



## Homeless Continuum of Care of Stark County

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*No one should experience homelessness. No one should be without a safe, stable place to call home.*

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### **HOMELESS CONTINUUM OF CARE OF STARK COUNTY Members' Meeting**

July 20, 2015

Held at

Main Branch, Stark County Library

#### **In Attendance**

Please see attached sheet for members and guests in attendance.

#### **I. Call to Order**

Jean Van Ness, Chair of the Homeless Continuum of Care of Stark County (HCCSC), called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

#### **II. Approval of Minutes**

**Motion:** Jennifer Keaton moved and Shannon Williams seconded that the minutes from the March 2015 Members' Meeting be approved as circulated. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **III. Reports Out on National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) Conference**

Members of HCCSC who traveled to the NAEH Conference summarized the sessions they attended. They shared the following details and lessons learned.

##### **1. Veterans - Lisa Waikem**

- Currently in Stark County, there are 5 veterans on the centralized prioritization list (3 for rapid re-housing [RRH] and 2 for permanent supportive housing [PSH]).
- Some strategies for removing barriers are: (1) helping homeless veterans obtain their DD214 and disability verifications, (2) working from a shared list of homeless veterans, (3) working more closely with the domicile and advocating for more resources.
- New Orleans has officially reached "functional zero" for their homeless veteran count.
- Cleveland is also doing well at addressing their homeless veteran population with providing immediate coordinated access to care. Within 60 days of being identified as homeless, veterans are guaranteed access to a low barrier shelter. The Domicile reports to HMIS and HMIS, VASH, and SSVF are integrated. They have a single list and meet weekly to address the housing needs. Veterans are assessed by the medical facility.
- Having the mayor, city council and community leaders on board is key.

## **2. Plenary Speech from President of NAEH - Jean Van Ness**

- Many US households are facing tremendous pressure: housing costs are increasing and wages are not keeping up.
- Providers are also facing pressure: interventions require new skills. National funding is harder to gain; however, enough national resources are available to end veteran homelessness, and Stark County appears to be very close.
- HUD studies show transitional housing (TH) is not cost-effective and RRH outcomes are as good, or better, than TH for a fraction of the cost. More rigorous RRH service packages are needed.
- There is an increasing focus on youth homelessness and Health and Human Services (HHS) funding for youth services is available.
- The best opportunity to make an impact is now, under the Obama administration, as it is fully committed to the goal of ending homelessness.

Lastly, Jean noted that HCCSC would like to have many representatives attending this conference annually, and asked interested members to keep this in mind for next year.

## **3. Rapid Re-Housing - Angenita Daniels**

Angenita noted that she had a great experience at the conference.

- Various states are experiencing the same issues as Ohio.
- Finding affordable housing is a challenge. RRH case managers must be creative with realtors and build relationships with landlords.
- Several sessions focused on employment opportunities for RRH tenants. Many RRH tenants are unemployed or under-employed. On the job training opportunities are needed.
- YWCA's RRH project is being effective. It is in the process of hiring another case manager and housing assistant to increase success of project. Between May – July 15 households were housed, 3 are waiting for inspections, and 10 are searching for affordable housing.

Following Angenita's update, a Stark County Real Estate Investment Association (SCREIA) representative shared the pressures that landlords face (e.g. recovering from the recession, mortgages, taxes, and insurance) that prevent them from charging low rental rates for RRH. Discussion followed about the possibility of housing multiple single persons together in homes, including the zoning-related issues and insurance feasibility of this option.

In addition, concerns were voiced regarding the loss of TH, which can serve category 2 homeless persons, in the CoC. Jean shared that, during the conference, it was made clear that HUD does not favor TH and that federal CoC funding must align with HUD's priorities; our application will be penalized if we do not align with HUD's priorities, and we will lose funding. Securing alternative resources for TH would be the most effective way of retaining some TH in the community.

## **4. Affordable Housing, Community Development, Workforce Initiatives, Medicaid, Olmstead Act – Shirene Starn-Tapyrik**

- Many non-CoC funding streams (including SAMHSA, CDBG, Department of Justice [DOJ], and other federal sources) appear to be aligning to encourage the PSH model. In addition, the

Qualified Allocation Plan through the State set plans for allocations for housing focused on workforce initiatives, affordability and medical assistance.

- Affordable housing: funds will be available from the State in order to encourage desegregation and discourage silos of housing for only certain sub-populations.
- Medicaid: funds will be available for supportive services, including deposits for housing. Medicaid is moving away from supporting group homes. These funds can be accessed through Medicaid/Medicare billable agencies.
- Workforce Initiatives: many of these projects focus on the importance of both employment and housing. SNAPS funding for families with minor children is expanding to provide services related to employment. Jean added that recent research supports on-the-job training as an appropriate model for homeless clients, helping to get them employed quickly.

## **5. Youth, Outreach, Community Partnerships, Evaluating Project and System Performance and Re-Entry – Natalie McCleskey**

Natalie recounted that the following objectives were stressed as components of a successful CoC:

- Maintain a sense of urgency; move while the political focus is on ending homelessness.
- Continue to learn from other successful communities and implement similar strategies.
- Set big goals locally and believe in them, and adopt HUD's goals (ending homelessness for veterans by 2015, the chronically homeless by 2017, and families and youth by 2020).
- Tap into other funding streams, including HHS, DOJ, and VA. CoC funding is not sufficient to end homelessness.
- When engaging with other federal departments, work to learn their "language;" gain a better understanding of their strengths and possible contributions to our cause.
- Develop strong outreach strategies.
- Maintain data and make data-driven decisions. In the coming years, the CoC application will be based largely on outcomes of System Performance Measures. HUD representatives at the conference were not sure if benchmarks would be set on the national or local level.
- Develop a strategic plan.
- Partner with key leadership and agencies in the community, including law enforcement, libraries, and political leaders. Natalie thanked the Mayor of Alliance for attending the meeting.

Natalie also asked any interested members to get involved in the Youth Subcommittee. Senate Bill has been created which, if passed, will bring additional funds into projects targeting youth, expanding assistance to 36 months. HUD is looking for communities that are developing projects for youth to see what is working and successful. In Ohio, the Attorney General is very interested in youth homelessness and has worked with an agency in the Cincinnati CoC.

## **6. Prevention & Diversion – Shannon Williams**

Shannon shared examples of prevention and diversion models. The different communities she learned about adopted diverse strategies to prevention and diversion, such as:

- Targeting those facing eviction, with the help of a mapping tool using tenancy court data
- Targeting those returning to homelessness (for diversion)
- Targeting those on shelter wait lists (for diversion)

- Using wraparound service centers that bundle TANF and faith-based funding for assistance
- Building diversion into central intake and assessment; diverting after initial assessment
- Using assistance besides financial to help the household stabilize
- Partnering with interfaith groups that can advocate
- Partnering with Housing Resource Centers with housing stability and career coaches
- Recognizing diversion as a (sometimes long-term) strategy to help people avoid shelter, regardless of their level of need (i.e., forcing them to prove that they can stabilize after receiving one month of assistance is outdated. One speaker suggested that 90% of traditional prevention funds are wasted)

She summarized the other sessions she attended, as follows:

- Richard Gere spoke about his new movie, in which he plays a homeless man in NY.
- Missions and CoC's: establish a shared goal about the people, not the data and requirements.
- Human Trafficking: 14,000 – 17,000 individuals are trafficked in the US each year. Screening tools have been formed by many organizations that may be helpful.
- Written Standards: we seem to be ahead of the game in developing these.
- Public Housing Authorities: some instituted set-aside vouchers for homeless, and others discussed their homeless preference.
- HUD Q&A: HUD doesn't know much about prevention, and is expecting communities to experiment and share.
- In general, VI-SPDAT was repeatedly brought up as a good tool.

#### **IV. 2015 PIT Count Results**

Jennifer Keaton shared PIT data from the past 7 years. She discussed the following points:

- The total homeless numbers have decreased over the past 2 years, but the number on the street has increased.
- More individuals are in permanent housing than ever; HUD VASH and RRH increased this.

Discussion followed about addressing those who are precariously housed. The following points were raised:

- Margaret Egbert expressed the concern that we must address the precariously housed, especially families with children.
- Natalie shared that CoC funds must address those who are literally homeless first and other funding sources must be identified for working on prevention.
- Carla Wright stressed that we are making progress.
- Jennifer Kiko, HCCSC member from Congressman Gibbs office, shared that she will be our advocate at the state and national level and encouraged other members to reach out to her.

#### **V. 2015 CoC Application**

Beth Pearson shared that a recent HUD notice stated that NOFA would be out by end of July, but we anticipate it may be longer. The registration process is complete. The Annual Renewal Demand for Stark County is a little over \$2.3 million.

The Recipient Approval and Evaluation Committee reviewed renewal applications to determine possible reallocations. The Board recommended the re-allocation of two TH projects to more PSH. The policies for the application review process can be found on HCCSC's website. We are uncertain if HUD will use a Tier system again and if there will be bonus funding available.

## **VI. Quick Updates**

### **1. Hotline and Central Waiting List**

Teresa Ponchak shared that the Hotline staff are working closely with clients and providing diversion assistance. Teresa thanked everyone for updating the waitlist. The Hotline communicates with PATH outreach staff weekly regarding any unsheltered persons.

### **2. Central Intake and Assessment**

Jean shared that we gave the new system 6 months of operation and now reconvening the committee beginning Friday to ensure the system will function as efficiently as possible. There will be an additional all-day SPDAT Train-the-Trainer session on August 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **3. Governance Structure**

Jean reviewed the governance structure and Board who acts on behalf of the CoC membership. She noted that HCCSC is:

- Operating transparent decision-making processes
- Establishing System Performance targets and evaluating CoC and ESG projects
- Ahead of the game with our written standards. We must change the RRH policies to address the gap that will be created through the reallocation from TH to PSH
- Implementing and abiding by Conflict of Interest procedures
- In need of help to understand the various funding streams

In addition, the Board is considering how HCCSC's work will be managed in the future. Jean noted:

- Sisters of Charity is giving 100% of Jean's time and 40% of Shannon's time to HCCSC work.
- Stark County must have a compliant CoC in order to qualify for CoC and ESG funding.
- The Board is looking at how other CoCs are managed (e.g., by city or county government or a non-profit). Board favors developing a non-profit to provide the CoC infrastructure.
- The State is also expecting CoCs to play a greater role in funding decisions.
- Political and business leaders are needed.

### **4. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)**

With the following increases, as well as an additional 25 VASH vouchers this year, HCCSC is well over meeting the PSH goal of 45 additional units established after the Corporation for Supportive Housing gap analysis in 2014:

- Alliance for Children and Families will be adding 10 units for families with children
- Coleman Behavioral Health will be adding 10 units for transitional age youth and 4 houses (12 PSH beds) to prioritize chronically homeless persons from the wait list
- Through re-allocation of the YWCA and Alliance for Children and Families TH projects to PSH, an additional 18 units will be created.

### **5. Other items**

Malone University has interns available.

Corporation for Supportive Housing has a PSH Institute available. Contact Jean for details.

## **VII. Adjournment**

Jean thanked everyone for their attendance and adjourned the meeting at 4:03pm.