

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

HAB Quarterly Meeting

July 28, 2015 10:00AM to Noon

Human Services Building

One Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh.

Purpose: The Homeless Advisory Board (HAB) is a public/private partnership formed to assist and recommend Allegheny County, the City of Pittsburgh, the City of McKeesport and the Municipality of Penn Hills on public policy, programs, activities, data and all other efforts that will eliminate homelessness and improve the wellbeing of homeless persons and families.

HAB Member Attendees

Refer to sign in sheets; many people did not sign in at this meeting.

Guest Attendees

Refer to sign in sheets; many people did not sign in at this meeting.

Notes

1. Welcome & Minute Approval—Frank Hammond

The April 2015 Quarterly Meeting minutes were approved.

2. Updates

Updates were provided by Committee Chairs or initiative leads. Minutes from the Committee meetings were distributed with the Quarterly Meeting materials

a. Advocacy—Adrienne Walnoha

The Advocacy Committee has been focusing their attention on the uses of media to change public perceptions. Primary focus has been on developing a website which would serve as a linkage to information for all stakeholders, and the initial idea is to model the website on endhomelessness.org. The Committee is also working with artistic partners to develop strategies to do messaging through different forms of art.

b. Continuum of Care—Linda Kilderry

The Continuum of Care Committee has been working with ESG funders to develop a ranking tool that is similar in use to the tool used in the CoC. The intent is to design the tool to be performance base, and to this point the group has determined that the measures used for transitional housing will be the same as those required for HUD. The next meeting of the Committee is on September 9th, and the group will be working on a draft of the tool for that discussion.

c. Homeless Outreach Coordinating Committee—Mac McMahon

The HOCC has been working on connecting with colleagues in McKeesport, as well as reaching out to the county jail to collaborate on identifying homelessness issues as people enter the jail opposed to on their way out. The HOCC is meeting on the 4th Thursday of each month but is considering transitioning to a bi-monthly schedules.

d. Homeless Education Network—Joe Lagana

The HEN meets quarterly, with the next meeting scheduled for the morning of September 18th. Mr. Lagana announced the Homeless Children's Education Fund's

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

annual Summit is scheduled for November 13th, and will focus on advancements that have been made around unaccompanied youth—serving as a follow-up from last year’s Summit V. The Summit is expected to bring in hundreds of participants, and a number of topic areas will be presented on, including collaboration with law enforcement and the judicial system. HCEF has been holding focus groups with law enforcement officers to gather their perspective on young people living on the street and discussing responses to working with these youth. Additionally, they are exploring the ability to develop an app that would inform officers of available resources when they do encounter youth experiencing homelessness.

e. **VA Boot Camp—Chuck Keenan**

The VA Boot Camp is an initiative in Allegheny County between HUD and Veterans Affairs with the charge of ending veteran’s homelessness by the end of 2015—as such, the Boot Camp is concluding at the end of December. The group meets every other Thursday and has been working on a new initiative within the last 3 months to register unsheltered veterans into a database to identify who needs help and understand the scope of the population.

In addition to the registry, an event was held in mid-July to engage and inform landlords. Approximately 30 landlords participated and the event allowed those participants to grow their familiarity with the housing and homeless system and identify ways they can help.

Finally, Mr. Keenan spoke to the Boot Camp’s Buses and Brueggers campaign, which involved posters on buses, in bus shelters, and at Brueggers, with directions for landlords to call 2-1-1 to help house veterans. In the first few days of that campaign, nearly 40 landlords called.

f. **Executive Committee—Jane Downing**

Ms. Downing updated meeting participants on the Executive group’s drafting of a strategic plan for ending homelessness. Citing the national call to end chronic homelessness by 2017 and child, youth, and family homelessness by 2020, the plan would seek to pull together a local framework. Other cities are being looked to as models for this planning initiative, including Columbus, OH, and the initial suggestion is to identify a contractor who can lead the effort and move it forward. The plan would seek to identify gaps in services, and commonalities among all groups working with people experiencing homelessness, and guide action to combat the issue. Money will need to be raised to move this initiative, so the expectation is for this to pick up in January, and the goal is to have corporate involvement, in addition to the stakeholder groups that are already engaged around homelessness.

g. **Ending Chronic Homelessness—Cindy Haines**

The Chronic Homelessness group has its first meeting in June 2015, and used that time to designate itself as the Closing the Gap Action Team. The team will be using diagram driving to discuss existing gaps and thinking through approaches for addressing those gaps—e.g., engagement center, encampment outreach, DeLancy Model, tiny homes, etc. The group is really focused on identifying attainable solutions to focus on over the next 2 years.

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

3. HUD/CoC Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) Application—Chuck Keenan

Mr. Keenan informed meeting participants that the NOFA was expected to be released shortly and the window for submission was usually 2-3 months. A full application is expected, and it was noted that HUD is making the process more complete (e.g., moving away from a formula grant). The intent this year is to make a substantial move on numbers and business processes. In particular, and the main point for discussion during this meeting, is to make a move from transitional housing programs to rapid re-housing. Mr. Keenan stated that there are approximately 100 units of scattered site transitional housing that have been identified to move towards rapid re-housing. Because there is not existing evidence of the effectiveness of rapid re-housing with victims of domestic violence, youth, or ex-offenders, the existing transitional housing programs for those populations would not be asked to make this change. The set of transitional programs that would be ended to make resources available for new rapid re-housing programs were shared, and Ms. Kilderry noted that the CoC ranking tool did provide bonus points to any program that transition to a new program type in support of the CoC's direction and goals. In presenting this proposal the following comments were shared:

- Rapid re-housing can provide resources for more clients, as the term of service is *up to* 24 months, rather than being a fixed 24 months
- Rapid re-housing allows consumers to gradually take over full cost of leasing, compared to having a fixed payment for 24 months and then jumping to full coverage
- Results from the HUD Family Options Study compared rapid-rehousing, transitional housing, and Section 8 vouchers, and found rapid re-housing to be the most cost effective method for families experiencing homelessness.

The proposal identified 9 programs, covering 105 units, and the plan would be to work with them to transition off their transitional housing program. The 9 programs were selected because they are scattered site and a number of them have a rapid re-housing model available. Technical assistance would be made available to help programs understand the purpose of such changes and how to serve consumers using best practices.

Mr. Keenan clarified that the HAB previously authorized the reallocation of funds, and the current request for approval being put forth is to authorize an RFP for rapid re-housing programs, which would be paid through the reallocated funds. The transition programs that will be phased out will work closely with DHS to plan timing for when referrals will stop being made, and existing consumers will be phased out.

Jane Downing called for approval, Joe Lagana seconded, and no one opposed.

4. Update from National Conference on Ending Homelessness

A number of HAB members attended the National Conference on Ending Homelessness and below are highlights they shared by Ms. Kilderry, Mr. Lagana, and Mr. Keenan from the conference:

- The CoC seems to be moving in the right direction around the use of performance measures
- Throughout a number of sessions the need to set reallocation plans and follow Opening Door strategies were stressed.
- Support the move towards aligning regulations for ESG and CoC grants.

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

- CoC should consider training around trauma informed care, for both adults and children
- Developing written standards for populations served, and utilizing system performance measures

5. **HMIS Dashboard, Preliminary Mock-up—Brian Bell**

In April, Brian Bell spoke to the HAB about developing a dashboard for HMIS data, and used this meeting to share some initial mock-ups. These mock-ups were shared with HAB members through the meeting materials, and Mr. Bell briefly reviewed the difference aspects that would be included in the dashboard, including the ability to see counts by varying filters (e.g., demographics), such as active clients or those waiting for services. For all data fields there will be the ability to see the underlying data. The plan is to have three levels of access—internal to DHS/HAB, providers, and the public (who would be able to view summary numbers). Discussions are still ongoing as to what individual providers will be able to see beyond their own numbers. The development plan is on schedule, and the dashboard is expected to be released in the fall.

6. **HAB Meeting Survey—Frank Hammond**

Frank Hammond thanked meeting attendees for their participation in the survey about the format and content of HAB meetings. He briefly reviewed summary results, sharing that two-thirds of respondents citing education and information sharing as their reason for attending HAB meetings, and nearly three-quarters identified the meetings as being useful. A couple fine points from the comments are that the Executive group did decide to maintain quarterly meetings, and there will be an attempt to tighten the timing, in addition to sending materials in advance. Additionally, moving forward the meeting space will be set up to have HAB members clustered around the table for discussion, and all other attendees can sit in the auditorium style arrangement.

7. **Coordinated Intake—Reggie Young, Joe Elliott**

Reggie Young and Joe Elliott provided an update on Coordinated Intake. Mr. Young reiterated with meeting participants that the transition to the coordinated intake system was made to provide a central access point for consumers, while also enabling a better opportunity to capture full data identifying who is in need and what their needs are, as well as tracking those consumers movement through the system.

Mr. Elliott then spoke to how the coordinated system has been working, noting that it has provided consumers with a door into the homeless system, but potentially too-wide of a door. A main challenge is long waitlists, and a few action plans are in place in an effort to alleviate those issues:

- The timeframe for contacting clients has been reduced from 3 days to 24 hours—this means that providers do not need to make calls over 3 days before moving onto the next day, rather those calls need to be made over a 24 hour period
- Entrance into the homeless system is being narrowed to focus on those who will be unsheltered the night of their call. For consumers who are at risk of homelessness, for example doubled-up or pending eviction, they will be asked to use their existing resources or prevention resources (rather than homeless resources), enabled many consumers to self-resolve, and focusing resources on those experiencing literal homelessness

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

- The system is also being revised on the back end to have a master list of clients with referrals, enabling a linkage among referrals
- Furthermore, the master list will be prioritized, factoring in results from the VI-SPDAT tool, so that the most vulnerable clients will be linked to programs first.
 - It was noted that the move to a master list will not remove client choice from the process, rather it will just coordinate the multiple referrals received by a single client, so that clients are not being duplicated

8. **Announcements**

- Stand Down is scheduled for September 26, 2015
- The next HAB meeting is on Tuesday, October 27th