

# Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

---

## **CoC Bi-Monthly Meeting**

May 31, 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 to 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 persons and families who are homeless.

### **HAB Member Attendees**

Tom Cummings, URA  
Sean DeYoung, PATF  
Jane Downing, Pittsburgh Foundation  
Abigail Horn, ACDHS  
Linda Kilderry, Michael's Place  
Joe Lagana, HCEF  
John Lovelace, UPMC

Mary Frances Pilarski, VA  
Laurel Randi, McCune Foundation  
Richard, Ranii, All. Co. Economic Development  
Amy Snider, ACTION Housing  
Philip Spina, Light of Life  
Adrienne Walnoha, CHS

### **Guest Attendees**

Seth Abrams, ACDHS  
Wendy Allman, YWCA  
Annie Boyd, ACDHS  
Andrea Bustos, ACDHS  
Val Coleman, Naomi's Place  
Bret Cogis, EECM  
Mary Jo Dickson, ACDHS  
Nancy Dunkis, All Co. Economic Development  
Rob Eamigh, ACDHS  
Judy Eakin, HEARTH  
Joe Elliott, ACDHS  
Kevin Gallagher, OSN  
Erin Gillette, Alle-Kiski Area HOPE Center  
Andy Halfhill, ACDHS  
Carol Haley-Smith, POWER  
Kate Holko, ACDHS  
Ryan Hoy, ACDHS  
Brian Johansson, Light of Life  
Lisa Kessler, ACDHS  
Tim Kelly, Auberle

Terri Laver, ACDHS  
Jennifer Lewis, Auberle  
Scott Lewis, Salvation Army  
Leah Marmo, ACDHS  
Nick Martini, City of Pittsburgh  
Stephanie Meyer, ACDHS  
James Morris, Auberle  
Mary Parks, Sister Place  
Diana Reichbach, Goodwill SWPA  
Angela Reynolds, UWAC  
Judy Robertson, HEARTH  
Rachel Rue, ACDHS  
Kelly Russell, City of Pittsburgh  
Hilary Scherer, ACDHS  
Barb Smith, HEARTH  
Pat Valentine, ACDHS  
Iris, Whitworth, Consultant  
Jeff Wilhelm, Reed Smith

### **Minutes**

1. **Welcome & Review of Meeting Minutes—John Lovelace**
  - a. The May 31, 2016 meeting minutes were approved, pending the correction to the spelling of Mary Frances Pilarski and Nicole Molinaro's names.
2. **Reallocation of CoC program in Allegheny County**

To inform the HAB's discussion on reallocation of CoC Program funds, members were reminded of a number of HUD's priorities and presented with data reporting the service

## Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

---

level needs of consumers requiring homeless system interventions over a six (6) month period, as well as the system capacity. The details presented can be found in Attachment 1, but generally spoke to the need for resources for both individuals and families across the continuum, and the importance of planning towards a system with low barriers and high performance.

To begin the HAB's discussion on reallocation, Abigail Horn noted that national trends and guidance from HUD clearly indicate a need to move toward a Housing First approach and away from Transitional Housing. With the announcement of the Tier 2 CoC Program funding, HUD noted a \$155 million decline in funding for transitional housing projects and over 80 projects weren't funded that would have been if these projects had committed to Housing First practices. This decline in funding, which resulted in at least one CoC losing more than \$4 million, comes after years of HUD sharing research on the effectiveness and efficiency of permanent housing over transitional housing, as well as continuing to increase the priority in ranking given to projects supplying permanent housing services. Other HAB members then added the following points in response:

- Desire to get people into permanent housing as quickly as possible and support their ability to maintain housing
- Permanent housing, using a housing first approach, meets people where they are, fulfilling their housing need, from which support services can be wrapped around
  - Rapid rehousing can be used as shorter term assistance, but prioritizes the housing option being long term and without requiring disruptive moves
- Recognition of the priorities of HUD and the need to position the CoC competitively within HUD's funding announcement
  - Each year, the HUD NOFA includes an increase in the ranking priority given to projects supplying permanent housing services
  - HUD cites the effectiveness and efficiency of permanent housing strategies, e.g., Family Options Study
- A decision to reallocate CoC Program Funds away from Transitional Housing would not eliminate Transitional housing in Allegheny County; rather, this housing type would not be part of the HUD CoC Program funding stream, but may continue to be funded in Allegheny County through other sources, including ESG, HAP, and private funds.

The HAB also discussed transitional processes following reallocation decisions; DHS representatives explained HUD contracts have different start dates, so the ending of transitional programs and starting of new permanent housing programs would occur on a rolling basis over the course of 2017, with the earliest programs ending in February.

Jane Downing motioned that for the upcoming NOFA the CoC adopt policy to house the most vulnerable in the housing most appropriate for their needs; adopt a housing first approach; and reallocate transitional housing to permanent housing (permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing). The motion was seconded and voted in favor by more than two-thirds of HAB members, with one abstaining vote. In response to his abstention, Richard Ranii motioned to have the vote amended to reflect that 95% of transitional housing be reallocated, stating that he had concerns over reallocating all programs and not leaving space for consideration of special circumstances which would indicate appropriate use of transitional housing. HAB members discussed this perspective, and some noted discomfort with choosing an arbitrary number and suggested a caveat be considered if a specific

# Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

---

population was deemed appropriate to retain transitional housing. No population was identified, and the motion to amend the previous vote to change the reallocation of transitional housing for 95% of the programs did not receive enough votes to pass.

***As such, the motion that for the upcoming NOFA the CoC adopt policy to house the most vulnerable in the housing most appropriate for their needs; adopt a housing first approach; and reallocate transitional housing to permanent housing was sustained.***

### 3. **RFP for HUD Permanent Supportive Housing Program Recommendation**

Linda Kilderry presented the Evaluation Committee's recommendation to select Mercy to provide permanent supportive housing using the funds reallocated from the Path to New Life. She reminded HAB members that Path to New Life had sought a reallocation of these funds so that the funds could be utilized within the CoC Program, while St. Vincent de Paul continue its mission of serving men exiting jails, and following HAB approval a RFP was released on March 18, 2016 for these funds. Proposals were reviewed by the Evaluation Committee and the group identified Mercy as the strongest candidate.

***The motion to approve the selection of Mercy for the RFP for HUD Permanent Supportive Housing Program was approved.***

### 4. **Ending Homelessness Among Veterans**

Jane Downing provided meeting participants with a brief overview of the efforts that had been occurring to meet the Opening Doors priority of ending veteran homelessness by 2015, and explained that last year the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) released guidance on how communities could confirm achieving a functional zero for veteran homelessness. As Allegheny County confirms its data to indicate it has achieved the functional zero, the application to USICH will be finalized and HAB support for the submission will be sought. In recognition of timing needs, Ms. Downing requested that the ***HAB delegate support of the submission of the CoC reaching the functional zero for veteran's homeless to the Executive Committee, and this motion was approved.***

Ms. Horn noted that chronic homelessness would be the next area prioritized for reach the functional zero mark.

### 5. **HOCC Update**

Christopher Roach, Co-Chair of the HOCC, provided meeting participants an update on the Committee, speaking to the Committee's effort in January 2016 to identify priorities, which have been narrowed into three main focus areas:

- Ending Chronic Homelessness
- Collaboration with Law Enforcement: Specifically, Mr. Roach spoke to the Committee's efforts to build relationships with emergency providers and law enforcement, noting that he has had the opportunity to meet with the Chief of Police and Zone Commanders to build collaboration. These connections foster the ability to find long term solutions to appropriately responding to persons living on the street, particularly as they interact with City personnel (e.g., officers, public works staff). With people on the street being more likely to be the victim of crime than the perpetrator, these relationships are particularly important.
- Transitional Camp Space: Mr. Roach explained current efforts to develop confirmed camp space that can be used to support transitions to permanent housing for people

# Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

---

who are living outdoors. Citing the early presentation of data, and the HAB's decision to focus on Housing First and permanent housing solutions, Mr. Roach explained that transitional camp space would provide a safe location where individuals can stay and resources can be provided as they wait to access permanent supportive housing. Such a space would allow the CoC to meet their needs and have access to the individuals; though it is necessary to note the camp would be a transitional space with a time limit of 9 months. Both HOCC Co-Chairs met with the Mayor's Office and the City is interested in exploring best practices and policy for such a camp.

In citing the City's interest around policy and procedure pertaining to persons experiencing street homelessness, Mr. Roach explained that the City has discussed forming a Task Force. Members have not been named for this group but the HOCC is looking to be represented and engaged in any process going forward.

A motion was put forth and approved to have the ***HAB Executive Committee put forth a letter to the City in support of having participation from HAB representatives (such as Philip Spina and/or Chris Roach as HOCC Co-Chairs) participate in the City's Task on policies for working with individuals living outside.***

## 6. Data and Planning Update: Homeless Scorecard

Speaking on behalf of the Data and Planning Committee, Andy Halfhill presented HAB members with the Homeless Scorecard, explaining that the Scorecard was developed to provide the HAB with regular updates on how the Allegheny County homeless system is doing towards the goal of making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. The data presented provides an update on:

- Number of persons entering the homeless system for the first time (on an annual interval)
- Bed utilization
- Length of stay in homeless programs
- Exits to permanent housing destinations
- Recidivism

The Scorecard data will be updated and presented to the HAB at each bi-monthly meeting.

One meeting participant asked for clarification on what "permanent housing destination" included. After the meeting the following list of exit destinations which HUD defines as "permanent destinations" were shared with attendees. These are response options in HMIS. If any client exits a program in HMIS and has one of these as their "destination", and then returns to the homeless system, that is called recidivism.

- Moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA PH
- Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy
- Owned by client, with ongoing housing subsidy
- Permanent housing for formerly homeless persons
- Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy
- Rental by client, with GPD TIP housing subsidy
- Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy
- Rental by client, with VASH housing subsidy
- Staying or living with family, permanent tenure

# Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

---

- Staying or living with friends, permanent tenure

## 7. Severe Weather Emergency Shelter System Considerations

Kevin Gallagher, supervisor of the Severe Weather Emergency Shelter (SWES) for Operation Safety Net (OSN), spoke to the HAB about discussions that have begun around reorganizing the structure of SWES to increase the continuity of the shelters, better collect data, and increase the ability for the SWES to serve as a base for engagement. These efforts are being considered within the same budget, and include:

- Stabilize the time that SWES are open (e.g., two years ago the SWES were open for 90 days, while this past year they were open for 45 days), including being open beyond winter months
- Consider a SWES network, which would help provide beds beyond the winter months
- Utilize SWES as overflow while being able to more consistently serve people throughout the year

Mr. Gallagher estimated about 90 individuals per night use SWES, and while numbers do fluctuate there are returning individuals both within a season and from year to year.

## 8. Public Comment/Announcements

Judy Eakin, Barb Smith, and Jeffrey Wilhelm, each provided comment in response to the HAB's decision to reallocate CoC Program Funds from transitional housing to permanent housing.

### Action Items

- DHS will release an RFP for funds reallocated from transitional housing to permanent housing; this RFP will also include options for bonus project funds
- The HAB Executive Committee will put forward a letter to the Mayor requesting HAB representation on the City Task Force related to serving persons experiencing street homelessness
- The Data and Planning Committee will update the Homeless Scorecard for the July meeting to include the data.

### **Next CoC Meeting**

Tuesday, July 19, 2016—10:00 AM to Noon

Human Services Building

One Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh

# Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

## Attachment 1 Reallocation Discussion Slides

### Components Emphasized by HUD

- Data and performance;
  - Effective and efficient
- Prioritize people who most need assistance;
- Allocate resources to the types of projects that are most likely to reduce homelessness;
  - 2015 Awards: Funding for transitional housing projects declined by \$155 million (nearly halved), while funding for RRH doubled and PSH increased by \$165 million.
- Housing First Approach

### Allegheny County CoC Housing Need/Supply

Families					Singles				
Project Type (VI-SPDAT Range)	Households	Capacity <sup>6</sup> (units)	Exits <sup>1</sup>	Gap <sup>6</sup>	Project Type (VI-SPDAT Range)	Individuals	Capacity <sup>6</sup> (beds)	Exits <sup>1</sup>	Gap <sup>6</sup>
Emergency Shelter/Homeless Prevention (0-3) <sup>2</sup>	14 (4%)				Emergency Shelter/Homeless Prevention (0-3) <sup>2</sup>	148 (12%)			
Transition Housing/ Rapid Rehousing (4-8)	219 (61%)	242	121	-67	Transition Housing/ Rapid Rehousing (4-7)	720 (60%)	542	415	-298
Transitional <sup>3</sup>		103	72		Transitional <sup>3</sup>		415	303	
Rapid Rehousing <sup>4</sup>		139	49		Rapid Rehousing <sup>4</sup>		127	112	
Permanent Supportive Housing (9-22) <sup>5</sup>	127 (35%)	390	65	-62	Permanent Supportive Housing (8-17) <sup>5</sup>	342 (28%)	585	110	-155
	360	632	186	-129		1210	1127	940	

<sup>1</sup>Includes an estimate for DV program exits based upon recent APR data

<sup>2</sup>Emergency shelter and Homeless Prevention programs accept clients with any VI-SPDAT score; this line indicates those who were eligible ONLY for emergency shelter/homeless prevention

<sup>3</sup>Includes Bridge Housing Programs

<sup>4</sup>Includes Penn Free Bridge programs operating as RRH

<sup>5</sup>Excludes VASH units and exits; Excludes Wood Street SRO which has been in development; Includes SRO and CMI Bridge projects operating as PSH

<sup>6</sup>Adjusted to account for: TH projects reallocated to RRH and Safe Havens reallocated to PSH