

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

CoC Bi-Monthly Meeting

September 28, 2021; 10:00AM to 12:00PM

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting *and*

1 Smithfield St, Pittsburgh, 15222 (HSB, Lower Level)

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

Nicole Anderson (P)	Knowledge Build Hudson	Diana Reichenbach (P)
Breanna Benjamin (P)	Anna Kudrav (P)	Lea Etta Rhodes (P)
Damian Butler-Buccilli (P)	Joe Lagana (P)	Cynthia Shields
Jane Downing (P)	John Lovelace (P)	Katie Stohlberg (P)
Laura Drogowski (P)	Jennifer McCurry (P)	Gale Schwartz (P)
Stuart Fisk	Susie Puskar (P)	Kyona White (P)
Pete Giacalone (P)	Christy Pietryga (P)	Bethany Wingerson (P)

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

Minutes

1. Welcome—Gale Schwartz

Gale Schwartz welcomed all HAB members and CoC participants.

July 2021 Meeting Minutes were approved by the HAB

2. CoC Annual Process Overview—Gale Schwartz

HAB Membership

- Each Fall, the CoC opens a nomination period to seek new HAB members. Nominations are received through November 30th and from the nominations the Executive Committee proposes a slate of members to be voted on by the full HAB at the January meeting. HAB membership terms are 3 years, and service begins following the January HAB meeting. Members can serve 2 terms, with the exception of the Provider Representative.
- Provider Representatives are selected via a provider committee vote, and serve 1, 3-year term.
- Current HAB members whose second terms are ending following the January 2022 HAB meeting are: Jane Downing, Anna Kudrav, Joe Lagana and John Lovelace. Additionally, LeaEtta Rhodes will be completing her term as Provider Rep.
- Jennifer McCurry's and Gale Schwartz's first term will be ending, and they can seek a second term.

Annual Review: Governance Charter and Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures

- There is also an annual review of the CoC's Governance Charter and Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures. These documents are available on the [CoC's Planning Documents webpage](#) and will be distributed via email to the CoC. Public comments will be accepted through November 30th, and proposed changes will be presented for vote at the January HAB meeting.

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

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3. HUD CoC Program NOFO Update—Hilary Scherer

HUD released the annual competition for CoC Program funds in August, with applications due in November. Hilary Scherer briefly reviewed the process and timeline, and highlighted updates to this year's application. Information shared can be found in the NOFO Update slides in Appendix A.

4. Allegheny County CoC Strategic Planning—Committee Roles and Considerations

At the July meeting, the HAB began discussing considerations for the final year of the existing Strategic Plan and for the CoC's next plan. As a continuation of that planning, the HAB reviewed each of the Committees—discussing priority work for each Committee moving forward.

Slides in Appendix A provide the existing Charge for each Committee, as well as questions for discussion. Below are comments and questions raised during the meeting for each Committee.

CoC Analysis and Planning Committee

- Recommendation to aggregate system inefficiencies, most specifically the barriers that come from the system design/requirements (e.g., HUD requirements) and impose difficulties to serving individuals and families and effectively operating a system that makes homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring. The CoC would benefit from knowing systemic barriers so efforts can be made to make changes within the CoC and advocate for changes from external entities, including HUD.
- Consider the capacity of the CoCAPC to do analysis and planning, with planning inclusive of broad system development areas, such as prevention and collaboration with other sectors.

Communication and Education Committee

- Engaging people with lived experience in community outreach efforts.
- Identifying staff at organizations to be points of contact for sharing of agency resources and updates.
- With the pandemic the Committee has not been actively planning the same types of awareness raising events that it has in the past, but is acknowledging that recent shift and the group wants to be thoughtful of how to reintegrate into community.

Homeless Outreach Coordinating Committee

- Not specific to street outreach, but inclusive of it, is consideration for how we leverage the lessons learned from the past 18 months to design and implementing creative and effective responses, particularly in the context of the influx of new, but time limited, funding.

Provider Committee

- Interest in hearing from the Committee, as the provider perspective, on the experiences and needs of front-line staff and ways the system can support those staff
- Establishing a systematic account of barriers to staff being successful

5. Planning Next Steps

Intention is to have a document that the CoC can use to guide the shared vision of making homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. The existing Strategic Plan is a 5-year plan, but that same format does not need to be used. The CoC can begin with values that anchor the work and shared vision. Proposal to have an ad hoc group begin initial drafting of ideas for feedback and/or redirection where needed.

HAB members highlighted the following as priority considerations:

- Prevention, inclusive of how other systems are incorporated into efforts
- Racial equity
- Defined implementation/action plan within goals

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6. MHFA SAMHSA Training Grant Update—Emily Insalaco, Cristina Ruggiero

In March, the HAB and CoC heard about a grant from SAMHSA which supports the provision of Mental Health First Aid training, with a particular focus on housing and homelessness prevention providers. Cristina Ruggiero and Emily Insalaco, from ACHI, provided an update on the work to-date (see Appendix B slides), and sought feedback/suggestions for ongoing outreach moving forward, including highlighting the desire to engage residential councils and housing staff.

7. Public Comment/Announcements

- Whitney Finnstrom, City of Pittsburgh, OMB: Cited City of Pittsburgh HOME-ARP Funds, and the desire to engage with the CoC as part of the fund utilization planning. Details on programming and requirements were still forthcoming, but HOME-ARP funds can be used for four eligible activities: Production or Preservation of Affordable Housing; Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA); Supportive Services, including services defined at 24 CFR 578.53(e), homeless prevention services, and housing counseling; and Purchase and Development of Non-Congregate Shelter. These structures can remain in use as non-congregate shelter or can be converted to: 1) emergency shelter under the Emergency Solutions Grant program; 2) permanent housing under the Continuum of Care; or 3) affordable housing under the HOME Program.
- Kent Bey, Project Love Coalition, invited meeting participants to the Harvest Festival Love Our Neighborhood Day Block Party, held on October 9th in the Hill District.

Next CoC Meeting

November 30, 2021 from 10:00am to 12:00pm
Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting *and*
1 Smithfield St, Pittsburgh, 15222 (HSB, Lower Level)

**Appendix A
Meeting Presentation**

CoC/HAB Bi-Monthly Meeting *September 28, 2021*

Please mute your lines when you are not speaking

Meeting will be recorded

Agenda

- ▶ Annual Process Review
- ▶ HUD CoC Program NOFO Update
- ▶ Committee Planning Discussion
- ▶ Planning Next Steps
- ▶ MHFA Training Grant Update
- ▶ Public Comment/Announcements

Annual Processes

- ▶ HAB Membership
- ▶ Charter Annual Review
- ▶ Coordinated Entry Policy and Procedure Annual Review

- ▶ HUD CoC Program
NOFO Update

What is the NOFO?

- ▶ Previously “NOFA” (Opportunity vs Availability)
- ▶ Largest source of federal grant funding for homeless services and housing programs serving people experiencing homelessness
 - \$2,656,000,000 available to CoCs across the county
- ▶ By statute, CoC Program grants must be awarded through an annual NOFO
 - 400 CoC communities apply for grants for approximately 7,000 homeless services projects
- ▶ Includes renewals of existing grants (inclusive of service project grants, CoC Planning grant, UFA grant and HMIS grant) and grant requests for new projects

FY2021 Competition Key Notes

- ▶ Emphasis around:
 - ▶ Collaboration with and utilization of healthcare sector
 - ▶ Collaboration with Public Housing Agency’s
 - ▶ Racial Equity
- ▶ Increased attention to participation of people with lived experience
- ▶ No unsheltered data will be evaluated during this year’s NOFO
- ▶ Bonus points available for collaborations mentioned above
- ▶ Additional section (and points allotted) regarding how CoC’s addressed challenges from COVID-19

Committee Planning Discussion

Strategic Initiatives



Provide access to yearround low barrier emergency shelter



Establish a centralized rental housing locator (navigator)



Expand and develop partnerships to pilot new programs and help with school responsibilities under ESSA



Ensure that outreach resources are sufficient to cover the entirety of Allegheny County



Develop a communications plan that includes broader dissemination of information



Increased supply and access to affordable housing

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Achievements

- ▶ Continued operations of shelters throughout the pandemic
- ▶ Groundbreaking on Second Avenue Commons and RFP for operations of shelter and drop-in center
- ▶ Establishment of Housing Navigator Unit
- ▶ Expansion of services and partnerships for TAY via the development of the Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness and launch of new YHDP -funded projects.
- ▶ Act 1615 Tuition Waiver signed into law for Foster Care Youth
- ▶ Expansion of Field Unit
- ▶ Implementation of Allegheny Housing Assessment (AHA)
- ▶ Connection to clinical (behavioral health and physical) via telehealth
- ▶ CoC webpage plan developed and initiated
- ▶ Continuation and expansion of voucher set asides
- ▶ Risk mitigation fund

Considerations for moving forward

- ▶ Ability to support shelter flow
- ▶ Addressing the housing and social-emotional needs of young adults in the post-pandemic era
- ▶ Forum for Higher Education Administrators and Faculty for students experiencing hunger and housing issues
- ▶ Creating a continuum of care for physical, behavioral health and substance use hand-offs
- ▶ Strengthening communication and growing a community of responder practices
- ▶ Utilization of emergency vouchers
- ▶ End of eviction moratorium
- ▶ Launching Housing Mobility Demonstration Project
- ▶ Effective utilization of influx of time-limited funding
- ▶ Exploring Shared Housing Model
- ▶ Opportunities to keep people stable in their homes when transitioning from homelessness system housing to using vouchers
- ▶ More effectively link service supports for those in public housing
- ▶ Healthcare and housing collaborations
- ▶ Equity
- ▶ Centering people with lived experience

CoC Analysis and Planning Committee

2nd Wednesday, 10:00-11:30am

Chairs: Pete Giacalone, Kelly Russell

IO Rep: Jess Fleming Jessica.Fleming@AlleghenyCounty.us

The CoC Analysis and Planning Committee provides ongoing analysis to support the planning of the CoC, at both the provider and system level. This includes analysis of policies and performance measures in order to recommend strategies to the HAB so the PA-600 Continuum of Care's funding applications remain competitive, as well as studying changes to policy specific to project types and shifts in emphasis within the CoC related to projects and policies. In addition, the Committee regularly reviews available data, proposes data collection needs and performance metrics to the HAB, and identifies trends, gaps and needs presenting from the data. It establishes clear guidelines for data requests to the IO and annually determines the HAB's main data needs for the coming year so the IO can meet those needs in a timely fashion. In conjunction with these ongoing analysis efforts, the Committee will review and develop ranking tools and recommend housing priorities for our homeless continuum of care. The Committee establishes the Evaluation Subcommittee for the review and ranking of all applications submitted to HUD. The Evaluation Subcommittee then submits their recommended ranking to the HAB for final review and approval.

CoCAPC Planning

- ▶ Committee Goals/Deliverables
 - Annual ranking tool
 - Performance Reviews (system, program, project levels)
 - Recommend housing priorities for our homeless continuum of care based on HMIS and DHS level data
 - Use HMIS and DHS level data to answer provider questions

- ▶ Additional and/or more specific considerations for moving forward (e.g., specific data points to consider, new/dynamic ways up updating CoC on performance, etc)?

Communication and Education Committee

Last Monday, 10:00am
Chairs: Jennifer McCurry
IO Rep: Peter Harvey
Peter.Harvey@AlleghenyCounty.us

The purpose of the Communication and Education Committee is to develop and distribute messaging about the needs of homeless persons in Allegheny County. Based on the conviction that the organized, strategic, and effective engagement of stakeholders in relevant policies and funding is critical to creating an effective homeless system, this committee also coordinates advocacy efforts at the county, state and federal levels.

Communication and Education Committee Planning

- ▶ Current focus:
 - Development and maintenance of website that fully serves the communication, education, and advocacy needs of the CoC
- ▶ Considerations:
 - Strategic Plan Final Report and Ongoing Reporting –audience, purpose, responsible parties?
 - Other considerations for the Committee?

Homeless Outreach Coordinating Committee

Meetings: 3rd Wednesday, 9:30-11:00am

Chairs: Laura Drogowski, Dan Palka

IO Rep: Gabe Krivosh Gabriel.Krivosh@AlleghenyCounty.US

Existing Charter

The purpose of the HOCC is to address the complex issues and challenges faced by people experiencing housing crisis living in places not meant for human habitation which includes being on the streets and under bridges or using the emergency shelter network in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. Annually, the HOCC assists with implementation of the Point-in-Time study. The committee also ensures that street outreach agencies are notified of any targeted homeless encampments before evictions. They also help to develop strategies to educate and inform law enforcement officials and other stakeholders about the needs of unsheltered population.

Committee Draft Revision

The HOCC engages with those experiencing homelessness and the organized efforts to assist them, with a special focus on individuals who are unsheltered. The HOCC works to ensure that the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness are effectively addressed by the systems that serve them. These efforts include offering training and education, providing channels for participant input, facilitating program coordination, and researching and promoting best practices.

Homeless Outreach Coordinating Committee

2020 Achievements

- ▶ Provided a forum for partner engagement, services updates and best public health-focused practices (transport, outreach, food drop offs);
- ▶ Facilitated discussions leading to the identification of critical unmet needs during COVID-19, including wash facilities in camps, cell phones, refuse collection (all ongoing);
- ▶ Supported safe engagements with participants;
- ▶ Partnered with ACHD to provide COVID-19 updates for providers;

Homeless Outreach Coordinating Committee

2021 Focus Areas

- ▶ Refocus on proactive projects and engagements;
- ▶ Partner with CEC on “safety” focused training for outreach partners;
- ▶ Educate the continuum about the work that street outreach does and the challenges that they experience via provider executive quarterly meeting;

AREA OF FOCUS	DIRECT SERVICE (n=17)	NON DIRECT SERVICE (n=11)	TOTAL (n=28)
Criminal Justice/Jail Release/Reentry Coordination	14	11	25
Outreach Staff Training/Credentialing	13	10	23
Public Safety Partnerships	11	11	22
Camp Coordination	9	7	16
Street Medicine	9	4	13
Donations/Resources/Distribution	4	4	8
Volunteer Engagement	1	5	6

HOCC Planning

- ▶ Role and responsibilities of the HOCC?
- ▶ Key focus areas?

Provider Committee

1st Wednesday, 2:30-4:00pm

Elected Reps: LeaEtta Rhodes, Kyona White, Diana Reichenbach

IO Rep: Rob Eamigh Robert.Eamigh@AlleghenyCounty.US

The Provider Committee captures the experiences and perspectives of providers in order to inform CoC planning and processes. The committee provides an avenue for strengthening communication across the CoC by facilitating systematic information sharing among service providers and between providers and the HAB. Finally, this Committee will support system and service improvements by utilizing the provider lens to identify gaps/needs and recommend responses

Provider Committee Planning

- ▶ Operationalizing the Provider Committee Charge
- ▶ Key focus areas?


Planning Next Steps



▶ Public Comment/Announcements

Next Meeting:
Tuesday, November 30, 2021
10:00am-12:00pm

Appendix B MHAT Grant Update Presentation



Allegheny HealthChoices • Inc
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INNOVATION

Mental Health Awareness Training Grant

*Allegheny County
Allegheny HealthChoices, Inc.*

Overview

- Update on activities
 - Trainings
 - Organizations trained
 - Instructors
- Feedback/suggestions-next phases
 - Resident Councils
 - Housing Staff
 - Outreach

Trainings and Participants

(April 2020 – April 2021)

- Conducted 10 Adult MHFA trainings
 - Doubled grant obligation of 5 trainings
- Trained 112 individuals
 - Superseded grant obligation of 100 individuals trained



Organizations Trained

(April 2020 – April 2021)

Behavioral Health Providers

- Auberle
- Center for Victims
- Community Human Services
- Center for Victims
- East End Cooperative Ministry
- Familylinks
- Light of Life
- Sojourner House

Housing / Adjacent Providers

- Allegheny County Housing Authority
- Allegheny Valley Association of Churches
- Alli-Kiski Area Hope Center
- Bethlehem Haven
- Goodwill SWPA
- Metowers Senior Housing
- Mon Valley Initiative
- Valley Youth House
- Veterans Leadership Program
- Women's Center and Shelter of Pittsburgh
- YWCA



New MHFA Instructors (April 2020 – April 2021)

*Added 21 Adult MHFA instructors to Allegheny County
from housing / housing adjacent organizations*

- Allegheny County Housing Authority
- Community Human Services
- East End Cooperative Ministry
- Gaudenzia
- Goodwill SWPA
- KBK Foundation
- Light of Life Rescue Mission
- Mon Valley Initiative
- Rhino Security Services
- Salvation Army
- Trek Development



Referrals (First Year and Beyond)

- Track MHFA First Aider participants' post-course engagement with individuals and referral to services
- Started referral program in March 2021

Month	Number of Referrals	% of Participants' Response to Referral Information
March 2021	37	28% out of 64 participants
April 2021	17	22% out of 64 participants
May 2021	28	16% out of 97 participants
June 2021	41	12% out of 170 participants
July 2021	37	9% out of 179 participants
August 2021	42	11% out of 179 participants



Feedback/suggestions

Recruitment and training:

- Resident councils/residents
 - *Chromebooks available for trainings*
- Housing Staff
- Other affiliated organizations

Outreach:

- Communications re: Mental Health resources/reducing stigma
- Focus groups with councils/residents



Thank You

Any Questions?

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