

ALLEGHENY COUNTY HOMELESS ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
July 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; Sue Scheuring, City Planning; Wayne Jones, Heinz Endowments; Nicole Anderson, AIU; Eldolia Weir, Urban League; Krissy Scragg, Bethlehem Haven; Gary Glacken, VA; Adrienne Walnoha, CHS; Lenny Prewitt, Family Links; Meg Balsamico, Penn Hills Planning

Guests

Liz Daniels-Totten, City Planning; Steve Chopek, PHFA; Matt Bloom, Veterans Place; Denetta Benjamin, Bethlehem Haven; Jacqueline Shellaby, Veterans Place; Dan Law, Heinz Endowments; Joe Elliott, DHS; Melissa Roberts, ACED; Lois Mufuka-Martin, Bethlehem Haven; Stephen Legault, CHS; Eryca Blue, CHS; Mary Jo Dickson, DHS-OBH; Frank Cuspard, Pleasant Valley; Terry Carrick, MBH; Rob Eamigh, DHS-OCS; Judy Barricella, DHS; Rhonda Albert, Women's Center and Shelter

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 April 26, 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 new projects award came in and Allegheny County received all funding that was requested, totaling \$8.4 million. This included 8 new projects with a total of 223 units.
- The county is currently evaluating new projects for the 2011 Continuum of Care application. The county anticipates that it will have approximately \$3.7 million available for new projects. The county has received 8 applications for new projects for a total of over \$8 million. Given the amount of money applied for and money available, not all projects will get funded. The county will prepare a financial analysis to see which projects will fit in and has already submitted the projects to the Evaluation Committee for their review.
- The 2011 application will have 60 programs up for renewal for about \$10 million.

Laurel Shaw asked about the types of new projects that have been submitted and whether or not the Board could review them. Chuck Keenan noted that the county uses an

independent Evaluation Board to review, score, and rank the projects. A general discussion then occurred on when and how the Homeless Advisory Board should be involved in the process. Board members indicated that they would like to be included in the prioritization of projects and the types that they would like to see. Mr. Keenan replied that the county has taken the input of the Board and the previous work group that was set up into account when it solicits projects from the homeless providers. He cited Operation Safety Net's newly awarded Safe Haven that is currently under construction as one example where the Board's work on setting priorities for the Continuum of Care was considered. Linda Sheets also explained how the Evaluation Committee scores and ranks projects and how HUD encourages certain types of projects through the award of bonus points for certain kinds of projects.

Benchmark Reports

Mr. Eamigh announced that his office will hold another benchmarking meeting on August 2, 2011. 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. The August 2 meeting will be the third benchmarking meeting and scores have significantly improved since the first one. Mr. Eamigh noted that agencies that have not met their benchmarks in previous meetings have received assistance from the high performing agencies, which has led to a great deal of information sharing and collaboration between the providers.

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 is planning to get the group together this quarter to work on a project collectively. Community Human Services and the Housing Alliance are working on a City Council Proclamation on the need for affordable housing and homeless programs. Steve Chopek added that he has found that one of the best ways to raise awareness for the need for homeless programs and services is during ribbon cuttings and open houses, where politicians and other community leaders can come to see the impact of those projects. The board had a general discussion of the role of the city and county governments in adding homelessness to comprehensive and consolidated plans.

HEARTH Act Work Group

Adrienne Walnoha reported on the work of the HEARTH Act work group. She noted that the group is working on four specific areas: preparing for HUD's new performance measures, development of a centralized intake system for people who need service through the homeless system, determining how new regulations will impact existing providers, and developing a more efficient homeless prevention and rapid re-housing system. Ms. Walnoha noted that they have spent a good deal of time thinking about how the new law will impact Allegheny County and about how to get the data that will be

necessary to comply with it. The group will hold its next meeting on August 8 at 9:00 AM in a location to be determined.

HPRP Update and Transition to ESG

Sue Scheuring gave the group an update on the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). She said that both the City and the County had met the required 60% expenditure requirement for the initial two year period of the program, with over \$8.7 million spent to date. She also reported that the City and County have served 3504 people in 1563 households. Most of those served were through prevention activities. The City and County are now working to ramp down the program, noting that some agencies have almost exhausted their funding. Finally, Ms. Scheuring said that over 1900 people are currently on the waiting list, most of which will unfortunately not be served by the program.

Mr. Drozynski asked how the centralized referral process has worked out so far. Ms. Scheuring reported that it has worked very well, noting that applicants to the program went through the Call Center at the Department of Human Services. A general discussion of the call center then took place with the Board citing the need for such a service to create efficiencies within the homeless system. The Board also discussed the need for a call center given the growing need for prevention programs, homeless shelter funding, and case management activities. Mr. Drozynski asked the HEARTH Committee to work on ways to create and fund a call center after the HPRP Program ends.

Wayne Jones asked that the group also try to find a way to assess the impact of the HPRP program on the community at-large. Staff from the City and County said that they would try to determine the impact of the program, but noted that HUD had not provided any means for local recipients to do this kind of analysis.

Announcements

None.

Open Discussion

None.

Next Meeting

The next Homeless Advisory Board meeting will be on October 25, 2011 at 10:00 AM Liberty Room, Lower Level, Human Services Building, One Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh.