

Systems Change Collaborative
Meeting #4
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

Welcome

The Systems Change Collaborative is convened by the Chicago Department of Public Health and hosted with the Illinois Public Health Institute and Wilburn Strategic Solutions. The Collaborative was built to bring together stakeholders and allies to look at expanding high quality and comprehensive care for people experiencing homelessness and those transitioning into housing through a focus on the following:

- i. Benchmarking standards of care
- ii. Disseminating best practices
- iii. Identifying common needs
- iv. Advocating collectively for policy and system changes

The fourth Systems Change Collaborative meeting was kicked off by Colleen Mahoney, from Chicago Department of Public Health. Mahoney begins this meeting by going over the agenda, reiterating the purpose of the collaborative, and reviewing the expected timeline of the collaborative. Mahoney makes note of an extension in the timeline, where the collaborative will meet for an additional meeting in November.

Afterwards, Mahoney introduces Patricia Johnson of CDPH. Johnson is a new Public Health Administrator for the Chicago Department of Public Health. Johnson reviews the group norms with the collaborative.

Mission Moment

Kuliva Wilburn, from Wilburn Strategic Solutions, briefly leads the group through a Mission Moment. Wilburn takes the opportunity to introduce an article from May 2022, by Chicago Business titled "[Homelessness Interrupted](#)". This article, set in the Chicago region, highlights the work that has been completed since the beginning of the pandemic, by both non-profit and private partners, many of whom are members of the Systems Change Collaborative. This article reflects on how the work was integrated and coordinated to advance the progress in this sector and shows how leaders, partners, and agencies pivoted and innovated during the COVID-19 crisis to address homelessness.

Defining Sustainable Funding

When introducing the idea of today's meeting, Sustainable Funding, Wilburn notes how this phrase could hold a different meaning for individual agencies and organizations. Jess Lynch, from Illinois Public Health Institute, and Wilburn go through a definition of Sustainable Funding. This definition provided by Lynch and Wilburn will serve as a grounding definition of Sustainable Funding, however, both note that the description provided is not concrete. They invite the members of the collaborative to add to this definition to create one that fully captures all perspectives of sustainable funding.

Lynch and Wilburn explain how the construct of sustainable funding encompasses sustaining services, sustaining and enhancing quality, sustaining and allowing for a well-paid workforce, and addressing systemic inequities and root causes.

It was with these constructs in mind that a the following definition was chosen.

Sustainable Funding: *Models for sustainable funding showing include consistent and reliable funding investments, support the continuity of care (not limited to only funding for siloed programs and interventions), and increase quality by raising standards of care, investing in the workforce, reducing caseloads, and integrating missing intervention supports.*

Categories of Funding

Additionally, Jess Lynch goes through the several categories of funding. These include:

- i. Government (city, county, state, federal)
- ii. Philanthropy, Business/Institution/Corporate Investments, Individual Donations

- iii. Dedicated, one-time/emergency response/stimulus grants, community investment, and reimbursement
- iv. Healthcare sector, mental health sector, homeless sector, housing sector, etc.

State Plan to End Homelessness

Lynch then goes through a slide on the State Plan to End Homelessness. This plan is anticipated to be official this summer. The infographic on the slide provides an overview of the State Plan. The State Plan will center itself around racial equity, and the Collaborative will align itself with the state plan as well.

Moreover, the state plan has identified the following areas as ones where there are opportunities and a commitment by state agencies to leverage funding and policy levers to create change in the way funding and policy occur in the state.

- i. Development of Permanent Supportive Housing
- ii. Supporting College Students Experiencing Homelessness
- iii. Improving Discharge Planning for Young Adults
- iv. Expansion of the Medical Respite Model.

Jess Lynch then transitions over to Mary Kate Schroeter from Chicago Department of Public Health to talk about current CDPH funding sources. One of these funding sources is the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) Grant. This is a grant funding from Center for Disease Control (CDC) which CDPH has always received and goes towards local health departments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this was a source of funding that increased capital, and took CDPH from a million dollar organization to a several hundred million dollar organization.

Another funding source includes the Corona Virus Aid Relief and Economic Stability Act (CARES). This act, alongside the America Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) were one time boosts, and have gone to every jurisdiction, allowing them to self-select what programs each jurisdiction wanted to fund.

Finally, Corporate dollars, which are forgotten often when it comes to funding sources, but is received by every department in the city are considered flexible dollars. This source of funding pays for programs and staffing.

Presentation - Sustainable Funding

Kuliva introduces Emily Krisciunas, the director of Chicago Funders Together to End Homelessness (CFTEH). The CFTEH is a collaborative that is an intersectional funder collaborative with 30 Chicago funders. CFTEH hopes to mobilize its members in ways that will advance lasting solutions to ending homelessness, while addressing underlying causes, like structural and racial inequities that center people with lived experiences.

Krisciunas begins the presentation by going through an overview of CFTEH. While CFTEH currently has no government funders, Krisciunas expresses an interest in being both a public and private partnership that brings together public and private funding. CFTEH is housed at the Michael Reece Health Trust, and is managed by Krisciunas as the full-time Director, and a colleague as a the Program Coordinator. CFTEH is guided by a team of five funder co-chairs and additional working groups. Collectively, CFTEH has invested \$30 million via 500 grants to 200 organizations in 2020.

Krisciunas continues their presentation by reviewing a brief history of CFTEH. CFTEH started when a group of foundations traveled to Los Angeles to learn about an organization named Home for Good, and the Flexible Housing Pool. Over the years, this group of funders wanted to formalize and develop a shared strategy, and in 2020 Krisciunas was brought on as a Director.

Recently, CFTEH went through their first ever strategic planning process and aim to support funders by providing a greater line of sight into funding within the philanthropic and public sector. CFTEH recognizes itself as an educator, convener, and a grant maker that centers itself in advocacy and community organizing.

Krisciunas also emphasizes the importance of community engagement, and how community voices are important to their funding model. The following are themes CFTEH has learned from their community engagement:

- i. Understanding historic links between homelessness and racism
- ii. Promoting an inclusive definition of homelessness
- iii. Providing more than just grants
- iv. Creating grants with maximum trust and flexibility

From these themes, CFTEH created guiding principles which were fully incorporated into their strategic plan.

Afterwards, Krisciunas leads the group through CFTEH's strategic plan for 2022-2024. Krisciunas emphasizes that CFTEH identifies itself as an educator, an advocate, a group that can model and act as a convener.

CFTEH's strategic plan also includes three outcomes.

- i. Equitable policy,
- ii. Aligned funding and systems, and
- iii. Shifted power.

Finally, Krisciunas highlights recent work that CFTEH has accomplished – from aligning \$3.5 million for the Expedited Housing Initiative to coordinating resources from several foundations to compensating people with lived experience for participating in the State of Illinois' planning process.

Emily Krisciunas can be contacted at ekrisciunas@wearemichaelreese.org, and more information about CFTEH can be found at wearemichaelreese.org/how-we-work/cfteh.

Kuliva Wilburn facilitates a question and answer session between Krisciunas and the audience.

Breakout Room Discussion

The discussion portion of this meeting splits the group into three rooms, where a facilitator goes through a series of questions posed by the hosts of the Collaborative while holding space for participants to ask their own questions and engage in meaningful conversation with each other.

These were the questions posed during this session:

1. What feedback can you provide on both the constructs and definition for sustainable funding as presented during the meeting?
2. With more flexible and increased funding in the past few years (COVID and otherwise), what has that allowed for that you would like to see in the future? Who is/isn't getting resources at a sustainable level? What gaps or inequities have remained that must be addressed? What other needs are there at an organizational level – in terms of operations, infrastructure, and capacity – to meet the definition of sustainability?
3. What other needs are there at an organizational level—in terms of operations, infrastructure, and capacity—to meet the definition of sustainability?
4. In what ways can public and private funders provide transparency in their commitment to enhanced funding coordination and impact?

After about thirty-five minutes, the three groups reconvene to report on the discussions held in the breakout rooms.

Next Steps

Following the discussion, Jess Lynch asks the participants to fill out a short survey. The next meeting for the Systems Change Collaborative will meet next on **October 12th** on the topic of **Workforce Development**.