

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

CoC Bi-Monthly Meeting

November 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 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

Frank Aggazio, ACHA
Caster Binion, HACP
Jerry Cafardi, DCP
Tom Cummings, URA
Diana Bucco, Buhl Foundation
Jane Downing, Pittsburgh Foundation
Abigail Horn, ACDHS

Linda Kilderry, Michael's Place
Joe Lagana, HCEF
John Lovelace, UPMC
Richard, Ranii, All. Co. Economic Development
Amy Snider, ACTION Housing
Philip Spina, Light of Life
Adrienne Walnoha, CHS

Guest Attendees

Emily Alder, ACDHS
Seth Abrams, ACDHS
Annie Boyd, ACDHS
Tyrone Burrell, Spiritual Devotional Outreach
Recovery Program
Andrea Bustos, ACDHS
Jeremy Carter, CHS
Nancy Dunkis, All Co. Economic Development
Rob Eamigh, ACDHS
Judy Eakin, HEARTH
Joe Elliott, ACDHS
Angalo Farrara, Salvation Army
Marlon Ferguson, Veterans Place
Gina Florez, Florez Firm
Pete Giacalone, WPIC
Robert Hamilton, Veterans Place
Greg Higgins, HACP
Kate Holko, ACDHS
Brian Johansson, Light of Life

Diane Johnson, ACDHS
Chuck Kennan, ACDHS
Lisa Kessler, ACDHS
Terri Laver, ACDHS
Ashley Mancine, SDHP
Sara Mindor, Womanspace East
Samantha Murphy, ACDHS
Marlene O'Leary, St. Joe's House
Christine Pietryga, VLP
Emil Pyptyk, ACDHS
Leah Rainey, ACDHS
Gretchen Rechwald, YWCA
Chris Roach, OSN
Rachel Rue, ACDHS
Kelly Russell, City of Pittsburgh
Hilary Scherer, ACDHS
Sally Stadelman, Mayor's Office
Pat Valentine, ACDHS
Stephanie Villella, Chartiers

Minutes

1. Welcome & Review of Meeting Minutes—John Lovelace

- a. The September 2016 meeting minutes were approved pending the following revisions:
 - Language was added to the Public Comment recommendation put forth by the CoC Program Committee, to include the Committee's recommendation that within a public comment period for emergency votes, comments be limited to 2 minutes each, and 1 commenter per organization

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- The public announcement pertaining to ESG funds awarded to Allegheny County was revised to clarify that the City and County alternate years for applying to PA DCED.
- b. John Lovelace reminded attendees that nominations for HAB membership were due by 5pm (the day of the meeting—November 29, 2016), and nomination forms should be submitted to him via email, with the subject line “2016 HAB Nomination”

2. Governance—John Lovelace

John Lovelace provided an update on a few governance topics.

NOFA Update

No information had been shared from HUD since the September 2016 HAB meeting, however in that time a solo application for a transitional housing program was submitted to HUD for the 2016 NOFA competition. No agency has ever previously done this within the Allegheny County CoC so Mr. Lovelace took the opportunity to outline the process and the potential financial repercussions for the CoC as a whole.

HUD allows project applicants to submit a solo application if they “believe they were denied the right to participate in a reasonable manner” in the CoC’s planning process for FY 2016 funds. Once a solo application is submitted, the applicant had until October 14 to submit to HUD and the CoC any evidence that it believes supports its claim that it was not allowed to participate in a reasonable manner. The CoC then has up to 30 days to respond to the solo applicant’s claims. HUD will then review both sets of evidence submitted. If HUD finds that the solo applicant was permitted to participate in the CoC’s planning process in a reasonable manner, then the solo applicant will not receive funding for its project application. If HUD finds that they did not have a reasonable chance to participate, then HUD will review their project application on the merits of its quality and eligibility thresholds set forth in the NOFA. In this second scenario, if HUD decides that the project application meets its quality standards, HUD will fund it directly, however the amount of that funding would be subtracted from the overall funding received by the CoC. That is a potential \$442,000 reduction to the CoC’s funding. DHS, as the CoC’s Collaborative Applicant, per HUD’s guidance, pulled together the documentation of the CoC’s policies and procedures for NOFA planning and participation to counter the appeal. The CoC response was submitted to HUD on October 31, 2016.

CoC Input/Feedback

Mr. Lovelace and Adrienne Walnoha then provided an overview of recent activities undertaken by the HAB to gather feedback from homeless service providers.

The first effort occurred in October 2016 and involved the administration of an anonymous and voluntary online survey of homeless providers to gather insights on the HAB and its relationship with providers. Of the 37 provider agencies invited to participate, 17 submitted responses to the survey. Most responses were affirmative, however results indicated that increased communication from the HAB to providers could be beneficial. As such the HAB Executive Committee is establishing an Ad Hoc Provider Committee to explore and recommend the role and charge for a Provider Committee. Through the Ad Hoc Committee, further input can be gathered to guide how the HAB can effectively engage with providers and help ensure strong communication throughout the CoC.

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The second engagement effort was initiated in June 2016 when HAB members proposed working with the Forbes Funds to establish a Housing First Cohort, which would aim to bring providers together to learn from each other and experts on how to deliver Housing First services in meaningful ways. To better inform this proposal, the Forbes Funds recommended that it conduct interviews with service providers to better understand their commitment toward Housing First and any challenges they were identifying in implementing it. The broad recommendation was made that an individual engagement strategy be used, opposed to a cohort model. While a cohort model may not be needed to support providers, the HAB is looking to respond to barriers and pain points identified in the interviews, potentially through resources and trainings that would be available to all providers across the CoC.

Governance Charter Annual Review

Finally, Mr. Lovelace reported out on potential revisions to the CoC Governance Charter. Each year the HAB is required to conduct a review of the Charter¹, and in supporting this review public comment was sought for potential revisions. Through HAB discussions, and comments received, the following revisions have been proposed to date:

- In September, HAB voted to update public comment procedure
- CoC Program and Data & Planning Committee proposing they merge
- Term limit to take in consideration of previous time servicing on the HAB
- Consideration if term limit should have leeway built in for any representative that is deemed necessary to the HAB but no other stakeholder form that entity is available/well positioned to include

The Executive Committee will assess these changes, and any other potential revisions that arise through a thorough review, and changes will be drafted into an updated Charter and proposed for HAB vote in January.

3. Report out and 2017 Planning

CoC Program Committee

- The Committee is working on the 2017 ranking tool and plans to have a draft for January

Communication and Education Committee

- The Committee is continuing their focus on planning and developing strategies that could have a broad base impact
- On the artistic front: a comic book project is in progress with the Toonseum to use comic books to communicate homeless experience; art shows with Point Park University; and collaboration with Play BackTheater.
- Mr. Lovelace noted that one of the long term foals of the HAB is to think broadly about housing and affordable housing, and community engagement will be important part of that effort.

Data and Planning Committee

- The Committee continues to regularly look at system performance on the scorecard. Some current observations:

¹The annual review is not the only time in which changes to the Governance Charter can be made; it simply represents the minimum time period in which a review is required.

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- The system continues to have a reduced number of homeless served (compared to last year over the same time period) including first time homeless as well as continued low numbers for recidivism.
- The percentage of successful exits to permanent housing is also higher for this past 12 months than the previous year.
- Areas for improvement include reducing the length of stay across all project types to meet our performance goals and continuing to increase the percentage of exits to permanent destinations across all project types.
- Additionally, work is being done to turn the scorecard into a data visualization in Tableau that will allow us to view the data at any time and over any time period that we want. This will make the scorecard more interactive instead of just being a static report. This will make it much easier to monitor the system performance and to better visualize everything.
- Abby Horn brought to the HAB's attention that in looking at CoC's around the Country, Allegheny County is really at the forefront of putting this data out there and trying to make it useable through the scorecard and data visualization. She further noted that data dashboards for Allegheny County already exist, though what is being developed now is meant to streamline based on the HUD benchmarks, but if the desire exists another demonstration can be set up so that CoC members feel comfortable utilizing the data available.
- The opportunity was also used for Linda Kilderry and Amy Snider, as the HAB Co-Chairs for the CoC Program and Data & Planning Committees to put forth the recommendation to merge the two committees. They presented the rationale that the two meetings discussions were mutually reinforcing, while one emphasized provider level and the other emphasized system level the two groups were working towards the same goals and there would be efficiency in combining the two.

HOCC

The HOCC is working across three focused initiatives, each of which hold workgroup meetings:

- Transitional Homeless Camps—the group has drafted a working document for transitional camps and while that document gets finalized and work is done to implement it, the group is working on components of better serving those who are street homeless, including putting in porta potty at two camp locations and working with the Department of Public Works to have regular garbage pickup at numerous camp locations. The intent of the transitional camps is to utilize the engagement already occurring with people who are living on the streets, and bring services to them when shelter is not being accepted or otherwise presents as a barrier; as such the camps are not long term options for individuals, but rather a space where the system can provide enhanced service delivery while respecting the clients level of autonomy
- Law Enforcement—the BigBurgh app has been helpful in generally engaging law enforcement, in addition to Commander Kudrav being an ally to enable connections with the Community Resource Officers, who will attend the bi-weekly street outreach meetings
- Ending Chronic Homelessness—a draft initial list has been created with the intention of working through the list and utilizing case conferencing to connect those on the list with appropriate resources; the planned business process is to tap

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into the regular street outreach meetings and have targeting discussions around the individuals identified as chronically homeless, then on a monthly basis a larger group of providers can come together around these identified individuals

HAB members raised questions regarding the impact of the winter shelter, and it was noted that the change from a severe weather emergency shelter to a winter shelter that is consistently open every day has been seen as a success. At the time of the meeting the temperature had only been below 25 degrees once but utilization of the shelters remained high with 115 men and 25 women at peak times. Through the regular schedule, enhanced services had become available as the consistency of schedule enables organizations to plan times to be available, and for the Allegheny Link to be systematically engaged.

Infrastructure Organization

Ms. Horn provided an updated from DHS, as the infrastructure Organization, noting:

- At the September meeting it had been announced that DHS was awarded a three-year grant from SAMHSA for the H20 project (Health and Homelessness Outreach), and since then a Project Coordinator had been hired—Diane Johnson.
- As the CoC's Collaborative Applicant, DHS would be submitting the CoC's application for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project, which would begin with a planning process to create a community plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, and then allow for resources to actually fund housing options for youth. The application is highly competitive, as only 10 communities will be selected, including a designation for 4 rural communities; however, if awarded, the funds available would be eligible for renewal each year during the CoC NOFA process.
- The RRH Community of Practice had its first meeting on October 21, 2016 and brought together all RRH providers to engage around peer support, best local practices, and discussions of challenges. The group will be meeting again in early December.
- Based on the initial success being seen with the RRH Community of Practice, ideas are formulating to convene a similar approach around emergencyshelters.
- The annual Point-in-Time County will be the last Wednesday of January 2017, and for that count the CoC really wants to get a robust street outreach effort involved to ensure we are capturing an accurate number—as such, comments are welcome on how to support street outreach teams so more can be done across the County.

Community Planning

Jane Downing provided an update on the process to create a strategic community plan to prevent and end homelessness, speaking to a retreat held in October to gather information on best practices, effective crisis responses systems, and system integration and leadership. Ms. Downing then noted that Housing Innovations would be returning for a two-day visit to present draft recommendations for Allegheny County. Feedback from the January sessions will be used to prioritize recommendations and integrate them into a strategic plan. The January visit will start with a Community Meeting on January 10, 2017 at 10:00am. That meeting will be held in the Homestead Grays conference room, located on the lower level at 1 Smithfield St.

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4. Veterans Boot Camp— Robert Hamilton, Christine Pietryga

Robert Hamilton and Christine Pietryga are the Co-Chairs of the Veterans Boot Camp and provided an update to the HAB on their plans for submitting the regions application for reaching the USICH benchmarks for response to Veterans homelessness. Mr. Hamilton and Ms. Pietryga clarified that the notion of a functional zero is no longer the benchmark for which communities are striving, and instead USICH has developed a series of measures to assess that veterans homelessness can be ended as quickly as possible. The Boot Camp, which was originally convened in August 2014, is aiming to reach all criterion in December:

- Identifying veterans
- Demonstrating that every veteran has the option of quick access to shelter
- Length of stay in Transitional Housing
- Community capacity to move swiftly into Permanent Housing
- Recidivism

Mr. Hamilton and MS. Pietryga explained that the Boot Camp is looking to close the loop on a couple of the measures, specifically the length of stay is currently around 100 days and the benchmark is 90, and there remain a few chronically homeless veterans on the list that responses need to be confirmed for. However, the narrative of the application is developed and the Boot Camp is just waiting to have the final benchmarks met before submitting.

Based on this status the HAB voted to approved submission upon receipt of the report from the Veterans Boot Camp showing the criterion have been met.

5. Education and Homelessness—Samantha Murphy

Samantha Murphy spoke to the HAB and meeting participants regarding changes to laws effecting children who are homeless in terms of schooling. Ms. Murphy is the County's Education Liaison, and she explained that every school district in the county (43 districts) has an appointed homeless liaison who are positioned to help with enrollment, transportation, and other school stability concerns. The need to support homeless youth is quantified by the fact that every move results in a child losing 4-6 months of school development.

McKinney Vento is focused on school stability and a change this year in the law impacts the responsibility of the school district. Previously, districts were responsibility for providing supports, including transportation, to children experiencing housing crisis up until the time that child is permanently housed—at which time the child would begin enrollment at the school appropriate to their permanent housing. The change now has schools responsible for the supports for the entire year once a child is identified as experiencing housing crisis (i.e., the support does not end when permanent housing occurs). The intent of raising this change is to help inform and support providers so that they can support their clients and ensure they know their rights regarding school access, including transportation support.

Ms. Murphy closed with information around the various discussions occurring regarding the resources needed to fund transportation. She explained that any unique route can cost \$250-350 a day and that with 43 school districts the processes and expectations for transportation vary greatly, for example some districts contract services while others have staff, and others do not even bus. HCEF, United Way, and other organizations are engaged in discussions to think creatively about how to share and/or coordinate resources as well as streamline efforts.

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6. Public Comment/Announcements

- Chris Roach announced that on December 21, 2016 at 7pm there would be a homeless vigil held at the intersection of Grant and Fort Pitt Boulevard to pay respects to the 10 people who died on the street in 2016, 7 of which were caused by overdoses. In addition, about one dozen long term clients died in the previous week, and they would be remembered as well. Mr. Roach asked that if any providers have other people they wanted to have recognized at the vigil to please let him know.
- Judy Eakin asked that consideration be paid to the level of participation of HAB members and requested that notes reflect which members are not in attendance.
- Ms. Eakin also requested that the assessment of the need for the Providers Ad Hoc Committee not be dependent on attendance at the first meeting in December, and rather that additional meetings be planned in advance so providers can schedule appropriately and demonstrate their engagement.

Action Items

- Nominations to serve on the HAB beginning in January 2017 will be accepted until 5pm on Tuesday, November 29, 2016.
- Revisions will be drafted into the CoC Governance Charter for HAB vote at the January 2017 meeting.
- When the full set of benchmarks are achieved, the Veterans Boot Camp will share the report with the HAB and submit.

Next CoC Meeting

Tuesday, January 24, 2017—10:00 to 11:30 AM
Human Services Building
One Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh