

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

CoC Bi-Monthly Meeting

March 29, 2016 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

Meg Balsamico, Penn Hills
Jerry Cafardi, City of Pgh
Tom Cummings, URA
Sean DeYoung, PATF
Jane Downing, Pittsburgh Foundation
Anthony Duckett, HSAO
Abigail Horn, ACDHS
Linda Kilderry, Michael's Place
Joe Lagana, HCEF

John Lovelace, UPMC
Mary Frances Pilarski, VA
Lenny Prewitt, FamilyLinks
Laurel Randi, McCune Foundation
Richard, Ranii, All. Co. Economic Development
Amy Snider, ACTION Housing
Philip Spina, Light of Life
Adrienne Walnoha, CHS
James Wyler, UPMC-WPIC

Guest Attendees

Seth Abrams, ACDHS
Sheila Bell, ACDHS
Doug Berry
Will Boden
Annie Boyd, ACDHS
Andrea Bustos, ACDHS
Matthew Cain
Tia Canter, Mercy Behavioral Health
Nancy Dunkis, All Co. Economic Development
Rob Eamigh, ACDHS
Judy Eakin, HEARTH
Joe Elliott, ACDHS
Steve Forrester, WPIC
Pete Giacalone, WPIC
Andy Halfhill, ACDHS
Carol Haley-Smith, POWER
Peter Harvey, ACDHS
Kate Holko, ACDHS
Regina Janov, ACDHS

Chuck Keenan, ACDHS
Terri Laver, ACDHS
Scott Lewis, Salvation Army
Stephanie Meyer, ACDHS
Nicole Molinaro-Karaczun, WC&S
Dinesh Nair, ACDHS
Aimee Plowman, Auberlee
Diana Reichbach, Goodwill SWPA
Kelly Russell, City of Pgh
Hilary Scherer, ACDHS
Trishia Silvis, YWCA
Karen Snair, AVAC
Pat Valentine, ACDHS
Kyle Webster, Proud Haven
Jeff Wilhelm, Reed Smith
Kelly Williams, First Step Recovery Home
Reginald Young, ACDHS
Representative, HACP

Minutes

1. Welcome & Minutes Review—John Lovelace

- a. Vote to approve the January 2016 meeting minutes was approved by all HAB members in attendance.
- b. The July meeting will be rescheduled to Tuesday, July 19th, to avoid a conflict with the 2016 National Conference on Ending Homelessness, which is occurring July 26 - 28, 2016 in Washington, D.C.

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2. **Overview of Homeless Services—John Lovelace, Adrienne Walnoha, Jane Downing (Attachment 1)**

As the first meeting of the 2016 appointed HAB, an overview of homeless services was provided. John Lovelace presented a history of the high level actions driving homeless services at the federal and county level, as well as an explanation of the structure of the Allegheny County Continuum of Care (CoC) and how the HAB functions within that continuum. Adrienne Walnoha then provided a summary of the various funding sources that contribute to the CoC, overviewing federal, state, and local resources and the services they support. Finally, Jane Downing reviewed the composition of homeless services in the CoC and advancements made to improve the CoC over the past few year, and connected these items to HUD’s policy priorities and the key actions to be taken by the HAB in the coming year.

3. **HAB Discussion on CoC Planning**

Following the overview HAB members had an opportunity to discuss their role and future directions for planning. Mr. Lovelace summarized the iterative planning process, which includes Committees conducting work and developing recommendations for presentation, discussion, and decision by the HAB. Throughout this process, the intent is to engage all level of stakeholder, as the Committees are open, and public comment portions will always be included in HAB bi-monthly meetings. Additionally, within this process the HAB is positioned to build the system as community stakeholders, and be advocates for the system and its priorities. Mr. Lovelace further noted that the intent was to get the HAB situated in a productive cycle, enabling responsiveness to the HUD requirements while also providing opportunity for the longer term visioning and planning.

Tom Cummings noted that an Affordable Housing Trust Fund was one of the likely recommendation from the Mayor’s Affordable Housing Task Force.

4. **Unified Funding Agency—Michael Lindsey, Chuck Keenan**

Michael Lindsay, who provides HUD technical assistance through ICF International, and Chuck Keenan provided HAB members with an overview of what Unified Funding Agency (UFA) status would mean for the CoC. Mr. Lindsay explained that in most communities the decision to position themselves to apply for UFA is a big discussion because it requires a significant change to the system and the identification of an organizations that can handle the responsibilities; however, for the Allegheny County CoC, most of the responsibilities of a UFA are already encapsulated in the role of the Infrastructure Organization (IO), which is the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (ACDHS).

A UFA is a type of collaborative applicant selected by a CoC and approved by HUD to apply for funding for all projects in the CoC’s geographic area; to sign agreements and distribute funds to subrecipients; to oversee the fiscal controls for subrecipients; and to obtain approval for any grant amendments. Through the UFA, HUD may enter into one grant agreement with the UFA for new awards, in addition to one grant agreement for renewals, CoC planning, and UFA costs, if any. These two grants will cover the entire geographic area. Having a UFA also enables the CoC to receive additional funds to support the administrative costs of the UFA, and by working with the local HUD field office, the UFA has unique ability to move funds across all projects, regardless of component type, within the grant, and the only budget changes that require a grant amendment are shifts of more than 10 percent of

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the total grant award amount from one approved eligible activity category to another activity in a single year.

What this would mean for the Allegheny County CoC is:

- ACDHS would continue to apply for HUD CoC Program funding as it has (application process often referred to as the NOFA), but two grants would be awarded rather than nearly 80 (individual grants per program, as such the number 80 reflects the approximate number of programs, but the specific number changes from year to year). The two grants would include one for new awards, and one for renewals, CoC planning, and UFA costs, but funds would still be identified per specific program, for which ACDHS would monitor both fiscally and programmatically.
- The CoC would be able to make funding adjustments in more real time, rather than waiting to make reallocations in the following year. The process for moving funds would require coordination with the local HUD field office, as well as approval from the HAB as the representative body of the CoC; as such a change to funding allocations would be reflective of decisions put forth by the CoC and would not be an action ACDHS could take outside of the scope of the CoC.
- Ability to access 3% of funding for administration of the UFA, which would provide funding resources for ACDHS to fulfill its responsibility to complete the NOFA and provide fiscal oversight and programmatic monitoring. This 3% is distinct from and in addition to the up to 7% administrative funding received within the NOFA and shared with providers.

Chuck Keenen noted that the UFA registration process is arduous, with less than 5 UFAs identified in the country. Work will need to be done to ensure all necessary documentation is in order to fulfill the requirements of the UFA, including required policy and procedures.

5. **Reallocation—Linda Kilderry**

Linda Kilderry put forth a recommendation from the CoC Committee to request the infrastructure organization issue a Request for Proposal to reallocate the current 40 Safe Haven beds to Permanent Supportive Housing for Chronically Homeless Individuals. Within this reallocation the intent is to continue low-threshold services to persons experiencing chronic homelessness, but to make the beds available as Permanent Supportive Housing, rather than continuing the Safe Haven categorization. Safe Havens have not been available as a new project type by HUD for several years, and HUD is encouraging continuums that have existing Safe Havens to reallocate these projects to a more appropriate housing option for the specific CoC. In the HUD 2015 application, 30 beds were removed as Safe Haven category. The continuum at that time sent out an RFP for Permanent Supportive Housing for Chronically Homeless Individuals, and two projects were funded. Three Safe Haven projects remain with 40 beds. In reviewing client entry dates of participants enrolled in the project on February 12, 2016, 75% of the consumers had been in the program 2 or more years, while ten participants have been in the program prior to 2011 and as early as 2002. What this indicates is the Allegheny County CoC is providing long-term housing and service support through the Safe Haven programs but the consumers served are not categorized by HUD as being in permanent housing, and without the permanent housing designation there are benchmarks for length of stay. A relocation of the remaining Safe Havens to PSH for chronically homeless individuals will help the competitiveness of our next proposal, but will also guarantee continuation of the low threshold service the residents need.

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All HAB members in attendance voted in favor of the reallocation of Safe Haven beds to Permanent Supportive Housing for Chronically Homeless Individuals, with a continuation of the low threshold for entry.

Ms. Kilderry then put forward a recommendation from the CoC Committee to not further reallocate transitional housing programs to rapid re-housing (RRH) so that a review of last year's reallocation, which were just recently awarded, could be completed. Within the HAB's discussion of this recommendation, the following points were made:

- Rob Eamigh reminded HAB members that the reallocation that occurred last year targeted that transitional housing programs that were scattered-site and not targeting a specific subpopulation, such as youth or ex-offenders.
- Abby Horn noted that a change from facility based transitional housing to RRH is more difficult for providers, and while a reallocation would be an open, competitive process, there would need to be consideration around how to make the transition.
- Ms. Walnoha questioned how services for consumers would be affected by moving away from transitional housing, citing that RRH can be applied in many ways, so it is a model that could be used to fulfill the same service needs as transitional housing.
- Ms. Downing reiterated the importance of putting the discussion in our local context and considering the housing needs of the Allegheny County CoC, which should not be limited to just a discussion of RRH, but also PSH.
- Mr. Lindsay noted that the direction heard from HUD is to move to permanent housing.

Based on the HAB discussion, all HAB members in attendance agreed that there is a commitment to move from transitional to permanent housing, and an assessment is needed to determine the specific types of projects that transitional housing should be reallocated to.

6. Evaluation Tools—Linda Kilderry

Ms. Kilderry then shared the recommendation from the CoC Committee that the formal review process for ESG and CoC HUD applications be continued through the use of evaluation tools. The Committee recommends that the two funding sources utilize similar or identical performance measures and be in line with the HUD standards, and put forward corresponding evaluation tools for approval by the HAB.

For the HUD CoC 2016 process, the Committee recommends:

- All data with the exception of the Point in Time will be reported from the last submitted APR in e-snaps. The point in time data will be reported from the 2016 data submitted to HUD in HDX.
- After reviewing the CoC 2015 tool, three modifications were made to the tool:
 - Transitional Housing projects will receive a score based upon the average length of time in program for exiting consumers. Since HUD is emphasizing that length of time in a transitional housing program should not be 24 months but a shorter period, projects will be scored based upon the average time consumers who exit were in the program.
 - Permanent Housing Chronic homeless bed question was updated to reflect 2015 application numbers as opposed to 2014 numbers and projecting number of beds in 2016.

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- Bonus points will be given to permanent supportive housing projects who utilize the HUD established definition of Housing First. In order for a project to receive the 5 points, they must answer 9 questions that are asked in the HUD application as yes. If they answer no to one or more of the questions, no points will be given.

For the Emergency Solutions Grant program, tools were developed for emergency shelter, transitional housing, and rapid re-housing (ESG does not fund PSH):

- The committee took the CoC tool and adopted the emergency shelter component.
- The RRH, Homeless Prevention and TH tools had to be modified and incorporate different measures based upon the HUD requirements for the program. The systems performance measure report that HUD issued in May 2015 was reviewed and utilized to establish measures. Example: Emergency Shelter tool measures the number of persons who exit to any type of housing, not just permanent housing since the goal is to move the client to housing.
- A subcommittee of the CoC Committee met last summer after the System Performance Measures were released to discuss specifically RRH and HP. The results of those meetings were incorporated into the tool and included in the discussion in December 2015.

Mr. Lovelace suggested that median be used in place of average length of time, after which all HAB members in attendance voted in support of the CoC and ESG evaluation tools.

7. Announcements/Public Comments

- A representative from a group of churches spoke to the desire to identify how they can effectively link to the homeless system when they encounter people who need help. The group also asked for consideration of how people who need housing and services can receive that assistance more quickly, citing the effectiveness of OSN in providing street outreach. The speaker noted issues with coordination with the Link requiring regular access to a phone, and the restrictive hours of the severe weather emergency shelters.
 - The group was given information about coordinated intake through the Allegheny Link, as well as being invited to participate in the HOCC.
 - Points about improving coordination and expending resources were welcomed by the HAB and are important for planning. HAB members did note that the expansion of SWES hours specifically, and emergency shelter hours generally, requires access to additional funding/resources.
- Joe Elliott informed meeting participants that a Housing and Healthcare Integration Planning session had taken place in December, and from that an Action Plan was developed and four workgroups were formed. If anyone wants to be involved they can contact Joe (Joseph.Elliott@AlleghenyCounty.US), Peter Harvey (Peter.Harvey@AlleghenyCounty.US) or Chuck Keenan (Charles.Keenan@AlleghenyCounty.US).
- Abby Horn announced, on behalf of the Unaccompanied Youth Task Force, that the second annual YOUTH Count would be taking place from April 29th through May 6th. The YOUTH Count is a county wide initiative to identify how many unaccompanied youth there are (young people, 24 years old and younger, who are experiencing housing instability and are not accompanied by an adult). All people under the age

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of 25 are encouraged to take the survey, through which we can identify how many youth are experiencing homelessness and/or housing instability.

- Peter Harvey announced that a Forum of Workforce Development was taking place on May 2nd, and would begin the dialogue between workforce and housing.

Action Items

- Reschedule the July HAB meeting to July 19, 2016 (10:00am to 12:00pm)
- Issue RFP for reallocation of Safe Haven beds to Permanent Supportive Housing for persons who are chronically homeless
- Review data on housing needs and availability to identify appropriate reallocation of transitional housing.

Next CoC Meeting

Tuesday, May 31st, 10:00 AM to Noon
Human Services Building
One Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh.