

## ICCHP Quarterly Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2025, 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

**Members Present:** Co-chairs Karen Wade and Jessica Wichard; Latonya Agard, Brett Altman, Emily Ball, Darla Cole, Rep. Allison Dahle, Scott Farmer, Debra Farrington, Samuel Gunter, Hsun-Ta Hsu, Ashley Jarrett, Desiree Kennedy, Jaclyn Kiger, Steve Maynor, Karon McKinney, Deronda Metz, Fred Mills, Amy Modlin, Elizabeth Moncrief, Maria Perez, George Pettigrew, Lisa Phillips, Jeffrey Rawlings, Torry Reynolds, Joell Steininger, Ryan Stoddard (Senator Paul Lowe), Donya Strong, Pamela Suggs Story, Emilia Sutton, Josh Walker

**Members Absent:** Marsha Basloe, Rep. Cecil Brockman, Stephanie McGarrah, Sen. Natalie Murdock, Katrina Knight, Director Will Ray, Carla West

**Other Staff Present:** Liz Doherty (Governor's Office), Andrea Allard (DMVA), Sarah Kaminer Bourland (NC DHHS), Amy Sawyer (Redesign Collaborative), Denise Neunaber (Redesign Collaborative)

**Guests Present:** Elyse Powell (North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition), Denzel Burnside (NC Housing Table), Peter Kane (OSBM), Emily Carmody (Redesign Collaborative)

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The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Wade at 1:00 p.m.

**Welcome:** Karen Wade, Co-Chair

Karen Wade gave overview of ICCHP duties, first of which is to advise the Governor, Cabinet, agencies and partners on housing stability and homelessness. She outlined the key areas of focus for ICCHP – help people get and keep housing by expanding access to rental/related housing financial assistance, increase development of and access to rental units for people experiencing homelessness, and increasing the availability and quality of housing-focused services.

Chair Wade gave an overview of the agenda for the meeting, including:

- Welcome and opening remarks
- Advancing statewide response to homelessness
- ICCHP Member Introductions
  - o Theme of this throughout is breaking down silos
  - o Important to know each other's roles and silos
- Governor's Office & GROW NC Updates
- Member Updates
- Next Meeting
- Adjourn

Chair Wade notes the first presentation will be from DHHS consultants to walk through the building blocks of a statewide response.

**Advancing a Systemwide Response to Homelessness** – Denise Neunaber & Amy Sawyer, DHHS Consultants with Redesign Collaborative

Denise thanked the Council for past efforts and began the presentation by noting that many partners have worked on this for years. The goal today was not to reteach what members already know or cover every complexity, but to create space to move past jargon. She explained that the system has become centered on funding streams and programs, and the aim is to recenter on people, their experiences, and practical solutions. The Council is working with households currently at risk of or experiencing homelessness, with the goal of resolving crises through safe, stable, and affordable housing. This may mean helping someone remain in their home or move to a new living situation.

Referencing research by Greg Colburn and Clayton Page Aldern, Denise stressed that while poverty, health challenges, substance use, and unemployment are contributing factors, they do not explain differences in homelessness rates. Instead, housing market conditions—rental vacancy rates and rent levels—are the key drivers. She used the analogy of musical chairs to show that homelessness stems from a shortage of affordable housing, not individual shortcomings.

Affordability depends on balancing housing costs with household ability to pay. Programs address this through two strategies: increasing housing supply and reducing costs, or strengthening household buying power. Both strategies are needed.

Denise emphasized that every household has a housing plan, whether formal or informal, shaped by questions such as whether to stay or move, what type of living situation is appropriate, how affordability will be achieved, and what supports are needed. Permanent options may include rental, subsidized housing, ownership, or living with family or friends; temporary options range from shelters to FEMA-funded hotels. Affordability can be supported through earned income, job training, and financial assistance such as rental and utility aid, deposits, childcare vouchers, or disability benefits. Services like case management, housing navigation, financial counseling, and healthcare are also critical. No single program can provide all of these, so coordination across funding streams and agencies is essential.

Denise concluded that the system must align resources, ensure affordable units, and reduce barriers. Returning to the musical chairs analogy, she said the housing system must ensure enough chairs and the supports for households to reach them, so that all have the opportunity to secure housing, stabilize, and thrive.

Denise turns it over to her colleague, Amy Sawyer, to expand on the specific role of the ICCHP and potential opportunities for future work.

Amy notes that federal partners have been the backbone of a response – including HUD, HHS, and others. Federal funding does not keep up with the rising cost of housing. Sometimes federal policies don't fit perfectly for local communities. So even with very strong federal support, people can fall through the cracks. State leadership has the ability to turn fragmented dollars into integrated solutions.

Amy discusses convening power, and notes that the ICCHP bring convening power and is uniquely positioned to support cross-agency coordination, advise the Governor/Legislature, and strengthen partnerships. She notes that alignment is powerful because we can prevent duplication.

Amy discusses policy levers that the ICCHP can pull to help solve this problem by dividing into a few distinct phases including: Identify problems, equip the field, set direction, send clear messages, and strengthen partnerships. Amy lists state government examples of positive illustrations of these policy levers including the 2030 Re-Entry Plan, Healthy Opportunities Pilot, Governor Stein's Executive Order to relaunch the Council, Office of Strategic Partnerships for Helene Response – pulling together a call on housing/homelessness.

Amy encouraged Councilmembers to take action by thinking through these levers – and thinking about which ones to pull to achieve ICCHP priorities. Amy encourages the council to consider the question: How can we gain traction to build towards bigger goals?

#### **Council Introductions** – All participants

Councilmembers introduced themselves by sharing their name, organization, role and how their work contributes to the building blocks for addressing homelessness: housing, income/budget, and supports.

Emila Sutton, Housing Director for the City of Raleigh, dropped [link](#) in the chat for a 10-minute presentation from Greg Colburn, one of the authors of Homelessness is a Housing Problem, a book referenced and recommended earlier in the meeting.

Various folks in state government note that there is no centralized housing agency.

Chair Wade thanked Council Members for their introductions and introduced Liz Doherty and Desiree Kennedy.

#### **Governor's Office Update** – Liz Doherty

Liz congratulated members on their appointments and commitment to serve. Liz reiterated the goals of the Council and shared the updated Executive Order in the chat. She added that the Governor's team intentionally added a Helene focus to support our friends and neighbors in Western North Carolina and notes that Desiree Kennedy will speak more about WNC recovery efforts.

Liz acknowledged agency leaders across the state that lead housing work, especially as the state does not have a centralized housing agency. She reiterates the connection of homelessness to lack of affordable housing and emphasizes that Governor Stein understands this connection and referred to it in remarks at the Bringing it Home conference earlier this year. She outlined the Stein administration's focus on building more housing, ensuring availability of homes for everyone at every stage of life, and prioritizing affordability so people can afford a home. She notes that the Governor's commitment is reflected in his budget proposal which included \$60 million to leverage funds for affordable housing. This included appropriations for the housing trust fund, workforce housing loan program, and proposed grants to local governments. The Governor also believes in the continuum of care model, ensuring everyone gets the help they need no matter where they are or what they're going through. Acknowledges efforts at the state and federal level to criminalize homelessness undermine efforts. Adds that the Stein administration does not believe anyone should sleep outside, much less be penalized for it. Liz emphasized that now, more than ever, coordinated response to homelessness is essential.

Liz shared the link to [press release](#) and [new landing page](#). Asks members to look at landing page and make suggestions for resources that should be included on the page. For outreach, asks members to reach out to [ICCHP@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:ICCHP@dhhs.nc.gov). Liz shared her own email and encouraged folks who would like to meet with the Governor's policy team to reach out.

#### **GROW NC Update** – Desiree Kennedy

Desiree introduces self and GROW Office. Shares key statistics about Helene's impacts. Helene caused \$60 billion of damage including 74,000 damaged homes. Emphasized that this is an estimate and we don't have a comprehensive picture of the damage. To break down the \$60 billion in damage, \$10.3 is housing damage. Desiree recognized Governor Stein for establishing the GROW office to drive hurricane Helene recovery specifically. Shares organizational chart depicted GROW's position in the ecosystem of state government and in the Governor's office. Desiree shares that the biggest challenge is funding. There is gap between what the Governor has requested for housing and Helene and what the federal government has provided. Desiree shared detailed updates on federal, state, and local programs that are assisting residents of Western NC who are recovering from Helene including rental assistance, HUD programs, rapid unsheltered survivor program, and buy-out options. Desiree also shared the future goals of the GROW office, citing that housing the biggest piece of their long-term economic recovery goals.

#### **Conclusion and Next Steps – Co-chair Wichard**

Chair Wichard introduced herself and DMVA's role, especially relating to veterans' homelessness. Notes we are out of time for updates and asks members to send updates to [ICCHP@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:ICCHP@dhhs.nc.gov). Chair Wichard shared details about the next meeting which will be in person on November 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:57pm

