

ALLEGHENY COUNTY HOMELESS ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
April 26, 2011, 10:00 AM
Liberty Room

Members

Jerry Drozynski, HEARTH; Linda Kilderry, SVDP Society; George Moses, Housing Alliance; Jane Downing, Pittsburgh Foundation; Reggie Young, ACDHS-OCS; Laurel Shaw, McCune Foundation; Joe Lagana, Homeless Children's Education Fund; Linda Sheets, OSN; Tom Cummings, URA; Sue Scheuring, City Planning; Wayne Jones, Heinz Endowments

Guests

Michael Sundo, DHS; Joanna Deming, Housing Alliance; Lois Martin, Bethlehem Haven; Eldolia Weir, Urban League; Allie Palm; Mercy/OSN; Chris Sansone, DHS; Terri Laver; DHS; Cecelia Sims, Hosanna House; Jennifer Flanagan, Lutheran Services Society; Chuck Keenan, DHS; Melissa Roberts, ACED; Mac McMahan, CHS; Rob Eamigh, DHS; Jacqueline Shellaby, Veterans Place; Jack Johnston, Jaxon Development; Myra Zelenitz, EECM; Stefani Danes, EECM

Welcome

Jerry Drozynski welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Mr. Drozynski asked if anyone had corrections to the minutes that were sent out. No changes were offered. The minutes from January 25, 2011 were approved as presented.

Continuum of Care Status and Schedule

Rob Eamigh provided the following update on the HUD Continuum of Care Program:

- 2010 Renewal Projects were announced and Allegheny County received \$4.7 million. All projects applied for were funded.
- The county is still waiting on HUD's decision on new projects. DHS applied for \$8.6 million to fund 223 new units.
- The 2011 application will have 60 programs up for renewal for about \$10 million. The county expects about \$3 million to be available for new projects in the coming year.
- Letters of intent for new projects under 2011 CoC grant were received at the end of March. Over \$8 million in projects were submitted for nine different programs, which means that this will be a highly competitive process for new projects.
- Formal Pre-applications will be due on May 24.

Laurel Shaw asked about the types of new projects that have been submitted. Mr. Eamigh replied that DHS has encouraged the submission of Shelter + Care and Permanent Housing projects and that, for the most part, those are the types that have been

submitted. George Moses asked if there are new providers submitting applications. Mr. Eamigh said that there are two providers who submitted applications who do not currently have contracts through the CoC. Finally, Mr. Drozynski asked if there is a review process for the new projects. Mr. Eamigh said that the county has an independent review panel that ranks the projects and that people in the meeting can volunteer to sit on that panel if they do not represent an organization seeking funding this year.

Benchmark Reports

Mr. Eamigh announced that his office has instituted a benchmarking report and will be holding their second meeting on the new benchmarks tomorrow. The meeting will highlight the outcomes that each provider has achieved and how each one has measured up against its peer programs. The HUD mandated benchmarks, as well as local ones like client participation in the SOAR process, have been 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. Tomorrow will mark the second benchmarking meeting and scores have significantly improved since the first one. Mr. Drozynski asked if these benchmarks impact funding for the CoC. Mr. Eamigh noted that they absolutely do because the CoC application is scored and ranked nationally on these measures. Reggie Young also noted that if an organization falls below the county established benchmark in a certain area, they receive technical assistance from the county and high performing providers to help them to improve.

Homeless Prevention Work Group Update

Mr. Drozynski apologized for not having a meeting this quarter and noted that he will probably not have the availability to lead this group going forward. In light of this, he asked for someone else to chair the group. A general discussion then took place with the Board agreeing to merge the Prevention Work Group with the HEARTH Implementation Work Group, which is working on similar initiatives.

Advocacy and Awareness Work Group Update

George Moses gave the Board the report on the group's work to date. He also noted that the group did not meet this quarter, but that he and other members have been spending a great deal of time working to advocate for increases to the state and federal budgets for homeless programs. Mr. Moses also described an initiative from Eastern Pennsylvania led by Joe Willard to develop a statewide advocacy response to homelessness. He will send information to Chuck Keenan to get out to the group on this initiative.

HEARTH Act Work Group

Mr. Keenan passed out notes from the first meeting of the HEARTH Implementation work group. He noted that they had begun to focus on four areas where they felt the county should prioritize its efforts: prepare for HUD's new performance measures, development of a centralized intake system for people who need service through the homeless system, determine how new regulations will impact existing providers, and develop a more efficient homeless prevention and rapid re-housing system. The group

will hold its next meeting on May 23 at 9:00 AM in the Riverview Room at 1 Smithfield Street.

East End Cooperative Ministries (EECM) New Building

Jack Johnston gave an update on EECM's efforts to develop a new building to house its homeless shelter, Orr Center, and other social service programs. EECM has acquired a site and has tentative plans for the construction of a building on that site. These plans call for the consolidation of all programs (except EECM's transitional housing program) into this building. Stefani Danes went over the drawings and site plans for the building, which she said will be certified as Platinum according to LEED standards. The building consists of 36 shelter beds (for both males and females), 14 Orr Center beds, a commercial kitchen with 24 hour a day access, and spaces for educational and job training services. Unlike the current homeless shelter, the shelter beds in the new center will be private and available for 24 hours a day. To date, EECM has secured 40% of the funding for the building and expects to have the remainder of the funds needed for its construction to be in place by the end of the summer. EECM agreed to keep the board informed of its progress.

2011 Point-in-Time Update

Terri Laver presented a power point on the results of this year's point-in-time count of homeless persons in Allegheny County. She noted several changes in this year's report compared to those from previous years, including the count of homeless veterans in the VA DomCare Program, HPRP participants and those on the waiting list who were not housed at the time of the report were counted, people living in safe havens were counted as homeless this year, people staying at the Severe Weather Shelter were counted as housed this year, and chronic homeless families has been added as a category this year. The power point that was presented is included as an attachment to these minutes.

The group also had a discussion about counting people in the same manner from year to year, despite changes that HUD has required. For example, people staying in the Severe Weather Shelter in previous years were counted as "unsheltered" but this year counted as being in a "shelter." This makes the unsheltered population look much larger last year than this year and the "homeless shelter" population look much bigger this year than last year. The group would like an unofficial document produced that keeps the counting methodology the same year to year so that the Board can understand the numbers. Mr. Young agreed to produce such a document by the next meeting.

Announcements

Mr. Keenan announced that United Cerebral Palsy and DHS have reached an agreement for the former to provide attendant care services to clients in wheelchairs who need such services when they access the homeless shelter system. Mr. Keenan also announced that the Goodwill Safe Harbor project for people leaving the Allegheny County Jail homeless is now accepting applications.

Tom Cummings announced that EECM will be having a groundbreaking on its new building on May 3.

Open Discussion

None.

Next Meeting

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