  - Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Affairs
  - Office of the State Superintendent of Education
  - Metropolitan Police Department
- A representative of the agency designated as the District's "Collaborative Applicant" for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's CoC Program.
- One representative from a minimum of seven and a maximum of eight organizations that provide services within the CoC.
- A minimum of three and maximum of four persons with lived experience.
- One representative from a minimum of three and maximum of four advocacy organizations.

- One representative from a minimum of three and maximum of four business, philanthropic, or other private sector organizations that have resources or expertise to contribute to addressing homelessness in the District.

Additionally, the Chairperson of the DC Council, the Chairperson of the Committee of the DC Council that has purview over homeless services, and the administrative head of the Office of Shelter Monitoring are non-voting members of the ICH.

**Q: How are non-government members selected for the ICH?**

A: In accordance with Mayor’s Order 2014 – 258, each year, the ICH Executive Committee will issue a call for interest to fill vacant/expiring seats. Non-conflicted members of the Executive committee (i.e., those who are not applying for re-appointment) will review the applications to develop a slate of candidates for the Mayor. When developing the slate of candidates, preference will be given to individuals that:

- 1) Help satisfy the Federal CoC Board composition requirements at 24 C.F.R. § 578.5(a);
- 2) Bring valuable experience, expertise, and insight to the ICH;
- 3) Have proven their interest, commitment, and effectiveness in helping the ICH fulfill its purposes (candidates should have a track record of actively supporting standing committee and work group chairs in the planning and execution of meetings, work plans, and deliverables); and
- 4) Comply with the ICH Code of Conduct.

The Mayor will then select candidates from this slate. After selection by the Mayor, candidates must complete paperwork for the Mayor’s Office of Talent and Appointments (MOTA), be confirmed by the DC Council, be sworn in by the Mayor, and attend an ICH orientation session,

**Q: How is the work of the ICH accomplished?**

A: The ICH is staffed by the Director to End Homelessness and two Policy Advisors, but relies on the active participation of its member agencies/appointees and other stakeholders to advance implementation of the District’s two strategic plans, *Homeward DC* and *Solid Foundations DC*.

The ICH operates a number of committees and work groups to support interagency coordination and implementation of the *Homeward DC* and *Solid Foundations DC* plans. Per the ICH Bylaws,<sup>1</sup> the ICH has five standing committees: Executive, Strategic Planning, Emergency Response and Shelter Operations, Housing Solutions, and Youth. Each year, ICH staff work with committee co-chairs to identify objectives/priorities for the year and, accordingly, any work groups that may need to support fulfillment of those objectives.

**Q: What decision-making authority does the ICH have?**

A: Under the HSRA (D.C. Official Code §4-752.01), the ICH is assigned a number of powers and duties:

- Coordinate an annual, community-wide needs-assessment and planning process to identify, prioritize, and target needs for services within the Continuum of Care.

---

<sup>1</sup> The ICH Bylaws can be found on the ICH website at <https://ich.dc.gov/publication/ich-bylaws>.

- Every two years, evaluate the service needs of the District's LGBTQ homeless youth as compared to homeless youth in the general population.
- Every five years, prepare and publish a strategic plan for services within the CoC that takes into account existing data and community input.
- Prepare and submit to the Mayor an annual update detailing the resources and strategies needed to support implementation of the strategic plan.
- Direct the Department of General Services to identify vacant public buildings or tax-foreclosed buildings to be used as shelter and transitional housing or permanent housing program facilities.
- Provide input into the District's planning and application for federal funds for housing and services within the CoC.
- Regularly review HMIS data to assess program and system utilization and performance.
- By September of each year, develop a plan, consistent with the right of clients to shelter in severe weather conditions.
- Review reports of the fair hearings and administrative reviews requested or received by clients within the CoC.

It is on these requirements that ICH shall be asked to make a decision (e.g., approval/adoption of a final product). Beyond these responsibilities, the ICH also serves as a forum for member agencies and stakeholders to raise concerns, solicit feedback, and share updates with the goal of improving alignment of policy, programming, and investments.

**Q: How are decisions made?**

The ICH Bylaws outline how decisions are made (i.e., who may vote, what constitutes quorum, and procedures for voting). The work of the Strategic Planning, ERSO, Housing Solutions, and Youth committees is advisory. Any committee plan, report, or recommendation must be presented to and approved by the ICH Executive Committee or full Council, as outlined in the bylaws.

**Q: Who can attend meetings of the ICH?**

A: The quarterly full Council meetings and standing committee meetings (Executive, Strategic Planning, ERSO, Housing Solutions, and Youth) are open to the public per the HSRA and the District's Open Meetings Act. Anyone is welcome to attend and observe. Work group meetings are deliberative; participation in work group meetings is managed by the work group co-chairs and is determined based on the experience/expertise needed to complete the work assigned to the group and return recommendations back to the committee level.

**Q: What if I want to discuss something during a meeting this is not on the agenda?**

A: Committee co-chairs will send out draft agendas in advance of each meeting, soliciting any additional agenda items from stakeholders. Committee co-chairs will also open each meeting by reviewing the agenda and asking stakeholders present if there is anything they would like to add. Because committees have a defined purview and specific work they are trying to move forward, co-chairs will determine if the issue is relevant to their committee

or should be referred to a different committee. If the issue is relevant to the work of the committee, depending on the urgency of the issue and number of agenda items for the month, co-chairs have the discretion to add it to the current month's agenda or defer it to a future month.

**Q: Are meeting minutes available?**

**A:** In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, meeting minutes for the quarterly full Council meetings and all standing committee meetings are posted on the ICH website at <https://ich.dc.gov/events>. (Using the search box on the left hand side of the page, navigate to the meeting for which you want to retrieve notes; click on the meeting title, and you will see notes and handouts from the meeting.) Note, work group meetings are deliberative, and notes from the meetings are not shared publicly. Final work products will be captured in committee meeting minutes once a work group returns recommendation to the committee level.