

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Homelessness Response System Launches to Improve Connecting Those in Need with Housing Assistance

STATEWIDE, Idaho – Idaho Housing and Finance Association (IHFA) and local housing and homeless service providers have partnered to establish a new standardized approach within the statewide homelessness response system to address the needs of persons experiencing a housing crisis and help them gain access to the supportive programs and services they need. This change went into effect on January 22, 2018.

The new response system ensures homeless persons or those at risk of homelessness who are seeking long-term housing solutions have consistent access to housing resources. The system brings together a network of community partners across Idaho to create a collaborative, objective environment that offers an informed and consistent way of prioritizing and providing housing and supportive services to the most vulnerable people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

“We are hopeful that by implementing this change and creating increased provider collaboration even those with the most extreme cases of homelessness will be able to find stable housing faster,” said Brady Ellis, vice president of IHFA and chairman of the Idaho Homeless Coordinating Committee (IHCC).

The cornerstone of the new system is the creation of Access Points across the state where homeless or at-risk persons are assisted in identifying appropriate resources based on their needs. This offers a more centralized approach that prioritizes those with the greatest needs rather than the “first-come, first serve” approach previously employed among all providers. The Access Points will now work to coordinate housing and service referrals with a network of community providers who offer housing and other essential services.

“The new homelessness response system focuses on creating strong partnerships within the community to help the homeless and provide easy access to housing programs and assistance in one stop,” says Gerald M. Hunter, president and executive director of IHFA. “This change is a substantial improvement to the way we care for Idaho’s homeless population, providing a progressive first step on the way to housing.”

Local housing and homelessness providers within the homelessness response system share guiding principles and a set of common operational policies to efficiently connect those in need with appropriate resources. Each region of the state has an identified access point for homeless or at-risk persons to connect with. The access points will help homeless persons identify specific resources based on their needs.

The goals for the Homelessness Response System are to:

- Provide easy access to community resources for those in need.
- Prioritize those with the most severe needs and vulnerabilities to receive housing and assistance first.
- Maximize the use of local resources for the greatest impact on the population being served.
- Produce better outcomes with referrals based on the specific needs of those experiencing homelessness.
- Reduce first-time homelessness, length of time being homeless, and returns to homelessness.
- Identify gaps in available services so that new programs can be developed to more fully address local needs.

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Those in need of immediate shelter will continue to access emergency shelter services in their communities. Shelters and other community support programs have been educated on the establishment of Access Points and will assist homeless or at-risk persons in connecting with Access Points.

Introduction of the homelessness response system is expected to roll out to six regions across Idaho starting January 22. IHFA is the largest administrator of federal homelessness housing and services funds in Idaho.

The homelessness response system is a component of the *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, a federal policy introduced by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness in 2010, and updated in 2015 (https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/USICH_OpeningDoors_Amendment2015_FINAL.pdf).

For local comment on the new change to the homelessness response system, please contact the Access Point in your region.

Regional Access Points

Region 1- Coeur d'Alene		
Access Point	St. Vincent de Paul of North Idaho	208.664.3095
Region 2- Lewiston/Moscow		
Access Point	Sojourner's Alliance	208.310.4554
Region 3- Nampa/Caldwell		
Access Point	The Salvation Army	208.461.3733
Region 4- Twin Falls		
Access Point	South Central Community Action Partnership	208.733.9351
Region 5- Pocatello/Blackfoot		
Access Point	Aid for Friends	208.254.0290
Region 6- Idaho Falls		
Access Point	CLUB, Inc.	208.529.4673

***Footnote for Treasure Valley Reporters: (Ada County) contact Catch, Inc. at 208-495-4240**

About Idaho Housing and Finance Association

[Idaho Housing and Finance Association \(www.idahohousing.com\)](http://www.idahohousing.com) is a financial services and housing business organization. IHFA's mission is to improve lives and strengthen Idaho communities by expanding housing opportunities, building self-sufficiency, and fostering economic development.

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