

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

CoC Bi-Monthly Meeting

September 27, 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
Diana Bucco, Buhl Foundation
Jane Downing, Pittsburgh Foundation
Sean DeYoung, PATF
Anthony Duckett, JRS
Abigail Horn, ACDHS
Linda Kilderry, Michael's Place

Joe Lagana, HCEF
John Lovelace, UPMC
Mary Frances Pilarski, VA
Richard, Ranii, All. Co. Economic Development
Amy Snider, ACTION Housing
Philip Spina, Light of Life

Guest Attendees

Jackie Abel-Stavropoulos, Goodwill
Seth Abrams, ACDHS
Tyrone Burrell, Spiritual Devotional Outreach
Recovery Program
Bret Cogis, EECM
Nancy Dunkis, All Co. Economic Development
Judy Eakin, HEARTH
Angalo Farrara, Salvation Army
Emily Goodwin, Soldier On
Carol Haley-Smith, POWER
Andy Halfhill, ACDHS
Kara Harmicar, Mercy
Kate Holko, ACDHS
Chuck Kennan, ACDHS
Melissa Kelley, Mercy

Terri Laver, ACDHS
Keenon Mikell, First Step Recovery
Michael Mitchell, ACDHS
Emil Pyptyk, ACDHS
Chris Roach, OSN
Dan Robinson, ACDHS
Rachel Rue, ACDHS
Kelly Russell, City of Pittsburgh
Hilary Scherer, ACDHS
Jemmi Sestina, ACDHS
Lisa Trunick, Bethlehem Haven
Pat Valentine, ACDHS
Chelsea Cazquez, ACDHS
Stephanie Villella, Chartiers
Laverne Wagner, HACP

Minutes

1. **Welcome & Review of Meeting Minutes—John Lovelace**
 - a. The July 19, 2016 meeting minutes were approved.

2. **Infrastructure Organization Report—Abigail Horn**

Abigail Horn provided updates pertaining to both the CoC and DHS:

 - The CoC Program NOFA application was submitted on September 13, 2016, ahead of the September 14th deadline. The reallocation process undertaken by the CoC, which reallocated transitional housing funds to permanent housing, both RRH and PSH, netted a gain of 33 units if the funding is approved.

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

- The quarterly Homeless Provider meeting was held on September 16, 2016 and included a review of the online fiscal enterprise system that is being developed at DHS, as well as an overview of the DHS structure involved in homelessness.
- A RRH Community of Practice will be convening in October, bringing together providers who have started RRH through last year's reallocations and those who will be implementing RRH if funded, to share experiences and learning and collectively improve the effective delivery of services in a RRH model.
- In response to concerns the HAB Executive Committee has heard around implementing Housing First principles, the Forbes Funds is reaching out to providers to get input on what a Housing First Cohort may look like. No final decisions have been made as the HAB Executive Committee waits for feedback, but the intent is to develop some support for providers around meaningful integration of a Housing First model.
- DHS has hired a new staff member, a Resource Coordinator, to serve as the nexus between Coordinated Entry and the Bureau of Homeless Services. This role will enable diligent oversight of the waiting list, providing a validation point to confirm that referred clients still qualify for and are in need of the services for which they are being linked to. This role will also support the one-on-one case conferencing and coordination that is sometimes needed to ensure appropriate linkages between consumers and resources.
- DHS was recently awarded a SAMSHA grant for \$800,000/year, renewable for up to 3 years. The Healthy Housing Outreach (H2O) project will support a collaboration between behavioral health and the homeless system, seeking to provide the outreach and services necessary to keep people with behavioral health needs housed, particularly those who have been chronically homeless, and veterans, families, and youth who are homeless. Four providers are engaged in this project—Mercy, Community Human Services, Chartiers, and Western Psych.
- As the Collaborative Applicant, DHS will be replying on behalf of the CoC to the HUD NOFA for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project. An initial, small meeting was held with the existing youth homeless providers to discuss what this project might look like for Allegheny County, but if the CoC is selected as one of the up to 10 communities for this project a collaborative community effort will be engaged to develop a plan for preventing and ending youth homelessness. If awarded, the work would build off the already existing efforts of the Unaccompanied Youth Task Force, and any project funds awarded would be added to the overall CoC grant amount, renewable through the CoC NOFA in future years.
- Finally, Ms. Horn updated meeting participants that the Severe Weather Emergency Shelters were going to be open for the entire season, from November 15, 2016 through March 15, 2017, rather than just on nights below the temperate threshold. The intent of this change is to have a more consistent, low-barrier shelter during the winter months and improve the ability to keep clients engaged in services. By implementing this consistent schedule, there will also be a better opportunity to regularly schedule service providers to connect with the shelter clients. Men will be served at Smithfield United Church and women will be served at Wellsprings.

3. Committee Updates

Linda Kilderry provided an update on behalf of the CoC Program Committee. Ms. Kilderry first spoke to the Committee's commitment to having a ranking tool for the 2017 NOFA application drafted by February 2017 so that it is available in advance of the application

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

process. Ms. Kilderry then presented the Committee's recommendation on public comment, which included:

- Any item up for vote be shared with the CoC 8 days in advance of the meeting,
- Public comment be submitted in writing by the Thursday before the meeting,
- Comments received be shared with the HAB on the Monday before the meeting,
- If an emergency vote is needed, and was not on the agenda shared in advance of the meeting, the HAB will allow a 15-minute comment period before voting.
 - Comments will be limited to 2 minutes per comment, and 1 comment per organization.
 - The Chair has authority to extend the public comment period if deemed necessary.

After discussing the staffing capacity to manage these changes, the **HAB voted to approve the updated public comment process for HAB votes.**

Speaking on behalf of the Data and Planning Committee, Andy Halfhill presented HAB members with a report update around the Homeless Scorecard, reminding members 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 around 5 core measures so that progress can be regularly tracked. Mr. Halfhill reported that the Committee is working on options to visualize the data so that it can be more easily reviewed and processed. Further, the intent of the Committee is to review the data monthly so that they can identify achievements, opportunities for improvements, and areas for additional analysis that can then be discussed by the HAB.

4. **Governance Updates—John Lovelace**

John Lovelace notified HAB Committees and members that the November HAB meeting would include updates from each Committee, including plans for those Committees over the next year. Mr. Lovelace further notified all CoC members that the November meeting would include a review of the Governance Charter and that nominations for HAB membership would be due by November 29, 2016 (the date of the next HAB meeting).

5. **Preventing and Ending Homelessness by 2020: Community Strategic Planning Process—Jane Downing**

Jane Downing updated meeting participants on the Community Strategic Planning Process for Preventing and Ending Homelessness by 2020. As a reminder, this Planning Process is a community wide effort to create a strategic plan to: (1) prevent and end homelessness among veterans in 2016; (2) finish the job of ending chronic homelessness in 2017; (3) prevent and end homelessness for families with children and youth in 2020; and (4) set a path to ending all types of homelessness. This means the community will have a systematic response in place that ensures homelessness is prevented wherever possible, or if it cannot be prevented, it is a rare, brief and nonrecurring experience. The HAB Planning Committee selected Housing Innovations from New York as the consultant and hired a local project coordinator, Iris Whitworth to help guide the process. The first site visit for this process was held from August 3-August 5, 2016, and included a Community Kick-off meeting followed by a number of initial Focus Groups with a range of community stakeholders.

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

Ms. Downing shared that a retreat led by Housing Innovations was scheduled for October 12 and 13, 2016 and would include three sessions around best practices, data and evaluation, and leadership and funding.

Ms. Downing also shared a set of draft principles that would be adopted as part of the strategic plan when finalized. She requested that members review these principles and provide feedback, including if anything was left out, by October 5, 2016. The draft principles presented were:

- Use a collective approach
- Ensure service accessibility and quality
- Prioritize rapid exit and housing stabilization
- Align services to peoples' needs
- Prioritize services for people with the greatest needs
- Build a system that works efficiently, effectively, and collaboratively
- Invest in continuously strengthening the system

6. **City of Pittsburgh Encampment Update—Sally Stadelman, Christopher Roach**

Sally Stadelman, City of Pittsburgh, and Chris Roach, Operation Safety Net, addressed the HAB regarding efforts currently underway with the City of Pittsburgh to address the needs of people who are living on the streets. Ms. Stadelman noted that the City's position is to not move anyone unless there is a safe place for them to be moved to, however the City is not a service provider and therefore coordination and collaboration has been a key aspect of this work. The City is committed to figuring out an effective approach to the situation and current responses have involved connecting with designated street outreach teams when complaints and camp information is received. Ms. Stadelman did point out that additional pressure is applied when residents or Council Persons are adamantly seeking movement of people, but the intent is to find safe and responsible solutions for all residents.

Ms. Stadelman and Mr. Roach also highlighted the collaboration that is occurring and ongoing with law enforcement and community groups. Specifically, they highlighted the engagement of Commander Kudrav, who has been dedicated to improving the processes by which police interact with persons experiencing homelessness. Commander Kudrav has been active in the development and implementation of BigBurgh and the pilot of the web tool has been successful, not only with police but with community groups. Mr. Roach noted that he has coordinated with a number of neighborhood groups who are looking to utilize BigBurgh when they identify other residents experiencing homelessness.

Following the update, HAB members asked a number of question/made comments, which are outlined below, along with their responses:

- Is there a sense of how many encampments/people in encampments there are at any one time?
 - The City's involvement at this stage is very reactionary and based on complaints received or the experience of the Department of Public Works in their role around trash pick-up. When a trend of calls in received about a particular area, the street outreach teams are engaged so that people are not

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

simply just relocated to another inhabitable area, but rather are connected to service and housing opportunities.

- Are there educational opportunities available when community members identify encampments?
 - There is an intent to utilize complaints as opportunities to educate the public about homelessness, however there is also a need to protect the identities and privacy of people who are living on the street. In the case of the encampment at the 31st St Bridge, public perception was heavily focus on drug use, which was not an accurate portrayal of that encampment. As such, efforts were made to challenge those perceptions. In another example in East Allegheny on the North Side, there exists a neighborhood that is engaged around homelessness, and the homeless system had the opportunity to speak with the neighborhood group and discuss what the County provides—this was a great experience, as many residents are not aware of the scope of services, particularly the existence of street outreach teams.
- Is the size of encampments associated with complaint calls?
 - There does not seem to be a tipping point of “too many individuals” that leads to complaints, rather it is the by-products, such as increased trash and public urination, that cause attention by residents. About 8 weeks ago the largest camp identified by street outreach had about 20 people but was down to 6, with the largest currently existing camp having 8 individuals.
- Diana Bucco spoke about a recent event held by a coalition of homeless providers on the North Side, that invited community members to attend and have discussions about homelessness. The event was very well attended and included a personal account from a formerly homeless resident, as well as comment from a number of providers. Included in this event was the opportunity for residents to submit questions and comments, and a recurring theme was that a number of people genuinely did not know how to handle the situation of interacting with or responding to those who are experiencing homelessness. Ms. Bucco noted that it was a really good first step to have honest and open conversations about this topic with the community and she is hopeful that more events like this can occur.
 - Mr. Roach noted that much of the current outreach is centered on the North Side, Downtown, and the Southside, which are the primary locations for the population. The engagement of police has been centered around Commander Kudrav’s zone, as the pilot area, and that a lot of this success if through the police on bicycles. Ms. Stadelman also added that communication is growing, but there is a desire to do more with community members, and one avenue might be more follow-up on 3-1-1 calls.

7. Public Comment/Announcements

- Richard Ranii announced that approximately \$450,000 was award for Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development (PA DCED) ESG funds. The County and City alternate application for funding with PA DCED each year, and this year’s funds were with the County’s turn.

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

- Tyrone Burrell announced his efforts to establish a spiritual based program to connect people experiencing homelessness with housing.
- Keenon Mikell noted recent barriers he has been experiencing, including finding resources for men on Megan's List and effectively meeting the needs of people who are in recovery through RRH.

Action Items

- CoC members are asked to submit comment on the Governance Charter by Tuesday, November 22nd. The HAB will incorporate comments received into their discussion regarding the annual review of the Charter.
- The 2016 HAB Nomination form will be released in early November and nominations should be submitted by 5:00pm on Tuesday, November 29, 2016.

Next CoC Meeting

Tuesday, November 29, 2016—10:00 AM to Noon
Human Services Building
One Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh