

**Minutes of the
Homeless Continuum of Care of Stark County's
February 22, 2017 Central Intake and Assessment Committee Meeting**

Attendance. The following members of the Central Intake and Assessment Committee attended the meeting: Frank Aquino; Renee Biggums; Amy Dornack; Margaret Egbert; Amanda Fletcher; Jennifer Keaton; Teresa Ponchak; Shirene Starn Tapyrik; Lisa Waikem; Kurt Williams; and Jean Van Ness.

Approval of Minutes. Jean opened the meeting shortly after 10 a.m. and requested a motion to approve the minutes of the Committee's January 24, 2016, meeting. Teresa made the motion, Shirene seconded it, and the motion passed by a unanimous vote of those present.

Change of Priorities for Veterans. Amanda asked that, before launching into the agenda for the current meeting, the Committee come to a decision about the request from the Stark County Veterans' Task Force to give veterans higher priority for housing. (That request was submitted to the Committee at its January 2017 meeting.) During the ensuing discussion, Committee members considered the following factors:

- As discussed at the Committee's previous meeting, both the VSC and Family and Community Services were expected to start providing new RRH services for veterans in the near future.
- According to Lisa Waikem, at that moment, as far as she could tell, HCCSC was essentially at functional zero with respect to homelessness among veterans.
- Veterans have been complaining that they are being forced to contact the Hotline and register with it in order to receive VA services.
- The VA may be broadening its eligibility guidelines to serve veterans with less than an honorable discharge.
- Later on the same day of the meeting, Lisa and Amanda would be meeting with representatives of the VSC, VA, and Family and Community Services and would have more information after that meeting about cooperative efforts to serve homeless vets in the months ahead. They agreed to e-mail Committee members about the outcomes of that meeting

Motion: Amanda made a motion to leave the priorities for veterans unchanged for the time being but to reconsider this matter in six months after the Committee has had an opportunity to see how the new housing programs for veterans are working. Shirene seconded the motion, and it passed by a unanimous vote of those present.

Changes to Policies Governing Eligibility and Prioritization. Jean reviewed with Committee members changes she had drafted to the Eligibility and Prioritization policies and distributed before the meeting. During the ensuing discussion, the Committee reached consensus about the following:

- In the event that clients are no longer eligible for RRH but continue to score for RRH rather than PSH, the shelter where they are staying should conduct their SPDAT again to determine whether they score higher during a face-to-face interview than they did originally. If such clients are not in shelter, the Hotline will re-do their SPDAT. If those clients continue to score within the range for RRH rather than PSH, their cases should be brought before the Quality Assurance Workgroup to brainstorm possible solutions to their housing needs. Section VI.D.2 will be changed accordingly.

- Even though transitional housing is being phased out of the Continuum, the policy sections on eligibility and prioritization for transitional housing should be left in place just in case new transitional housing is developed in the future.
- In Section X.C.4., the language should be changed to provide that, at least every 90 days, clients must re-certify their income.

Jean indicated that she would make these changes and e-mail them to the Committee for a final vote along with the other changes she had made before the meeting. Once approved, these changes would be submitted to the HCCSC Board for approval at its March meeting.

Discussion of Possible Operating Standards. Before the meeting, Jean had submitted to the Committee the attached operating standards that Natalie and she had drafted following Natalie’s 2016 monitoring visit to projects. The standards were intended to establish some basic expectations for projects and to indicate what standards projects would have to meet to be considered “high-performing” and to receive higher scores on their projects in the CoC grant competition.

Jean pointed out that, to a considerable extent, these standards were designed to put pressure on projects to improve in areas of system-wide weakness, including linking clients to mainstream benefit and increasing income from employment and non-employment sources. She noted that recent review of performance data by the System Performance Committee had revealed that, overall, the performance of local projects is getting worse rather than better in these areas.

Various representatives of projects indicated that meeting these standards was not within their reach. One indicated that, to some extent, the poor performance reflected in 2016 data might be the result of underreporting by project staff, who, before 2016, were not obliged to enter this data in HMIS. She predicted that, due to better data entry by project staff, this performance data would reflect significant improvements in 2017.

Since it did not appear that the Committee would be able to reach any consensus on these operating standards during this meeting, Jean tabled the discussion.

Review of the Coordinated Entry Process Self-Assessment. Jean led the Committee through a review of the Coordinated Entry Process Self-Assessment which HUD had issued in January along with its Coordinated Entry Notice CPD-17-02, which established new requirements for CoCs’ centralized or coordinated assessment systems. Areas identified for improvement in our process included the following:

- Marketing. We need to develop a comprehensive marketing plan for the Hotline.
- Accessibility. We need to be sure that we have a way for the following to access the Hotline:
 - Those with limited or no English.
 - Those with visual or hearing impairments. (The possibility of the hearing impaired accessing the Hotline through e-mail was discussed.)
- Emergency Services. We need to outline procedures for accessing emergency services when the Hotline is closed.
- Prevention Services. We need to make sure that there are written rules for accessing the new, experimental prevention program that CommQuest has developed.

- Safety Planning. Although we have a good process in place for cooperation between domestic violence projects and the Hotline, we need to figure out who we should be working with at the Domestic Violence Project since Denise Hollenbach is no longer with DVP. Teresa will look into this.
- Street Outreach. We need to get PATH staff together with the all-volunteer Homeless Outreach Team to coordinate outreach efforts and let the police know whom they should contact in the event that they come across people living on the street or in places not meant for human habitation who are in obvious need of outreach help.
- Assessment Process. We may want to look into using the Youth SPDAT for transitional age youth. We also need to reexamine our policies to make sure that we're not screening out people due to perceived barriers. Among other things, providers should not be using arrest records to deny admission to clients, only convictions where appropriate. Amanda mentioned the need to try to collect and review the policies and eligibility rules of all projects.
- Training. Teresa and Jennifer indicated that there are currently a lot of training opportunities available. They conduct SPDAT training quarterly; biannual training for specific project types; and monthly privacy and security trainings. However, there appeared to be consensus that more widespread training in trauma-informed care and cultural and linguistic competency would be useful as well as training of safety planning.
- Client-Centered. We must inform clients of their ability to file a non-discrimination complaint. (Does this need to be added to the Hotline's script?)

The Committee will be working on these issues in the months ahead.

Old Business. Jennifer Keaton indicated that she, Shirene, and Amy had plans to meet to develop instructions to accompany the recently adopted disability verification form. This was a task they had agreed to assume at the January meeting after discussion revealed that many people filling out this form were doing so incorrectly.

New Business. None

Adjournment. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned around noon.