

**ALLEGHENY COUNTY HOMELESS ADVISORY BOARD**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**October 30, 2012, 10:00 AM**  
**Liberty Room**

**Members**

Jerry Drozynski, Bayer; Linda Kilderry, St. Vincent de Paul; Lenny Prewitt, Family Links; Jane Downing, Pittsburgh Foundation; Stephanie Chiappini, OSN; Mary Frances Pilarski, VA; Cassandra Collinge, ACED; Liz Daniels-Totten, City Planning; Reggie Young, ACDHS-OCS

**Guests**

Rob Eamigh, ACDHS; Chuck Keenan, ACDHS; Myrna Zelenitz, EECM; Cindy Haines, HUD; Kevin Hanley, United Way-PA 211; Mac McMahon, CHS; Judy Eakin, HEARTH; Lois Mufuka Martin, Beth Haven; Steve Forrester, WPIC; Lynetta Ward, OSN; Jackie Shellaby, Veterans Place; Jackie Abel-Stavropoulos, Goodwill; Kate Holko, DHS; Lisa Zimmerman, Adagio; Ryan Burger, DHS; Donnie Yawn, YWCA

**Welcome**

Jerry Drozynski welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Approval of Previous Meeting Notes**

The minutes from the July 2012 meeting were approved as presented.

**Human Services Block Grant Presentation**

Shannon Fairchild explained the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare's (DPW) newly created Human Services Block Grant funding. Ms. Fairchild noted that the block grant is a combination of 7 separate line items in the DPW budget into one grant. The Homeless Assistance Program is now combined with six other programs in the grant. DPW is allowing participating counties, including Allegheny, to move up to 20% of the categorical funding between programs in the first year of the grant. Ms. Fairchild also noted that a draft of the Year 1 Plan on block grant is due to DPW tomorrow.

Allegheny County will submit the following to DPW as part of its Year 1 Plan:

- Creation of a Block Grant Advisory Board
- Begin a Needs Assessment within the Department of Human Services
- Create an Internal Planning Team at the Department of Human Services

Ms. Fairchild asked the Homeless Advisory Board to nominate at least one member of its board to the Human Services Block Grant Advisory Board. She also explained the seven line items that are in the block grant in greater detail.

**Continuum of Care Application Update**

Rob Eamigh gave an update to the Continuum of Care funding application. He explained that this year's CoC application has 70 projects up for renewal, with a total demand for 13 million dollars. The *pro rata* need for the county is 18 million dollars, meaning that

he expects about 4.7 million dollars to be available for new projects in this year's application. As a result, DHS will be applying for over 180 units of new housing under the 2012 CoC application. Specifically, the application contains the following new projects:

- a. Permanent Housing
  - i. Community Human Services (18 family units)
  - ii. Gaudenzia (21 single and family units)
  - iii. Mercy (16 single units)
  - iv. Naomi's Place (14 single and family units)
  - v. Veterans Leadership Program (16 single and family units)
  - vi. Community Human Services/Wood Street Commons (11 single units)
  - vii. ACTION-Housing/YMCA McKeesport (25 units)
  - viii. Chartiers Center (30 single units)
  
- b. Transitional Housing (Youth 18-25)
  - i. Community Human Services (18 single and family units)
  - ii. Joshua Development (17 single units)

#### **Comments to HUD on CoC Regulations**

Linda Kilderry reported on the comments to the new CoC regulations that were drafted by the Continuum of Care Committee after last quarter's HAB meeting. The draft comments were passed out and Ms. Kilderry asked that any changes to them be submitted to Mr. Keenan within a week. After all comments are received, the Continuum of Care committee will submit them to HUD under Mr. Drozynski's signature.

The group also discussed the merger of the Continuum of Care and HEARTH committees that took place last year. The combined committees need to resume regular meetings, as there is a great deal of work that needs to be done in response to the new CoC regulations. Finally, the group discussed membership in the Homeless Advisory Board and the need to formalize the official members, replace members with significant absences, and re-visit the governing structure. This will probably be on the agenda in subsequent meetings.

#### **ESG Program Update**

Cassandra Collinge gave a brief update on the implementation of the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG). She noted that the new homeless prevention and rapid re-housing activities began on October 1, 2012, with the United Way's 211 Line serving as the initial point of contact for the program. Kevin Hanley explained the role of 211 as it pertains to the ESG program, saying that 211 will take initial applications and use a pre-screening tool to determine who is appropriate for the program. Mr. Hanley also stated that they are currently maintaining a waiting list due to a backlog at the ESG providers. The pre-screening tool was also distributed and Mr. Hanley said that only families or individuals scoring a 7 or above would be referred to the ESG program. Those who score less will be referred to other programs. To date, the ESG program has taken over 100 applications.

Ms. Collinge told the group that the ESG program is designed for those in market rate housing and that most clients will be rapid re-housing, rather than eviction prevention. This is a change from the HPRP program. Ms. Collinge also explained the efforts that have been undertaken to reach out to Transitional and Bridge Housing providers to recruit consumers from those programs into the ESG program, but with little success so far. ACED and City Planning would like to see these consumers receive first month's rent and security deposits as a means of exiting the transitional housing programs, thus freeing up space for new consumers to enter. Mr. Eamigh agreed to re-send an e-mail to the transitional housing providers reminding them of the ESG program and to refer appropriate clients to 211 for an application.

Finally, Mr. Drozynski asked if the HAB could formalize the role of the ESG program into the Continuum of Care. Ms. Collinge said that this is one of the goals that she would like to see achieved in the coming year. Jane Downing also asked if the pre-screening tool could be used beyond the homeless programs and into the other housing programs. Ms. Collinge said that the United Way uses it to refer inquiries to other programs when they are not appropriate for ESG or the CoC programs.

#### **Veterans Administration (VA) Update**

Mary Frances Pilarski gave a brief update on the status of the VA's work to end veteran homelessness. She noted that the VA began its work on the Five Year Plan to End Veteran Homelessness in 2010. This plan has six pillars, one of which is Community Partnerships. She further explained some of the VA resources available to homeless veterans in the county and stressed that she is looking for feedback on the various VA programs. To that end, the VA hosts the VA CHALENG and the VA Summit to solicit feedback on these programs. However, the VA is considering a different model for this year's summit and asked if it should become part of a subsequent Homeless Advisory Board meeting or if it should continue as a stand alone event. The group discussed and determined that it would probably function best as its own event at the VA, but that the HAB would co-sponsor the event.

#### **Announcements**

Cindy Haines talked about the Homeless Summit that will take place at this year's Homes within Reach Conference on December 5, 2012 in Harrisburg. She urged anyone attending the conference to also attend this seminar.

Mr. Keenan announced Allegheny County's participation in the PA Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) Local Lead Agency program, which will give people who are homeless access to newly constructed apartments funded through PHFA's Low Income Housing Tax Credit program.

Mr. McMahon announced the Homeless Outreach Coordinating Committee's publication of a resource card.

Stephanie Chiappini announced that the Severe Weather Emergency Shelter will be open anytime the temperature is below 25 degrees or dangerous weather conditions are forecasted beginning on November 14, 2012.

Lois Mufuka-Martin announced that Bethlehem Haven and one of its funders will be sponsoring a dinner for the homeless in November on the South Side. A formal announcement will follow.

**Open Discussion**

None.

**Next Meeting**

The next Homeless Advisory Board meeting will be on January 30, 2013 at 10:00 AM Liberty Room, Lower Level, Human Services Building, One Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh.