

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

CoC Bi-Monthly Meeting

July 26, 2022; 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	Devon Goetze (P)	Diana Reichenbach (P)
Breanna Benjamin (P)	Andy Halfhill	Gale Schwartz (P)
Damian Butler-Buccilli (P)	Knowledge Build Hudson (P)	Katie Stohlberg (P)
Laura Drogowski (P)	Brian Knight (P)	Jeffrey Upson
Chase Archer Evans (P)	Christy Pietryga (P)	Kyona White
Stuart Fisk	Kevin Progar (P)	Bethany Wingerson (P)
Pete Giacalone (P)	Susie Puskar	Michael Yonas (P)

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

Minutes

- **Welcome—Gale Schwartz**

Gale Schwartz welcomed all HAB members and CoC participants. The May meeting minutes were approved, with one member abstaining from the vote.

- **IO Update—Hilary Scherer**

FY2022 CoC Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Every year the CoC needs to apply for HUD CoC Program Funds (about \$23 million for Allegheny County CoC). At the time of the meeting the NOFO had not yet been released, but is for the CoC Program funds that would begin July 1, 2023. The NOFO application consists of narrative responses regarding the governance, administration, and performance of the CoC; project applications for each of the individual projects we are seeking funding for, and a ranking of all the projects we are seeking CoC Program funding for. The HAB has already approved the performance outcome tool used to inform our ranking of projects. DHS populates the tools with system data, fiscal information and monitoring results. As monitoring is wrapping up, DHS is finishing those tools now. They will go through a final internal review and then be shared with each project for review. Providers review the results, note any issues they see, and can provide justification/context for any areas not meeting the targeted benchmarks. A evaluation Committee then reviews and puts forward a ranking recommendation to the HAB. HAB and CoC members will be asked to serve on the Evaluation Committee.

Supplemental CoC Program NOFO to Address Unsheltered Homelessness

While we wait for the annual NOFO, HUD has released a supplemental NOFO targeted towards unsheltered and rural homelessness. The Allegheny County CoC is able to seek funds under the unsheltered competition. Initial awards through this NOFO will be for 3 years, and then become part of the annual renewal competition. The CoC has an opportunity to apply for up to \$8million more a year in CoC Program funds.

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

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DHS is recommending the CoC apply under this NOFO, but are cognizant of the intention to hone in on unsheltered homelessness, and the awarding of bonus points to CoC's with much higher PIT counts than ours. New projects (meaning projects not already funded by CoC or ESG program funds), can be sought, in the areas of PSH, RRH and SSO. Currently the annual NOFO only allows us to apply for HMIS and CE related SSO projects, but this opportunity allows for the full scope of SSO projects. The application requires a Comprehensive CoC Plan for Serving Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness with Severe Service Needs. We will begin getting started on this, and think such a plan will support the CoC's work regardless of the HUD funding. A Request for Proposals will be developed and released to help identify projects to include in the application.

Home4Good

PHFA has informed us Home4Good funds will be available this year, and will be done as a block grant to CoC's, but we are still waiting for the full information.

- **HOME ARP**

City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County (via Allegheny County Economic Development) have both received HOME-ARP funding. They each must develop a plan for effective allocation of the funds and will seek CoC input to inform the development of their plans. Representatives from both the City and the County joined the meeting to provide a brief introduction to the work and start the coordination for gathering input.

American Rescue Plan provides \$5 billion dollars to assist individuals or households who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, and other vulnerable populations, by providing housing, rental assistance, supportive services, non-congregate shelter, and non-profit operating and capacity building, to reduce homelessness and increase housing stability across the country. City of Pittsburgh allocation: \$ 8,342,028 Allegheny County allocation: \$ 10,799,656. What City and County are looking for feedback on to inform what their allocation plan to HUD includes:

- Unmet needs of each qualifying populations
- Gaps in housing and shelter inventory
- Summary of planned use of funds based on unmet needs
- Estimate of number of housing units to be produced or preserved
- Preferences for HOME-ARP allocations

Once Allocation Plan gets approved by HUD, then the City and County will begin processes to fund specific projects. As next steps for feedback from the CoC, the City and County will attend HAB Committee meetings/coordinate with Committees and get input:

Questions raised:

- Amount of Admin costs versus direct benefit to individuals
 - Cap on 15% of total allocation
 - Funds awarded to service providers can be towards implementation and administration of services the benefit the qualifying populations
- Special Needs Populations—clarify what they include, and consideration to not use “special needs” as such needs are only “special” if they are not normalized for service response
- How to ensure CE is only used for eligibility and not for “ranking”
- Timeline for development the plan?
 - September meetings with HAB Committees
 - Oct-November data
 - December-January draft for City, and end of year goal for County

- **Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program**

Approaching a year into the EHV program and wanted to take an opportunity to review the status of the

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program, including processes and experiences around the vouchers, and also discuss lessons learned and potential opportunities moving forward. Housing Vouchers are a critical resource within the CoC, and the EHV program has not only brought vouchers into the community but has also provided flexibilities not previously allowed with vouchers. Taking a look at how things are going, what successes can be leveraged, and where we might work together to navigate systemic barriers is a great opportunity for the CoC to continue progressing forward.

Chuck Keenan, DHS, provided summary overview (see slides)

Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) was not present but messaged the following EHV utilization rates:

- HACP has 142 Vouchers
- 225 referrals received from DHS
- 63 applicants were made eligible and received vouchers
- 35 applicants have been housed
- HACP has a successful contract with Ursuline Services which is a company that assists residents secure housing and complete their applications.

Kim Longwell, Allegheny County Housing Authority (ACHA), reported the following:

- ACHA has 141 vouchers
- 201 referrals received from DHS
- 163 vouchers received by individuals
- Leased 90
 - Leasing in place versus new is 50-50
- 19 vouchers ported out and 15 ported in
- Have given about 30% of people extension
 - But do give 6 months on initial voucher
- Utilizing landlord bonus incentives regularly; repair fund is explained to all landlords at time of inspection result, but seeing lower utilization of that

Ms. Longwell and meeting participants then discussed experiences, challenges, best practices and lessons learned for future planning consideration.

Challenges:

- Finding landlords
 - Competing with regular HCV program
 - Payment standard, as landlords can sometimes get more than we can pay
 - Bonus payment very helpful here
 - Do have Landlord Liaisons that are helpful in finding units, coordinating with landlords and highlighting benefits of inclusion
- Benefits that are helpful and Best Practices
 - Giving extra time on vouchers
 - Strong communication and customer service with landlords
- Dedicated ACHA staff for EHV program so they can move through applications efficiently

Question and Discussions:

- Effectiveness of the landlord incentives?
 - No one turning down the bonuses.
 - Have bought in a few new landlords (potentially 5-10), some of which do have larger portfolios
- Consideration of \$5k limit on the repair fund (citing \$15k for the URA's repair fund)
 - Paying for that via a \$75k grant from foundation so sought to make it stretch across landlords but still be meaningful

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- Opportunity to bolster availability of repair dollars via HOME ARP?
- Also a need for fuller damage mitigation fund to support landlords staying engaged
- Running and use of criminal background checks?
 - ACHA is running them, as Megan's List and Methamphetamine charges, but we are not omitting people for criminal history.
 - Consideration for evaluation component to include stability of success for those with criminal histories to inform our approach to more successfully supporting those with the history
- Consideration of social services to wrap around voucher holders
- Interest in further understanding and exploring barriers to the approval and then lease up of vouchers within the City

- **Housing Mobility Demonstration Program—Colleen Cain**

Allegheny County DHS partnered with ACHA and HACP for HUD's Community Choice Demonstration Program; a 5 year program to examine the ability to improve geographic mobility for people who have HCV and have children. Research shows that children who grow up in higher opportunity areas benefit, so this demonstration program is to test if certain services can improve geographic mobility. People with children who are currently enrolled in HCV will be invited to participate in the study. There will be an information session to review the details, and a 1-minute video is available to describe it as well. Once a household enrolls in the study they will be randomized into one of two groups. One group will continue to receive their HCV and existing services available. The second group will be offered mobility counseling through YWCA, and the study is conducted to assess the effectiveness of mobility counseling services resulting in families moving to higher opportunity areas.

In presenting this update, concerns were raised about the distribution of services, and HCV holders with children going into the study and not getting services that can help them.

- **Consortium of Recognizing Experience (CORE)—Chase Archer Evans**

Chase Archer Evans reminded meeting participants that CORE is the new initiative to help center those who have utilized homeless crisis services in the CoC planning, administration and evaluation processes. CORE has established a regular, open forum immediately following each COC/HAB Bi-Monthly meeting. A flyer is available that speaks to what CORE is and the meeting detail information. All CoC members are encouraged to share the flyer. A Google Document outlining the input/ideas shared by CORE participants is also publicly accessible: <https://bit.ly/CORElist>

Mr. Evans raised the needed commitment to make space for discussion and open planning for the information raised through CORE and addressing it. Items he highlighted from the list included:

- Connection with PRT to address cost and reliability issues around transportation
- Resource List for immediate needs of people who are unhoused
- Adjusting the methodology of the PIT count in recognition of it being an under-count

Mr. Evans and Michael Yonas, also raised:

- Recommendation to do monthly HAB meetings, with the new meetings not needing to have prepared presentations, but rather be space for open discussion and planning
- Collective Responsibility for Community Engagement—discuss in future meetings a strategy for everyone in the CoC to participate in engaging those they serve, the experts on the ground.

- **Public Comments/Announcements**

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Next CoC Meeting

September 27, 2022 from 10:00am to 12:00pm
Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting *and*
1 Smithfield St, Pittsburgh, 15222 (HSB, Lower Level)

Meeting Slides

HOME ARP Planning Coordination Meeting

ALLEGHENY COUNTY AND THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH

JULY 26, 2022



What is HOMEARP?

American Rescue Plan provides \$5 billion dollars to assist individuals or households who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, and other vulnerable populations, by providing housing, rental assistance, supportive services, non congregate shelter, and nonprofit operating and capacity building, to reduce homelessness and increase housing stability across the country.

City of Pittsburgh allocation: \$ 8,342,028

Allegheny County allocation: \$ 10,799,656

Why is the CoC Involved?

Input from the local Continuum of Care (CoC) is a critical part of developing an effective Allocation Plan:

The Plan must define the needs for [Qualifying Populations](#) (or “QPs”):

1. Homeless
2. At risk of homelessness
3. Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking
4. Other populations where providing supportive services or assistance would prevent the family’s homelessness

What We Need to Know

- Unmet needs of each qualifying populations
- Gaps in housing and shelter inventory
- Summary of planned use of funds based on unmet needs
- Estimate of number of housing units to be produced or preserved
- Preferences for HOME-ARP allocations

How are the Preferences Determined?

A participating jurisdiction (PJ) may establish preferences among the [qualifying populations](#) to prioritize applicants

- For TBRA a PJ may establish a preference for individuals with special needs or persons with disabilities
- Can be limited to persons with a specific disability or can be limited to a specific category (ex: persons with HIV/AIDS, chronic mental illness) if it is identified as an unmet need in the allocation plan

PJ is responsible for determining and documenting that the beneficiaries meet the definition of a qualifying population

- A CoC coordinated entry system can collect eligibility documents as long as the information is not used to rank a person for assistance

What is Eligible?

Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)	100% of funds must benefit households in qualifying populations
Development and support of affordable housing	At least 70% of affordable housing units acquired, rehabbed, or constructed with HOME ARP must be occupied by a qualifying household
Supportive Services	100% of funds must benefit households in qualifying populations
Acquisition and development of non-congregate shelter	100% of funds must benefit households in qualifying populations

A PJ may not adopt limitations that make any of the four QPs ineligible for assistance.

Next Steps

Coordinate with the following:

- Continuum of Care Analysis and Planning Committee (CoCAPC)
 - Provider Committee
 - Homeless Outreach Coordinating Committee (HOCC)
 - Consortium of Recognizing Experience (CORE)
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Resources: Need More Information

HOME ARP HUD Exchange Page <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/homarp/>

HOME ARP Fact Sheets <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/6480/homarp-implementation-notice-fact-sheets/>

Contact: Hilary Scherer

Email: Hilary.Scherer@AlleghenyCounty.us

Phone: (412) 3504938

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EMERGENCY HOUSING VOUCHERS

- OVERVIEW OF THE VOUCHERS
- TARGET POPULATION
- REFERRAL PROCESS AND FORMS
- INCENTIVES
- OVERVIEW OF EACH PARTY'S RESPONSIBILITIES

OVERVIEW OF THE VOUCHERS

- 283 NEW VOUCHERS IN THE COUNTY (142 TO HACP, 141 TO ACHA)
- PART OF THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN SIGNED INTO LAW BY PRESIDENT BIDEN
- USED TO REDUCE THE HOMELESS POPULATION IN THE COUNTY
- EHV VOUCHERS SUNSET ON 9/30/2023
- SIGNED MOU BETWEEN HOUSING AUTHORITIES AND DHS TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM
- PROGRAM STARTED 8/1/2021
- AVAILABLE ONLY TO PEOPLE EXPERIENCING LITERAL HOMELESSNESS OR WERE FORMERLY HOMELESS AND NEED ONGOING RENTAL ASSISTANCE TO PREVENT FURTHER HOMELESS EPISODES
- DHS IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CERTIFYING ELIGIBILITY FROM PEOPLE REFERRED FROM PARTNERS

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TARGET POPULATION

- ACTIVE RAPID REHOUSING (RRH), TRANSITIONAL HOUSING (TH), AND BRIDGE HOUSING (BH) PARTICIPANTS THAT HAVE EXCEEDED THE MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE LENGTH OF STAY IN THEIR PROGRAM
- ACTIVE RRH, TH, AND BH PARTICIPANTS THAT HAVE LESS THAN THREE MONTHS OF ELIGIBILITY REMAINING IN THEIR PROGRAM
- ACTIVE PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (PSH) PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE READY TO MOVE ON
- ACTIVE RRH, TH, AND BH PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE READY TO MOVE ON
- HOUSEHOLDS WHO HAVE BEEN LIVING IN EMERGENCY SHELTER FOR OVER SIX MONTHS

TARGET POPULATION

- HUD HAS WAIVED CERTAIN ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING:
 - Owing a balance to another PHA
 - Criminal backgrounds except those prohibited by statute (Megans Law, Meth production)
 - Some third party documentation requirements can be received after the voucher issuance
 - Previous evictions from housing authorities for drug offenses
 - Current drug or alcohol related criminal activity
- HOUSING AUTHORITIES MAY STILL DENY FOR CURRENT OR RECENT VIOLENT CRIMINAL ACTIVITY, FRAUD OR BRIBERY IN SUBSIDIZED HOUSING, OR VIOLENT OR ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR TOWARD PHA STAFF
- COC STAFF MAY BE ABLE TO PROVIDE CERTIFICATIONS TO SOME ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS ON BEHALF OF THEIR CLIENTS BEING REFERRED

REFERRAL PROCESS AND FORMS

- DHS HAS CREATED A NEW REFERRAL FORM JUST FOR THEEHV PROGRAM. YOU **MUST USE THIS FORM TO MAKE A REFERRAL**
- SEND ALL REFERRALS TO DHS_EHV@ALLEGHENYCOUNTY.US
- REFERRED CLIENTS MUST BE IN THE TARGET POPULATION (RRH, TH, PSHOR BRIDGE HOUSING PARTICIPANTS WHO NEED ON-GOING RENTAL ASSISTANCE OR SINGLE ADULTS/FAMILIES IN EMERGENCY SHELTER FOR AT LEAST 6 MONTHS WHO WOULD ACHIEVE PERMANENT HOUSING WITH THE VOUCHER)
- YOU **MUST** HAVE ALL HOUSING AUTHORITY REQUIRED DOCUMENTS AT THE TIME OF REFERRAL
- YOU **MUST** BE ABLE TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS LISTED ON THE FRONT OF THE REFERRAL FORM (SEE NEXT SLIDE)

LANDLORD INCENTIVES

- WE ARE TRYING TO CREATE A PATH TOWARD EFFECTIVE USE OF THE VOUCHERS AND HAVE DESIGNED INCENTIVES WITH THIS IN MIND
- SPEED, SUCCESS, AND READINESS
- USE THE VOUCHERS AND INCENTIVES IN A TARGETED WAY TO END HOMELESSNESS, BUT ALSO ENSURE THAT WE ACHIEVE SUCCESS WITH THE REFERRALS
- DISCUSSIONS WITH HOUSING AUTHORITY STAFF AND OTHER COC ACROSS THE STATE, BUT AN EYE TOWARD OUR RENTAL MARKET IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY

LANDLORD INCENTIVES

- RETENTION BONUS- \$2000
- RECRUITMENT BONUS- \$1000
- SMALL REPAIR FUND- UP TO \$5000 TO PASS IQS INSPECTION

TENANT INCENTIVES

- HOUSING SEARCH ASSISTANCE
- APPLICATION FEES
- UTILITY DEPOSITS
- SECURITY DEPOSITS (ONLY IF NOT AVAILABLE THROUGH COC)
- RENTERS INSURANCE IF REQUIRED BY LEASE
- MOVING EXPENSES, HOUSEHOLD ITEMS (ONLY IF NOT AVAILABLE THROUGH COC)

SERVICE PROVIDER RESPONSIBILITIES

- IDENTIFY ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS
- SUBMIT REFERRAL TO DHS
- ASSEMBLE NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION (BIRTH CERTS, SS CARDS, ID, PROOF OF INCOME)
- ASSIST WITH APPLICATION, HOUSING SEARCH, OUTREACH TO EXISTING LANDLORD ABOUT INCENTIVES
- REQUEST MONIES THROUGH THE SERVICES FEE FOR LANDLORD BONUSES, APPLICATION FEES, FURNITURE, UTILITY DEPOSITS, RENTER'S INSURANCE, ETC.

DHS RESPONSIBILITIES

- MARKET THE PROGRAM TO SERVICE PROVIDERS AND EXPLAIN TARGET POPULATIONS
- ACCEPT REFERRALS FROM SERVICE PROVIDERS
- CERTIFY REFERRALS FROM SERVICE PROVIDERS (DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY)
- ENTER REFERRALS ON MASTER LIST
- SEND ELIGIBLE REFERRALS TO HOUSING AUTHORITIES

HOUSING AUTHORITY RESPONSIBILITIES

- PROCESS THE REFERRALS TO START VOUCHER ISSUANCE
- SEND APPLICATIONS TO APPLICANTS, SERVICE PROVIDER, AND DHS
- COMMUNICATE WITH APPLICANTS, DHS, AND SERVICE PROVIDER ON STATUS OF APPLICANTS/REFERRALS
- PROCESS RFTA, DO INSPECTIONS, CALCULATE RENTAL SUBSIDY, AND PERFORM OTHER DUTIES RELATED TO ISSUANCE OF VOUCHER
- PROVIDE HOUSING SEARCH ASSISTANCE (ACPTO CONTRACT THIS OUT)

HOUSING AUTHORITY RESPONSIBILITIES

- UPDATE MASTER LIST WHEN APPLICANT REACHES MILESTONES ON THE LIST (VOUCHER ISSUANCE, INSPECTION DATE, RFTA RETURNED, ETC.)
- TRACK REFERRALS, UPDATE MASTER LIST, COORDINATE THE PARTNERS
- STAY ON TOP OF DENIALS
- ENSURE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
- COORDINATE AND ATTEND MEETINGS OF THE PARTNERS (HA, SERVICE PROVIDERS, AND DHS)
- PROCESS PAYMENTS UNDER THE SERVICES FEE (LANDLORD BONUSES, APPLICATION FEES, UTILITY DEPOSITS, MOVING EXPENSES, ETC.)