

**ALLEGHENY COUNTY HOMELESS ADVISORY BOARD**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**January 25, 2011, 10:00 AM**  
**Liberty Room**

**Members**

Susan Coyle, Chartiers; Linda Kilderry, SVDP Society; Lenny Prewitt, Family Links; George Moses, Housing Alliance; Jane Downing, Pittsburgh Foundation; Reggie Young, ACDHS-OCS; Laurel Shaw, McCune Foundation; Joe Lagana, Homeless Children's Education Fund; Adrienne Walnoha, CHS; Nicole Anderson, AIU; Linda Sheets, OSN; Tom Cummings, URA

**Guests**

Elizabeth Daniels-Totten, City of Pittsburgh; Jon Hoffmann, Housing Alliance; Ryan Burger, DHS-OCS; Jared Souder, Veterans Place; Cindy Haines, HUD; Lois Martin, Bethlehem Haven; Genevieve Barbee, CHS; Mike Lindsay, DHS-OCS; Ashley Newhouse-Mancine, DHS-OCR; Mac McMahan, CHS; Mary Frances-Pilarski, VA; Chris Sansone, DHS-OCS; Steve Chopek, PHFA; Rob Eamigh, DHS-OCS; Jackie Shellaby, Veterans Place; Terri Laver, DHS-OCS; Chuck Keenan, DHS; Ed Haberchak, DHS; Dina Ciabattoni, CHS

**Welcome**

Sue Coyle welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Coyle asked if anyone had corrections to the minutes that were sent out. No changes were offered. The minutes from October 2010 were approved as presented.

**Appointment of new DHS HUD Program Administrator**

Reggie Young announced that this will be Mike Lindsay's last meeting, as he is leaving DHS for another position in Washington, DC. Rob Eamigh, who is currently Finance Manager, will be moving into Mr. Lindsay's position effective February 14, 2011. Everyone around the table wished Mr. Lindsay well and thanked him for his 10+ years of service to people who are homeless in the county.

**HPRP Update**

Liz Daniels-Totten gave an update to the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP). She noted that the City and County are one year into the program and that, to date, the City has enrolled 551 people and the County has enrolled 251 households into the program. 130 people have exited the program since it started, with 118 now stably housed. Half of those who left the program went to market rate housing and the other half went to subsidized housing.

Laurel Shaw asked if the program is expected to meet its regulatory goal of spending 60% of its funds by July 2011. Ms. Totten replied that it may be difficult, but that the lead agencies have been ramping up their efforts and are now on target to meet this goal.

She also noted that a new lead agency has been brought on board, which will help to take eligible people off of the waiting list. George Moses asked what has made the program work and what has made it difficult. Ms. Totten said that, because HPRP is a Stimulus program, the funds needed to be spent quickly, but that oftentimes the regulations were cumbersome and sometimes did not even come out until after the program began. She also noted that agencies have been working together very well and have been assisting each other throughout the program. The group had a brief discussion of the program, including the priorities that have been established since its inception: Veterans with VASH vouchers, Homeless Prevention, Families with children under six, Involuntarily Displaced, and Victims of Domestic Violence. The group also discussed the eligibility criteria: Homeless or at-risk of homelessness, Median Income at or below 50% of AMI, and the Ability to Sustain Housing when the Financial Assistance Ends. No changes to the program were offered by the Board as part of this discussion.

### **Continuum of Care Announcement**

Mike Lindsay noted that HUD announced the funding for Allegheny County's Continuum of Care renewal projects last week. All projects that sought funding were approved, including 29 existing housing projects with a total of 305 units and the county's HMIS project. The total for these renewals is \$4.7 million. New project awards are expected to be announced in the late winter or early spring. All of the information that Mr. Lindsay provided will be posted on the Allegheny County website. Terri Laver also announced that the county's new HUD/HAP Directory of homeless programs has been posted on the county website as well.

### **Benchmark Reports**

Mr. Lindsay announced that his office will be instituting a benchmarking report and meeting in the coming days. The meeting will highlight the outcomes that each provider is achieving and how each one measures up against its peer programs. The HUD mandated benchmarks, as well as local ones like client participation in the SOAR process, will be scored and ranked. The data for the benchmarks comes directly from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which will give agencies the opportunity to review the data for accuracy and reliability. The first meeting will take place next week and the scores from the first meeting will not be "counted against" the provider, but each subsequent meeting and report will be considered to be official. Mr. Lindsay noted that funding decisions will eventually be made on the basis of these benchmarking meetings and reports. The county will assist low scoring programs and providers through the Community Wellness Initiative and will also promote peer-to-peer mentoring of similar programs between high and low scoring providers.

### **Homeless Prevention Work Group Update**

Chuck Keenan gave an update on the first meeting of the Homeless Prevention work group. He noted that the group discussed the three major prevention programs currently available in the county—HPRP, the Urban League Rental Assistance programs, and the Community Human Services Subsidized Housing Rental Assistance program—and the other lesser known and utilized programs through the County Assistance Offices and with PATH funds. The work group also discussed the work previously done by the Allegheny

County Local Housing Options Team (LHOT) on eviction prevention. Possible initiatives to be considered for future implementation included magisterial education (including a conciliation process for renters similar to those offered through the courts during the foreclosure process) and trying a pilot program in a subsidized housing community with a high eviction rate. The Homeless Advisory Board suggested that the work group attempt to pilot a program with the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh and Leland Point.

### **Advocacy and Awareness Work Group Update**

George Moses gave the Board the report on the group's work to date. He noted that the group spent a good deal of time determining what is already being done in the way of advocacy in the county. The group has also been looking to surrounding counties to see who else is doing good advocacy work. Mr. Moses passed out a letter to the editor from today's paper and other materials from the Housing Alliance and the National Alliance to End Homelessness concerning advocacy and awareness activities.

### **HEARTH Act Work Group**

Sue Coyle led a discussion of the Board on a potential need to develop a local group of experts on the recently enacted McKinney-Vento reauthorization law—the HEARTH Act. Jane Downing noted that the county should begin to familiarize itself with this new law and have something ready to put in place once the law's regulations come out. Terri Laver noted that a group from Philadelphia recently brought in some national experts to educate their local housing advocates on the HEARTH Act. She asked if this would be possible for the Pittsburgh region. Cyndi Haines agreed to take this request back to the Pittsburgh HUD field office to see if they would be willing to sponsor such an event. In the meantime, the Board agreed to set up a work group on the HEARTH Act and a sign up sheet was passed around. Mr. Keenan offered to e-mail his housing lists once the group was formed to let them know of the first meeting as well.

### **Point-in-Time**

Terri Laver announced that the annual Point-in-Time count of homeless persons is going to take place tomorrow. She noted that HUD is emphasizing the need to count youth under 18 who are literally homeless and veterans this year. HUD has also announced a new category of chronically homeless families that will be counted for the first time this year, but that no unaccompanied youth under age 18 are permitted to be counted as chronically homeless. The Board had a general discussion of the lack of publicity that the PIT count has generated in the media here, while many other areas have had extensive press coverage and large teams of volunteers mobilized to conduct their counts. Ms. Shaw suggested the Board should send the DHS Office of Community Relations any information or announcements that it would like to be released at the end of each meeting. Ms. Haines said that she would also be interested in publicizing any stories in HUD's newsletters and quarterly reports that highlight local initiatives like the PIT. Mr. Keenan said that he would pass any information like this to the DHS Community Relations Office after the meetings when requested by the Board.

### **Severe Weather Emergency Shelter Update**

Linda Sheets reported on the work taking place at the SWES, noting that it has already been open almost 50 nights so far this year and that it has averaged about 90 people per night. They are seeing a lot of elderly men, youth under 25, and very mentally ill people at the shelter this year. Lennie Prewitt said that he could assist with housing the youth who come to the SWES in the DOCS and he also has some availability in Family Links' Shelter + Care Program for youth with disabilities.

**Announcements**

Mr. Keenan passed out some material on upcoming events that may be of interest to the group, including vacancies at John Fraser Hall and the Summit II sponsored by the Homeless Children's Education Fund. Jared Souter reminded everyone of the Veterans Place day program and said that he is seeking to partner with emergency shelter providers by providing veterans and safe and warm place to spend the daytime hours.

**Open Discussion**

None.

**Next Meeting**

The next Homeless Advisory Board meeting will be on April 26, 2011 at 10:00 AM Liberty Room, Lower Level, Human Services Building, One Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh.