

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

CoC Bi-Monthly Meeting

September 29, 2020; 10:00AM to 12:00PM

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

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 Members¹

Frank Aggazio (P)

Meg Balsamico

Jerry Cafardi

Jane Downing (P)

Laura Drogowski (P)

Annette Fetchko

Pete Giacalone

Abigail Horn (P)

Knowledge Build Hudson (P)

Joe Lagana (P)

John Lovelace (P)

Jennifer McCurry (P)

Michael Murray

Susie Puskar (P)

Christy Pietryga

Lea Etta Rhodes (P)

Gale Schwartz (P)

Kyona White (P)

Kellie Wild (P)

Bethany Wingerson (P)

In addition to the below notes, [the meeting recording can be accessed here](#).

Minutes

1. Welcome—John Lovelace

Upcoming Annual Nomination Period

- Annual nomination period will be starting in October. Hilary will share the nomination form with the CoC and have it posted on the CoC page, and they will be requested back by the November HAB meeting. The Executive Committee will review in December and January, and the new membership slate will be proposed to the full HAB at the January meeting.
 - HAB members whose final term with the HAB will be ending in January are: Frank Aggazio, Meg Balsamico, Jerry Cafardi and Abby Horn;
 - Kellie Wild's term will also be ending, and the Provider Committee will be electing their new representative;
 - In addition, Laura Drogowski and Jessica Smith Perry's first terms will be ending, and they're invited to seek a second term
- HAB Leadership positions also need to be filled. In particular, Chair and Secretary. Christy Pietryga is currently serving as Vice Chair, which she is willing to do a second, 2-year term of, but if anyone else is also interested in that role they could consider it. As such, asking sitting HAB members, particularly those who do not represent provider agencies or a government entity, consider the opportunity to serve as Chair or Secretary.

Annual Governance Charter Review Period

- The CoC Governance Charter is also reviewed annually. Hilary will send an email requesting comment on any suggested revisions. Comments received will be considered and discussed at the November HAB meeting, and revisions to the Governance Charter will be voted on at the January HAB meeting.

2. Eviction Moratorium—Robert Damewood, Regional Housing Legal Services

Robert Damewood, Staff Attorney with RHLG Pittsburgh Office, provided information on the CDC's halt on evictions. The presentation slides are available in Appendix A.

¹ (P) indicates HAB members who were present for the meeting.

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3. CARES Rent Relief Program Update—Cassa Collinge, Allegheny County Economic Development

During the July CoC/HAB Bi-Monthly meeting, Cassa Collinge provided an overview of the CARES Rent Relief program and its administration in Allegheny County, and returned to provide an update. At the time of the meeting, 5,700 lessee and 3,000 landlord applications had been submitted and the belief was the true need further exceeded these numbers. Of these applications, the program had paid out on 255 clients for just under \$800,000. Ms. Collinge cited the existence of a number of programmatic requirements that were showing to impede the administration of the program, but also noted that State and local levels adjustments were being made in an attempt to improve the process and flow of the program. Related, it was noted that legislation was being put before the State to make modifications to the program, and with local support of those modifications the decision was made to locally extend the deadline to October 31, 2020. With the extension, the hope was the State legislation would pass, but if not, local funds would be used to cover the distribution of funds related to any application submitted not meeting the State requirements.

4. IO Updates—Cynthia Shields

- Census completed with unsheltered population the week before the meeting;
- HUD has not yet released any guidance regarding conduction the annual Point-in-Time (PIT count; as such, there is no indication if HUD will say to cancel, or modify it, but DHS and the CoC Analysis and Planning Committee is working on a strategy for the count happening;
- Also have not received HUD guidance on the annual CoC Program Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), which is typically being submitted in September;
- Adjusting to the pandemic, homeless service monitoring is being conducted differently this year—DHS, as the IO, has been receiving technical assistance from HUD to streamline monitoring and this year implementing a risk score based on previous monitoring, DHS Director Action Line (DAL) complaints, and TA engagement from this year. The level of monitoring will correlate with that score. Expectation is that all monitoring will be done remotely this year. Providers should have all heard from Kate Holko about the upcoming monitoring at this point;
- Isolation/Quarantine facilitates are up and operating. In the past week and half have doubled the population at the individual Safe Haven Hotel, due to increased testing and health department orders;
- Winter shelter is expected to open on November 15th and will use Smithfield Church, as well as Shepherd Heart, as well as overflow at the hotels. DHS has been working closely with Mercy (service provider for Winter Shelter), CHS (service provider for Safe Haven Hotel), Health Department, Downtown Police, and other partners to prepare details and processes around the Winter Shelter.

5. Committee Updates

CoC Analysis and Planning Committee—Jessica McKown

The Committee's next meeting will include a review of the Performance Management Overview Report from Quarter 2, and a data review around persons who have died once moved into permanent housing.

Homeless Outreach Coordination Committee (HOCC)—Laura Drogowski

Laura Drogowski shared that the HOCC was shifting its meetings scheduled to have two monthly meetings—the first will align with the monthly street outreach teams meeting, and then the second will follow and will serve as a HOCC coordination and planning meeting around items like:

- Camp coordination
- Key issues with people leaving jail
- Street medicine
- Public Safety Coordination

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- Outreach staff support and credentialing

Provider Committee—LeaEtta Rhodes

The Provider Committee conducted a survey of providers around their interest focus areas and concerns, and the most common topics to arise were regarding employment for clients, childcare and safety concerns during the pandemic, including testing for provider staff. Survey results are helping to inform meeting plans, with recent meetings including presentations around health supports in shelters and employment support programming available to people engaged in homeless services. The next Committee meeting will be around childcare opportunities.

Susie Puskar noted that Partner4Work is collaborating with CCAC and Trying Together to develop an apprenticeship program in childcare and she is happy to connect with the Provider Committee around this and employment generally.

6. CoC Website Planning—Communication and Education Committee, Jennifer McCurry

In advance of the meeting, HAB and CoC members received a copy of the Communication and Education Committee's proposal for the development and maintenance of an Allegheny County CoC webpage. Pastor McCurry reviewed the proposal, asking for any comments or concerns. In summation, the website would fully serve the communication, education, and advocacy needs of the Allegheny County Continuum of Care as it interfaces with the general public. The site would include both existing and original content, and the Committee was proposing that this content to be culled by interns and reviewed by a three member CEC panel prior to publishing. While the website will stand independent from the official Allegheny County Department of Human Services site, meaning it would have its own URL and branding, DHS's Office of Community Relations, which has experience in website design and development will work with the Committee on initial design and be able to host the site.

The HAB members expressed support for the proposal, and once finalized a public comment period will be open and all comments will be shared with the HAB ahead of their final decision.

7. Public Comment

- No comments.

Next CoC Meeting

September 28, 2020 from 10:00am to 12:00pm
Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Appendix A

CDC Temporary Halt on Evictions: What it Means and How to Use it



Robert Damewood, Esq.
Regional Housing Legal Services
Allegheny County Homeless
Advisory Board Bi-Monthly Meeting
September 29, 2020

Regional Housing Legal Services



Regional Housing Legal Services is a legal aid program whose mission is to create housing and economic opportunity in under-served communities in Pennsylvania and to effect systemic change for the benefit of lower-income households.



CDC Order

CDC Temporary Halt to Evictions

Halts certain evictions through December 31, 2020.

To qualify, the Tenant must:

- Sign a Declaration (along with all adults on the lease)
- Deliver the Declaration to the Landlord
- OR provide the Declaration (or proof that the Declaration was given to the Landlord) to the Court
- <http://aopc-declaration.renthelppgh.org>



CDC Order

What Evictions are Halted?

The CDC Order prevents ALL evictions EXCEPT the following:

- engaging in criminal activity while on the premises;
- threatening the health or safety of other residents;
- damaging or posing an immediate and significant risk of damage to property;
- violating any applicable building code, health ordinance, or similar regulation; or
- violating any other contractual obligation, other than the timely payment of rent or other housing-related payment



CDC Order

What Actions are Prohibited?

- If a signed Declaration is provided to the Landlord, the Landlord may not take any action to cause the removal of the Tenant household
- This should include every affirmative step in the eviction process.
- A Landlord who violates the Order is subject to a fine of up to \$100,000 (higher fine or imprisonment if the violation results in death).
- If a signed Declaration is given to the Court, the eviction proceedings will be stayed until January 1.



CDC Order

What is in the Declaration?

In the Declaration, the Tenant states the following under penalty of perjury:

1. ***I have used best efforts to obtain all available governmental assistance for rent or housing.***
- "Best efforts" means doing everything you can reasonably be expected to do.
 - It does NOT mean doing everything imaginable.
 - Apply for a rental assistance program that best suits your needs.



CDC Order

What is in the Declaration?

2. **Income limits:** Income is less than \$99,000 (or \$198,000 filing jointly) or not required to report income in 2019 or received a stimulus check.
3. ***I am unable to pay my full rent due to a substantial loss of household income, loss of work hours or wages, layoffs or extraordinary medical expenses.***
 - NOTE: Income loss does NOT have to be as a result of COVID-19.
 - Extraordinary medical expenses = 7.5% of income
 - Substantial loss of income is not defined.



CDC Order

What is in the Declaration?

4. ***I am using best efforts to make timely partial payments that are as close to the full payment as my circumstances permit.***
 - "Best efforts" means doing everything you can reasonably be expected to do.
5. ***If evicted I would likely become homeless or live with other people in close quarters because I have no other available housing options.***
 - "Available housing" means decent, safe and sanitary housing that you can afford.



CDC Order

Practical Advice

- Keep a copy of your signed Declaration
- Be able to prove delivery to your Landlord (e.g., 1st class mail with verification of delivery)
- Apply for rental assistance first
- Offer your Landlord at least some partial payment
- Be prepared to show the Court your income and expenses if your Declaration is challenged



Questions

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