

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

Members

Jerry Drozynski, HEARTH; Linda Kilderry, SVDP Society; Linda Sheets, OSN; Sue Scheuring, City Planning; Tom Cummings, URA; Wayne Jones, Heinz Endowments; Michelle Jackson, HACP; Joe Lagana, HCEF; Gary Glacken, VA; Jane Downing, Pittsburgh Foundation; Reggie Young, ACDHS-OCS; Cassandra Collinge, ACED

Guests

Liz Daniels-Totten, City Planning; Terri Laver, ACDHS-OCS; Debra Martin, HUD; Denetta Benjamin, Bethlehem Haven; Frank Cuspard, Pleasant Valley; Cindy Haines, HUD; Mac McMahon, CHS; Eryca Blue, CHS; Mary Pilarski, VA; Chuck Keenan, ACDHS

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. One change was offered to correct “adding” to “expanding” in the Awareness and Advocacy section. The minutes from July 25, 2011 were approved as presented after the correction.

Continuum of Care Status and Schedule

Terri Laver provided the following update on the HUD Continuum of Care Program:

- The county is in the process of submitting the 2011 application, which is due on October 28, 2011.
- The new application will have 4 new projects and will continue to apply for all programs with expiring contracts. Ms. Laver explained the new projects in detail and passed out a summary sheet (attached) of them.

Jane Downing asked about the difference between the county’s *pro rata* need and the bonus. Ms. Laver explained that the *pro rata* need is a formula that the continuum (Allegheny County, the City of Pittsburgh, City of McKeesport, and Penn Hills) are eligible for based on a number of different factors. The Bonus is a separate formula for special programs for homeless people with disabilities only. The Bonus in this year’s application was \$1.7 million.

New Units under Development from 2010

Ms. Laver gave an update of the new projects awarded under the 2010 CoC application. She noted that the ACTION-Housing My Place II, Goodwill Harbor Project, and Sister’s Place Daylight Program were all under contract. The remaining 7 new projects are in the process of having their contracts signed—5 are still in the local HUD office and 2 are still

in DHS' office awaiting information from the awardees. Ms. Laver also noted that Trail Lane Apartments, which was funded under the 2009 CoC award, has recently opened. Linda Sheets explained that this project has 16 Safe Haven beds in the newly constructed building on Ninth Street on the South Side and 14 scattered site units. Ms. Sheets said that the Trail Lane building will also have a primary care physician and dental office on the first floor that will be available to anyone living in the building or anyone else who is homeless who does not live in the building.

Jerry Drozynski asked about new projects in the coming years—should we expect to see this level of development moving forward? Ms. Laver responded that it really depends on how much money the federal government makes available and the kinds of bonus projects they want to fund. She added that the county expects to have about \$1.5 million for new projects in 2012, which is smaller than the last few years. The group then had a long discussion on the significant rise in family homelessness and how to direct providers to address this problem through the Continuum of Care process. The group also discussed the differences between prevention programs (not CoC eligible) and rapid re-housing programs (CoC eligible) and what funding source would be appropriate for each.

HEARTH Work Group

Mr. Keenan gave an update on the work that the HEARTH Committee has been doing to date. He noted that the group began its work by focusing 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. The group has recently begun to focus most of its energy on a centralized intake process, with most in the group agreeing that an organization like the United Way/211 would be an appropriate place to house a one-stop-shop for people facing homelessness or a housing crisis. The committee will continue to meet and provide updates to the Homeless Advisory Board as its work progresses.

VA Presentation

Gary Glacken introduced himself and Mary Frances Pilarski to the group and noted that the reason that the VA had asked to address the Board was to update it on the work that they have been doing to end veteran homelessness. Mr. Glacken reported that the VA recently launched its 5 Year Plan to End Veteran Homelessness and that it had committed 50 staff people locally to the plan through three different programs. Mr. Glacken passed out the VA's VISN Plan and noted that he and Ms. Pilarski were here today to solicit input on that plan from the Board and other members of the community in attendance.

Ms. Pilarski presented the plan to end veteran homelessness, itself, which consists of six pillars:

- Outreach and Education
- Treatment Services
- Prevention Services
- Housing and Supportive Services

- Income and Employment
- Community Partnerships

Ms. Pilarski explained that the VA provides 24/7 access for vets through its national hotline and has a “no wrong door” approach in helping veterans end their homelessness. Cassandra Collinge noted that the HPRP program had a unique partnership with the VA through the VASH program where HPRP funds were used to pay for security deposits for homeless vets enrolled in VASH and asked if the VA could ask another agency to do a similar program under the new Emergency Solutions Grant. Ms. Collinge also said that Wood Street Commons tried to access the Vet Per Diem Program but was unable to do so because the housing quality standards were too high, even though they were compliant with HUD’s standards. Ms. Laver replied that the federal government is attempting to streamline regulations and that this is an area where the VA should look to become standardized with HUD. Mac McMahon asked if HPRP data on veterans could be shared with the VA and Ms. Laver responded that the county is currently working with the VA to get them into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Frank Cuspard also noted that he sees a lot of veterans at the Pleasant Valley Shelter and many of them do not take advantage of the services that the VA offers.

HPRP Update and Transition to ESG

Ms. Collinge updated the Board on the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP), noting that there are over 2000 people currently on the waiting list. All of these applicants will be getting a letter soon notifying them that they will not be served by the program due to a lack of funding. Those who are still in the program will continue to be served as long as funding remains.

Jane Downing asked if the city and county were going to prepare an evaluation report on lessons learned and the impact of the HPRP program on the community at-large. Ms. Collinge responded 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. Tom Cummings praised the administrators of the program, saying that they served many people in need in an effective manner.

Announcements

Mr. Keenan handed out a brochure on Resources for Multi-service Homeless Individuals and Families.

Linda Kilderry announced that the Employment and Training Committee will begin meeting again soon.

Frank Cuspard announced that the Pleasant Valley Shelter will be holding a fundraiser at the Priory on Friday and invited all to attend.

Open Discussion

None.

Next Meeting

The next Homeless Advisory Board meeting will be on January 31, 2012 at 10:00 AM Liberty Room, Lower Level, Human Services Building, One Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh.