Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

CoC Bi-Monthly Meeting
September 26, 2023; 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 Members[1]

Nicole Anderson	Shawlane Heffernan	Gale Schwartz (P)
Breanna Benjamin (P)	Matthew Grayson (P)	Katie Stohlberg (P)
Damian Butler-Buccilli (P)	Brian Knight (P)	Pam Turner (P)
Kwabena Danso-Ayesu (P)	Dave Lettrich	LaVerne Wagner (P)
Chase Archer Evans (P)	Amy Plant (P)	Michael Yonas
Melissa Ferraro (P)	Raymond Prushnok (P)	
Andy Halfhill (P)	Susie Puskar (P)	

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

Minutes

- **Welcome—Gale Schwartz**
  Gale Schwartz, HAB -Chair, welcomed meeting participants, and informed attendees that the July Meeting Minutes were pending.

- **IO Update—Andy Halfhill**
  Andy Halfhill provided the following update from Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS):
  - The completed draft application for the annual HUD CoC Program Competition was posted on the CoC webpage as of September 22, 2023, and would be submitted to HUD by the application deadline of September 28, 2023. The application is for CoC Program funding that would begin in July 2024.
  - DHS has an active solicitation open for supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness who have behavioral health needs. Proposals are due November 2, 2023.
  - DHS has been meeting with permanent housing programs quarterly to talk through programming in an effort to support quality service delivery and address any barriers.
  - The CoC's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is being transitioned to Green River. DHS has been using Green River for a few years to support back-end reporting needs. This transition will put the front end of HMIS onto Green River as well. Provider training occurred throughout September, and Office Hours will be held weekly throughout October and then bi-weekly throughout November. All existing data in HMIS will be migrated over to the new system, with data validation checks in place. The new HMIS will go live on October 1, 2023 with the officially launch on Monday, October 2, 2023.

---

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

- **Provider Committee Update—Amy Plant**
  Amy Plant, HAB Chair of the Provider Committee, spoke to meeting participants about the Provider Committee's desire to further engage its members and plan agendas that are meaningful to the needs of providers and the charge of the Committee. Pam Turner, Vice Chair of the Provider Committee, will be emailing a survey for feedback on the outcomes/outputs of the Committee, as well as the meeting time and format. A few upcoming focus areas for Committee include: establishing a "call to action" workgroup regarding coordination plans for service participants; coordination with the Area Agency on Aging regarding their Strategic Plan; and setting up a networking event for providers to meet each other.

- **Report Out: Community Workshop on Partnering with People with Lived Experience**
  Five members of the CoC participated in the HUD Technical Assistance Community Workshop on Partnering with People with Lived Experience (Amy Plant, Aubrey Plesh, Karen Roguski and Andy Halfhill participated in the full workshop. Chase Archer Evans participants in the pre-workshop sessions). In addition to Allegheny County, five other CoCs participated—Ohio Balance of State CoC, New York City CoC, Southeast Louisiana CoC, Nassau/Suffolk Counties CoC, and Pheonix/Maricopa County CoC. The Workshop consisted of 3 pre-worship session on racial equity, and 6 workshops on the topic of focus. The format of the Workshop was TA-led discussion on various topics aimed at helping CoCs think about how to better partner with persons with lived experience. Allegheny County CoC's participants shared the follow reflections:
    - There was no clear HUD guidance yet on this topic, rather clarity that it is an important value
    - Our CoC is doing a number of important things that other CoCs are not yet doing, or are struggling to implement
    - The desire had been to get more practical and actionable guidance, however there is hope that the experience with the Workshop can further galvanize improvements in our CoC, including, but not limited to:
      - Recognizing and honoring lived expertise (including in language of lived expertise, rather than lived experience)
      - Ensuring provider staff with lived expertise are paid sufficiently and supported in a manner that does not tokenize or require accommodation that makes the staff "othered"
      - Continuing to find ways to "slow down and listen"
      - Ongoing self-assessment as individual organizations and as a collaborative CoC

- **CoC Planning**
  In 2017 the HAB approved a 5-year strategic plan for the CoC. The plan was developed following a year-long process that included several stakeholder engagement opportunities, including community meetings, focus groups, service site visits and interviews. The plan was comprehensive in providing context regarding the CoC's development and status. It outlined guiding principles and then focused on 6 strategic initiatives, which are shared on the slide. Some of the strategic initiatives have been critical components of the CoC's direction and successes over the past 5 year. In particular: Provide access to year-round, low barrier emergency shelter; Establish a centralized rental housing locator; and Ensure that outreach resources are sufficient to cover Allegheny County. Other strategic initiatives were more difficult to progress on for varying reasons, such as: Helping with school responsibilities under ESSA, which did not remain a high priority in relation to other needs; and Increase supply and access to affordable housing, which the CoC is more limited in the levers it has authority over in this space.

The HAB would like to move forward on establishing a new plan. The HAB Executive would like to recommend that we establish an Ad Hoc Committee tasked with developing an RFP for a Planning Consultant. A Planning Consultant would position the CoC to collect and aggregate input from stakeholders, facilitate the prioritization of recommendations, and support the CoC in finalizing the plan. However, there are many different directions we could go in for the approach of the strategic plan. As such, the meeting discussion is an opportunity for initial input on framing the type of plan we think would be most effective for our CoC. Plans from 3 other CoC's were shared in advance of this meeting. Those were shared to show different models of approach, as they had varying degrees of detail and scopes of focus. For this discussion, we'd welcome examples of what people did or did not like from those examples plans, but also input that doesn't relate to one of the examples.

In discussing Plan approaches, Chase Archer Evans highlighted the need for accessible hygiene facilities throughout the community. Through the discussion of the importance of meeting basic hygiene needs, including the interplay of hygiene and homelessness, and the role other systems have in preventing and ending homelessness, it was recommended that the CoC's next plan be inclusive of specific action steps, and there be consideration of using a public health lens.

As next steps, an ad hoc committee will develop an RFP for a consult to coordinate with the CoC and develop the next strategic plan.

- **Public Comments/Announcements**
  - Mr. Evans shared that he has a bed for the first time in 2 years
  - Hilary Scherer reminded CoC members that the annual HAB Membership Nomination Period and Governance Charter review would be beginning in November.

<u>Next CoC Meeting</u>
November 28, 2023 from 10:00am to 12:00pm
1 Smithfield St, Pittsburgh, 15222 (HSB, Lower Level) and
Microsoft Teams

Appendix A
Meeting Slides

CoC/HAB Bi-Monthly Meeting September 26, 2023

Please mute your lines when you are not speaking

Meeting will be recorded

We ask that members of the media identify themselves for transparency and so we can follow up appropriately with any additional information that may need

Agenda

IO Updates

HUD Community Workshop: Partnering with People with Lived Experier

CoC Plan Development Next Steps

Public Comment/Announcements

2

July Meeting Minutes
Recording: bit.ly/3rrABpL

IO Update

Provider Committee

Report Out
HUD TA Community Workshop

CoC Planning

Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness (2017)

Provide access to year round low barrier emergency shelter	Establish a centralized rental housing locator (navigator)	Ensure that outreach resources are sufficient to cover the entirety of Allegheny County
• Second Avenue Commons	• Housing Navigation Unit • Landlord incentive programs	• Expansion of Field Unit • Expansion of Street Outreach Teams • Implementation of AHA

Expand and develop partnerships to pilot new programs and help with school responsibilities under ESSA	Develop a Communications Plan	Increase supply and access to affordable housing

Planning Process Next Steps

HAB feedback on plan approach (see example slides)

Ad Hoc Committee develop RFP for Planning Consultant

Consultant develops draft plan

9

Roadmap to Home: Philadelphia's Five Year Strategic Plan for the Homeless Assistance System (2018)

- Foundational context description (commitment to Housing First, recent progress and current state)
- 3 goals aligned with making homelessness **rare, brief** and **non-recurring**
- 8 foundational values: trauma-informed; person-centered; assessment-based; data-driven; flexible; efficient; transparent; accessible
- 5 priorities
  - Expand homeless housing resources
  - Coordinate across and integrate systems
  - Implement transparent and inclusive quality improvement process
  - Communicate more effectively
  - Connect people to employment and workforce development
- For each of the 5 priorities:
  - Describes the challenge
  - Key strategies (e.g., "target, prioritize, or repurpose resources based on need and program performance date")
  - Action steps (e.g., "conduct annual analysis of gaps between population needs and inventory of housing and services to drive funding decisions…")

10

Housing for All=Stronger Montgomery Strategic Plan (2020-2023)

- Vision and mission statement
- 6 goals aligned with the USICH goals to end homelessness among veterans, chronically homeless individuals, families, youth, seniors, and all
- 5 foundational values: Housing First and person-centered approaches; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Collaboration; Data and Results Based Decisions; Continuous Change and Improvement
- 6 Strategies
  - Reduce racial disparities across the system
  - Build and support strong adaptable programs
  - Build and support affordable housing solutions within the homeless continuum
  - Coordinate effectively across other systems of change
  - Increase and diversify funding
  - Educate and advocate for change
- For each Strategy:
  - Set measurable outcomes (e.g., "Number of people entering homelessness for the first time is reduced by 20%)
  - Set priorities for each year (e.g., "Expand and enhance the rapid rehousing program")

11

The Homeless to Homes Plan: Putting an End to Homelessness in Cincinnati and Hamilton County *Implementation Report and Update (2010)

- Prioritizing and establishing a timeline for the implementation of the 56 recommendations within the Homeless to Homes Plan
  - High Priority Recommendations – those items which must begin to be implemented in year 1 to immediately move Cincinnati's homeless services system forward in a positive direction.
  - Years 2-3 Recommendations
  - Years 4-5 Recommendations
- Recommendations are specific and organized category of support (Shelter, Transitional Housing, Permanent Housing, Services, Capital Funding, Smart Funding)
  - "A minimum of 191 site-based or scattered-site Transitional Housing beds are recommended…"
  - "Development of a minimum of 125 site-based Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) units and 79 scattered-site PSH units per year for the next 5 years is recommended…"
  - "Improve capacity to assess mental health and substance use disorders among homeless individuals by providing diagnostic assessment capacity that addresses both mental illness and substance use disorders…"
- In addition to the recommendations, the implementation report called for the identification of **best practices** across services, and development of **Minimum Standards for Shelters** and **Minimum Standards for "Good Neighbor Agreements"** (to which all housing programs must adhere)

12

Public Comment/ Announcements

Next Meeting
Tuesday, November 28, 2023
10:00am-12:00pm