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Silos to Systems: Solutions for Vulnerable Families

Summary Report prepared by Building Changes,
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**BILL & MELINDA
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The “Silos to Systems: Solutions for Vulnerable Families Summary Report” was developed by Building Changes, Seattle, WA. Building Changes is a non-profit organization that works with government entities, private philanthropy and community-based service providers to ensure that housing and vital public services are available to people experiencing homelessness in Washington State. Building Changes fosters collaborative partnerships and harnesses innovative, evidence-based strategies to collectively address barriers to housing stability and reduce homelessness.

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Silos To Systems: Solutions for Vulnerable Families

Call to Action: Why Now? Why Us?

It is time to fundamentally transform how we work with vulnerable children and families (see Appendix 1). The challenges that they face are complex and multifaceted. No single system has the resources, expertise, capacity, or responsibility for coming up with solutions on its own. To offer every child stability, safety, and an opportunity to thrive, we must effectively meet the housing needs of their families and use housing as a platform for families to connect with the supports they need to pursue opportunity. These goals demand that all levels of government, philanthropy, public systems, and private organizations serving children and parents work together. We must develop increasingly integrated solutions that reach the most vulnerable families when they are at risk, in crisis, and as they move toward stability.

Session Overview

In October 2011, a remarkable group of about 80 leaders from government, philanthropy, and the private sector gathered in Seattle, Washington, to spur creative thinking and develop a shared approach to timely policy and systems changes to address the needs of our nation's most vulnerable families. The Silos to Systems meeting in Seattle was sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Building Changes, Casey Family Programs, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the Corporation for Supportive Housing, the National Alliance to End Homelessness, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. It brought together researchers, policy experts, government and philanthropic leaders, and innovative practitioners—informed by some of the best thinking and promising practices in the field and in research about what works—to focus on three related goals:

- Improve skills, employment opportunities, and incomes for families living in poverty;
- Support the well-being of families that come to the attention of the child welfare system because children's basic needs are not being met; and
- Prevent and end family homelessness.

Even in the best of times, the systems and programs that address these goals lack a common language and shared approach to meet the needs of the families they seek to serve. Instead, separate systems use widely divergent funding mechanisms, goals, metrics, and incentives, as well as data systems that don't talk to each other or provide a complete picture of the families or their communities. Separate programs compete with one another for funding instead of determining how to integrate and leverage resources for a more holistic response to families. The result is underperforming, fragmented systems that are not in tune with the lives of the people they intend to serve and are outstripped by the scale of human suffering.

At a time when growing numbers of families with children are living in deep poverty and facing severe hardships—including housing instability and homelessness—and while public funding is being reduced for many programs that offer work supports and a safety net for needy families, we simply must promote a more coordinated and integrated response that helps achieve better outcomes. The meeting participants, and many others whose work informed the background papers prepared for this meeting, recognize the urgent need to overcome fragmentation and build momentum for realistic strategies that work across sectors, disciplines, programs, and funding streams to provide solutions and expand opportunities for vulnerable families. A cornerstone of this work is the recognition that **a stable home is the foundation all families need to provide children with the opportunity to become healthy, productive adults.** Housing provides a platform for families to access the American dream of upward mobility.

The meeting provided an opportunity for people who play different types of leadership roles in separate systems and organizations to establish or strengthen existing connections with influential leaders from other sectors and organizations, and to share ideas, expertise, evidence, and promising approaches. **The outcome is not a single coordinated campaign—but rather a set of actions, investments, and program and policy initiatives that are better aligned and informed by a shared understanding of the challenges and a shared vision of an improved system. In the weeks since the event, participants have begun following through with deeper explorations of these ideas. Plans and partnerships have been established for actions that are informed by knowledge, goals, and strategies developed at the meeting (see Appendix II).**

The purpose of this summary report is to share some of the highlights and themes that emerged from the meeting, focusing on a few ideas and opportunities for aligned or coordinated efforts. It is not meant to provide a comprehensive summary of a full day of presentations and discussions. We hope that this will reinforce and renew commitments and connections among those who participated in the meeting, while also providing information that can inform and engage other potential allies whose participation and support can help align and strengthen the systems and offer real solutions to the challenges facing vulnerable families today.



Themes and Highlights: The Need for Cross-Systems Collaboration

The need for cross-systems collaboration was a recurring theme in presentations and discussions throughout the day. Some of the highlights that emerged are summarized here.

Spotlight on the most vulnerable families offers a focus for collaboration. Faced with the understanding that the most vulnerable families living in deep poverty often have overlapping needs that cannot be solved within the narrow boundaries of separate systems and programs, there is a high level of commitment for thinking and working differently among visionary leaders in federal, state and local government, philanthropy, the non-profit sector, and policy and advocacy organizations. They recognize that too often, separate systems encounter the same families, but each system fails to prioritize and tailor assistance for families with the most complex needs and help them navigate and restore hope for themselves and their children. These systems rarely work together to coordinate assistance for families, resulting in a piecemeal approach that inadequately addresses needs and fails to produce the best outcomes across multiple domains. For instance, vulnerable families often have multiple caseworkers who offer inconsistent advice or competing demands. Families who are living in deep poverty and facing significant hardships are offered services and programs when they are looking for income or help with basic survival needs, including housing assistance. Cross-system partnerships need to be expanded and strengthened to overcome fragmentation and align funding and data requirements in order to streamline and integrate help for families with the most complex needs. Program initiatives that work to integrate services for vulnerable families must have an explicit focus on reaching families experiencing housing instability and homelessness.

Focus on the connections between homelessness and child welfare and invest in more effective collaborative responses. There is significant overlap between families involved in the child welfare system and those that experience homelessness and housing crises. Compared to other families, the children in families that experience homelessness are much more likely to enter foster care or receive other child welfare services. Many of the children in foster care have parents experiencing housing crises, and many of the families that have repeated contact with the child welfare system because of allegations of child neglect also experience housing instability or homelessness as well as other material hardships.

- **Differential response:** In many communities, efforts are underway to modify the child welfare system's response to the needs of vulnerable children and families. As an alternative to opening formal investigations, which often focus on determining whether to remove children from their families and place them in foster care, child welfare systems are beginning to adopt a less adversarial "differential response" to concerns about child well-being. Differential response begins with an assessment of family needs and risks. If a family is found to need services, but removal of the children is not warranted by the level of risk, assistance is provided to the family to improve the children's well-being and safety. For vulnerable families experiencing a housing crisis, this can mean tailoring and combining housing and service supports based on levels of need and risk.

- **Short-term housing assistance for rapid re-housing:** Many communities have implemented promising new program models that provide time-limited financial assistance combined with case management services to move families into their own housing quickly after a crisis has propelled them into homelessness, and connect them with the community supports they need to maintain stability. Rapid re-housing programs offer families an alternative to long stays in shelters or transitional housing programs. Such assistance might be an essential component of family stabilization services for some that experience housing crises.
- **Permanent housing with wraparound services.** The characteristics of families in which children experience “chronic neglect” and repeated involvement in the child welfare system appear to be very similar to the characteristics of families that experience repeated episodes of homelessness, and often include challenges such as extreme poverty, victimization and trauma, and mental health and/or substance use problems. More intensive interventions that combine permanent affordable housing and intensive case management and other supports—including Permanent Supportive Housing or models such as Critical Time Intervention—may be needed for these families.¹

Despite evidence of this overlap, the child welfare and family homelessness systems have separate funding mechanisms and program models, and currently these systems often do not collaborate effectively to strengthen, stabilize, and prioritize the most vulnerable, troubled families (*see* Appendix III).

There should be further exploration of opportunities to replicate the Keeping Families Together pilot program, which has provided permanent supportive housing in New York City that prioritizes homeless families at highest risk for separation. There may be opportunities for states to use funding available through Promoting Safe and Stable Families, a federal program administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families to replicate and expand this promising model.

We cannot wait for Congress to act. Administrative flexibility offers untapped opportunity to improve incomes and employment opportunities for vulnerable families by investing in the most effective strategies. There is widespread recognition of the need to invest in putting Americans back to work and boosting earnings for parents in families with the lowest incomes, but at the moment, there is little political will to support increased government spending. Congress has been unwilling to enact needed reforms in welfare-to-work or workforce development programs. In the current political and fiscal environment, solutions cannot

¹ Both Permanent Supportive Housing and Critical Time Intervention have been recognized as evidence-based practices that were initially developed for homeless persons with mental illness and have been adapted to serve homeless families with special needs. Permanent Supportive Housing is affordable, permanent housing linked to flexible support services that focus on helping people maintain housing stability. Services often address family needs and personal goals related to health and recovery, and may include services to meet the needs of children and youth. Critical Time Intervention is a structured, time-limited case management model designed to prevent homelessness or other adverse outcomes during the time period when people are transitioning into housing from shelters or other institutional settings. The model facilitates and strengthens ties to resources for ongoing community support while also providing emotional and practical support during transitions. For more information about the CTI model, see <http://www.criticaltime.org/model-detail/>



depend on significant funding increases or changes in federal law. Instead, leaders in both the public and private sectors have to find new ways to use existing resources and programs and maximize the flexibility to change programs or reallocate resources within the limits of current federal law. At the same time, they must continue to advocate for changes that will make these programs more responsive to the needs of vulnerable families in today's economy and lobby for investments that correspond to the level of need among families living in poverty.

Faced with these facts, in the short term, states and local governments and public-private partnerships, such as Workforce Investment Boards, will have to look for opportunities to use the flexibility available under current rules. Current laws and administrative structures may provide the wrong incentives or create obstacles that make it difficult to coordinate or integrate investments across sectors and funding streams or to implement new program models. Often, however, these incentives or rules are not outright prohibitions against local decision-making to use federal funding to provide more effective housing and services interventions for the most vulnerable families (*see Appendix IV*).

Welfare-to-work programs have often used “Work First” approaches that have not succeeded in raising family incomes significantly, even in times of low unemployment. A range of approaches is more effective in boosting incomes for vulnerable families in today's economy. These tools include:

- **Transitional jobs, training, and post-secondary education strategies** that incorporate sector partnerships and career pathways.
- **Employment navigators** who can facilitate linkages among housing, workforce development, and training systems.
- **Vocationalizing programs that prevent and end family homelessness** by integrating a stronger focus on income and employment goals and needs as part of regional planning and when working with families to identify goals and to deliver services and supports in conjunction with housing assistance.

These program models use integrated strategies that combine work and supports, offer opportunities to combine earning and learning, and integrate training for basic skills and the technical skills needed for jobs. Programs that achieve better outcomes for people with significant barriers, and that are likely to be most effective when aligned with housing assistance for vulnerable families, offer flexibility and wraparound supports. They come with additional support during transitions and provide opportunities for people to try again after being unsuccessful with a job or training or after a break in participation due to personal or family challenges.

There is significant overlap between families living in deep poverty—particularly families headed by single parents who have multiple barriers to employment, including those that are struggling to complete post-secondary education or job-training programs—and families that experience housing crises that can lead to residential instability or homelessness. New “rapid re-housing” models that offer time-limited rental assistance can help many families exit homelessness

and quickly return to their own housing, but many of these families will face repeated crises if they are unable to increase their incomes. Some of the most promising strategies for these families include transitional jobs and other forms of subsidized employment in programs that combine opportunities for work and increased income with training and supports to ensure housing stability while helping overcome barriers to success. These programs—based on the premise that many workers seeking to increase their skills and incomes face multiple challenges that make completion of necessary education and training programs difficult—should be more widely available to parents in families that have experienced housing crises, including families leaving homelessness with time-limited assistance through rapid re-housing programs.

Workforce development and homeless assistance programs should partner to hire and co-locate employment and education navigators who can help families connect to and successfully participate in programs to boost their incomes while they receive housing assistance and support to address personal and family challenges. Navigators not only provide direct assistance and coaching to vulnerable families, but they can also help facilitate cross-training for workers in separate systems to better align their efforts to achieve shared goals for families.

Data and evidence support lasting solutions. Better and more integrated data should be used to inform and improve coordination across systems to serve vulnerable families more effectively and “mainstream” responses to family homelessness. People with very different roles as policymakers, administrators, advocates, and practitioners in separate sectors or disciplines share some of the same goals, including a passion for using research and evidence to drive policy and practice reforms and to focus efforts on integrated solutions. For vulnerable families, the outcomes that matter most are safety and stability, and the opportunity for children to thrive. Data and evidence are critical—particularly when policymakers and philanthropists face competing demands for attention to a wide range of needs and priorities. When experts agree and can provide evidence about what works, data about outcomes can help make the case for targeting investments, using resources differently, and guiding changes in practice to achieve better results that can put an end to inter-generational cycles of poverty and instability. Philanthropy can play a critical role by investing in innovation and the research that informs public policy by demonstrating savings and better outcomes.

To better understand the connections between housing crises and the goals and outcomes of mainstream systems that serve low-income parents and children, consistent approaches are needed to identify housing status (including multiple indicators of homelessness or instability) across programs and systems. Information about housing instability and homelessness should be used to focus attention and trigger more appropriate, coordinated, and tailored responses to the most vulnerable families in child welfare, welfare-to-work, workforce development, post-secondary education, and other systems that provide benefits or work supports.



Additional Topics and Ideas

Participants identified additional and related opportunities for coordinated efforts that could lead to meaningful change for vulnerable families. A few of these are listed here:

- When using housing vouchers provided to local public housing authorities through the Family Unification Program, focus on serving families that have multiple episodes of homelessness and/or homeless, pregnant or parenting youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice system. Link these vouchers to funding commitments for supportive services.
- Develop a messaging and communication strategy to make the case for housing interventions to solve some of the challenges facing the child welfare and welfare-to-work systems.
- Develop a common language and a way to measure, publicly report, and hold multiple systems jointly accountable for achieving better outcomes for families and youth.
- Provide support from the federal government and/or foundations to invest in innovation, and link new funding to requirements to commit matching funds, provide flexibility in using current categorical resources, and include evaluation to document and support replication of promising approaches.
- Use housing as a platform for employment by delivering employment services and wraparound supports on-site or linked to subsidized housing. Use preferences that prioritize vulnerable families for housing and employment services.
- Explore new opportunities to link people to training and employment opportunities connected to the implementation of health care reform, including jobs as health coaches or as peer members of health teams serving vulnerable families and trainings connected to career ladders in health professions.

Next Steps

In the months and years ahead, policymakers, community leaders, and their partners in the public and private sectors have the opportunity to provide transformational leadership to support more effective responses to the needs and hopes of our nation's most vulnerable families. This work can be informed by the research, analysis, and policy recommendations that were summarized in the background papers prepared for the Silos to Systems convening, and advanced by the cross-system conversations and connections that were launched at the meeting. The organizations that sponsored the Silos to Systems meeting are inspired by the commitment, vision, and expertise offered by the people who participated in the meeting and the public and private agencies and organizations that they represent. The progress of some of these efforts since the convening is encouraging. In the coming months, these discussions and collaborative efforts will be continuing at the national and regional levels. These cross-system discussions can also be replicated in other local communities among leaders

who are committed to developing more integrated solutions informed by evidence about what works. Many of these efforts will be led by national organizations and networks that participated in our discussions in Seattle and helped to inform the analysis and recommendations that provide a roadmap for policy and systems change (see Appendix V). We can and will partner to offer more effective responses to the needs and hopes of our nation's most vulnerable children and families.

Background Research and Policy Papers

Two background papers were prepared for this meeting and distributed to participants. The papers, which summarize the key findings from research about needs, solutions, and opportunities for policy reform and systems change, are now available on the web:

- *Preserving and Strengthening Families and Children Experiencing Recurring Child Welfare System Encounters and Housing Crises* was prepared by the Corporation for Supportive Housing and is available at [CSH](#).
- *Connecting Vulnerable Families to Work and Incomes to Prevent and End Homelessness* was prepared by Building Changes and is available at [Building Changes](#).

Appendix I:

Definition of Vulnerable Families

We use the term **vulnerable families** to refer to families that experience homelessness or are at risk of homelessness because they have extremely low incomes, with family earnings less than 30 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI), or below the federal poverty level (FPL), and because they also spend more than half of their income on housing costs or do not have stable housing. This includes many families who experience significant housing hardships, such as being “on the brink” of losing housing, experiencing frequent and involuntary moves, or being “doubled-up.” Some, but not all, of these families may be defined as “homeless” for purposes of eligibility for some federal programs. Examples of vulnerable families include:

- Families that experience “literal” homelessness, meaning they are staying in emergency shelter or transitional housing programs for homeless families, or living in places not meant for human habitation (outdoors, in cars, abandoned buildings, etc.).
- Families that are doubled-up temporarily or living in hotels/motels because they lack housing of their own.
- Families fleeing domestic violence and lacking the resources needed to secure other housing.
- Families that have recently experienced an episode of homelessness and are currently living in housing with time-limited rental assistance.
- Families living in or near poverty (particularly families living in deep poverty with incomes below 50 percent of FPL) who do not have stable housing and who have experienced high rates of mobility, often due to involuntary moves.
- Families at risk of (“on the brink of”) homelessness because they have received an eviction notice, or because they are leaving a residential treatment program, hospital, or jail and lack the resources needed to secure other housing.
- Extremely low-income families (with incomes below 30 percent of AMI) that have “worst-case housing needs” because they pay more than half their income for rent or live in severely substandard housing.
- All kinds of families that include at least one adult and at least one child, including single parents, two-parent families, and families in which the adult is a grandparent, other extended family member, partner or caregiver, or a teen parent living independently.

Appendix II: Creating Stable Futures for Vulnerable Families

In January 2012, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) convened direct service providers, state and federal program administrators, advocates, and policy-makers from around the country to consider programmatic and policy options for creating stable futures for vulnerable families. These leaders and experts focused on the needs of families that experience multiple personal and family challenges that impact their ability to find and sustain employment and to succeed in traditional employment and education programs.

With the right guidance and supports, some vulnerable parents will be able to support their families through paid employment, but others may need access to basic income support for the long-term. Therefore, creating stable futures for vulnerable families means providing alternative pathways to work and ensuring that a safety net is available when work is not possible—either because no jobs are available or because a person’s circumstances are such that work is not a realistic option.

CBPP staff will use the ideas generated at the conference, along with other relevant information, to write a public paper that lays out a set of guiding principles and recommendations for policy and/or programmatic changes that will help improve the long-term outcomes for vulnerable families.

Appendix III:

Improving the Child Welfare System Response to the Most Vulnerable Families that are Homeless and at Risk of Homelessness

Currently, the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) is working with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to begin to replicate the Keeping Families Together model in sites across the country. With very few resources, jurisdictions are assembling public-private working groups to identify existing resources that can be used to integrate affordable housing and support for families affected by both homelessness and child neglect. Exploration and planning has begun in New Jersey, Minnesota, Arizona, Michigan, and Colorado.

In **New Jersey**, CSH has convened a number of stakeholders representing the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, housing, child welfare, and addiction and mental health services to develop 10 to 20 new units of supportive housing for families that are unstably housed and have recurring involvement in the child welfare system and substance abuse issues. The New Jersey Department of Children and Families has worked closely with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to redirect existing resources to this very small pilot.

In **Minnesota**, CSH is working with the child welfare agency and human services in Hennepin County, Heading Home Minnesota, the Family Supportive Housing Provider Group, the Children's Defense Fund, and other private and public stakeholders to develop a plan to replicate Keeping Families Together using existing supportive housing and/or Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers.

In **Arizona**, CSH has convened stakeholders including the Valley of the Sun United Way, Casey Family Programs, Virginia Piper Charitable Trust, the Arizona Departments of Housing and Economic Security, the City of Mesa and City of Phoenix, and providers of housing and services to homeless families to plan for a 25-to-30-unit Keeping Families Together pilot replication in the Maricopa County region.

The goal of Keeping Families Together replication is to collect further evidence that children can remain safely at home with their parents when families are provided the proper supports. Additional evidence will encourage more widespread



use of supportive housing as a means of improving child well-being and decreasing the need for avoidable foster care placements. However, in the current fiscal climate, it has been challenging to encourage public agencies to use their dwindling resources in new and innovative ways.

CSH and Community Solutions, another national organization focused on ending homelessness, have been working to create a Family Vulnerability Index that will allow communities to identify and prioritize for housing and services assistance families with high needs and high risk of child welfare system involvement. This Family Vulnerability Index will help communities clarify the current need/demand for supportive housing and other housing and services models that can help reduce child welfare system involvement and increase stability among vulnerable families and children.

Appendix IV:

Silos to Systems—Impact at the State Level

In Washington State, the Silos to Systems convening provided new insights and momentum for a range of activities to better integrate the child welfare, employment and workforce development, housing stability, and family homelessness systems. Many organizations are collaborating on these efforts with significant support from Building Changes and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

- Extensive data integration activities are underway at the state and local levels to promote the creation of administrative data sets linking a broad range of social services data, Public Housing Authority data, and educational system data. Some of this work is part of a multi-site study being led by Dennis Culhane from the University of Pennsylvania examining the relationship between assisted housing, educational outcomes, and child well-being. These data sets will greatly enhance a shared understanding of the trajectories of families as they move through multiple systems, and help state and county agencies to align resources and services from these systems to address their complex needs in the most effective and efficient possible ways.
- Public Housing Authorities, the state Children’s Administration, and human service department leaders in several jurisdictions are seeking to launch a pilot project linking rental subsidies to tailored, community-based case management services for homeless families involved in the child welfare system. Stakeholders from these systems are exploring opportunities to create greater system flexibility that can facilitate the re-investment of savings from reduced or averted costs for foster care placements, including a possible “IV-E Waiver” that would allow the use of federal funding currently allocated for foster care to support wraparound services for families.
- Family advocates (called “veteran parents”) who have themselves been involved with the child welfare system are actively engaged with both child welfare case workers and housing and service providers to increase understanding of the crises these families experience and better equip staff across multiple systems to provide sensitive and informed interventions that increase family stability over time.
- Public Housing Authorities, Workforce Development Councils, and local government agencies are collaborating to pair effective housing interventions with a range of proven workforce development strategies.



They are maximizing their programs' flexibility to support the variety of interventions necessary to meet the diverse needs of vulnerable families and their employers. Multiple housing-employment partnerships have emerged from this coordinated approach, including: a rapid re-housing program for families and individuals, located at an employment one-stop location funded by local levy funds, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA); three employment navigator programs that provide families with housing stability and individualized support to pursue employment goals; and sector-based training opportunities in high-growth fields.

- Homeless service providers are receiving training, technical assistance, and capacity-building grants to strengthen their abilities to provide services that support employment goals (“vocationalizing”) and partner with mainstream providers of workforce development services.

Appendix V:

Silos to Systems—Impact at the National Level

Here are just a few of the organizations and networks that are working at the national level to support policy reform and systems change efforts aligned with the goals of the Silos to Systems convening:

- **The National Alliance to End Homelessness** (Alliance) is a nonpartisan organization committed to preventing and ending homelessness in the United States. The Alliance works with the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to identify strategies that end homelessness, and build the policy and capacity infrastructure to implement them. The Alliance provides data and research to policymakers in order to inform policy debates and educate the public and opinion leaders. The Homelessness Research Institute is the research and education arm of the Alliance and is tasked with building the intellectual capital around homelessness and disseminating that information in a clear, comprehensible way. The Center for Capacity Building is leading the implementation of solutions that reduce homelessness in communities across the country. The Center accelerates the adoption of solutions that are cost-effective, data-driven, and that will ultimately accomplish the goal of ending homelessness. The Alliance’s work on federal policy is grounded in knowledge of the most effective approaches for ending homelessness and the need to take these best practices to scale. Alliance staff analyzes policy proposals; suggests new initiatives that would improve outcomes; forms, leads, and participates in coalitions on a range of issues; and educates policymakers on Capitol Hill, in the Administration, and people working in the field on ways to effect change in Washington.
- **U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness** (USICH) works to coordinate the federal response to homelessness and to create a national partnership at every level of government and with the private sector to reduce and end homelessness in the nation while maximizing the effectiveness of the Federal Government in contributing to the end of homelessness. Notably, USICH presented *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* to the President and Congress in June 2010. This is the first time that the federal government has established a goal to prevent and end homelessness for families, youth, and children, and set a timeline for that goal of 2020. Since the needs of families cover many of the silos of government, USICH’s work building collaboration among the federal agencies is critical

to supporting systemic solutions in communities across America. The work includes the impact of the large federal programs on areas including housing, employment, and health care, and includes special consideration of sub-populations, including veterans with families and families with child welfare involvement. Preventing homelessness for families will require engagement of mainstream programs to see housing stability as an interconnected outcome, and adoption of efficient and coordinated homeless response systems incorporating new models of homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing.

- **Funders Together to End Homelessness**, the national homelessness affinity group for the philanthropic sector, is in the process of articulating an advocacy agenda which will include three primary components: Housing as the key platform for individual and family stability, the importance of integrating mainstream and targeted resources from the public and private sectors, and the critical task of including child well-being and homelessness in the larger contexts of discussions of health care reform.
- **National Transitional Jobs Network (NTJN)** works to help build transitional jobs programs, define and support best practices in the field, and advocate for the strategy nationwide with a focus on helping the hardest-to-employ people, including those who have experienced homelessness, get and keep jobs. NTJN launched the *Working to End Homelessness Initiative* in 2011, with support from the Butler Family Fund, to shine a spotlight on the important role of employment solutions in addressing homelessness and to identify and disseminate promising employment practices. NTJN has released a series of briefs that highlights lessons learned from these efforts and the research literature and are intended for employment and homeless service providers, program staff, and policymakers who want to learn more about helping individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness become successful in employment. These briefs are available at [NTJN](#).
- With support from the Butler Family Fund, workforce development and homeless service leaders from five cities have been convened by the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County to share promising practices for using the resources and services of Workforce Investment Boards to meet the employment needs of people experiencing homelessness.

Silos to Systems October, 2011, Meeting Attendees

Sponsors

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (www.gatesfoundation.org)

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Ben DeHaan, Executive Director, Partners for Our Children (www.partnersforourchildren.org)

Tonya Dressel, Ballmer Giving

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Rachel Gragg, Federal Policy Director, National Skills Coalition (nationalskillscoalition.org)

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Sandra Henriquez, Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (www.hud.gov)

Jennifer Ho, Deputy Director of Accountability, U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (www.usich.gov)

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Silos to Systems

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