

**Minutes of the
Homeless Continuum of Care of Stark County's
August 24, 2016 Central Intake and Assessment Committee Meeting**

Attendance. The following members of the Central Intake and Assessment Committee attended the meeting: Frank Aquino; Amy Dornack; Margaret Egbert; Amanda Fletcher; Jack French; Denise Hollenbach; Jennifer Keaton; Teresa Ponchak; Shirene Starn Tapyrik; and Jean Van Ness. Tracey Lane and Lisa Waikem also attended the meeting at the invitation of the Committee's chairperson.

Approval of Minutes. Jean opened the meeting shortly after 10 a.m., noting that, at the Committee's last meeting on June 6th, it had neglected to approve the minutes from its May 25th meeting.

Motion: Jean accepted a motion from Jennifer Keaton to approve the minutes from the May 25th meeting, which had been distributed by e-mail to committee members. Shirene Starn-Tapyrik seconded the motion, and it passed by a unanimous vote of all present, with the exception of Margaret Egbert, who abstained.

Motion: Next, Jean accepted a motion from Shirene to approve the minutes from the June 6th meeting. That motion was seconded by Amanda Fletcher and passed by a unanimous vote of all present with the exception of Margaret Egbert and Jack French both of whom abstained.

Reconsideration of Policies Governing Prioritization of PSH as Outlined in HUD Notice CPD-14-012.

Jean reminded the Committee that, at its June 6th meeting, it had agreed to eliminate sections of the *Policies Governing Eligibility and Prioritization to Receive CoC Assistance and Standards for Administering Assistance* that followed HUD Notice CPD-14-012 section III.A.1 (c) and (d) in giving priority for PSH beds to individuals and families that, at the time the notice was issued, were considered chronically homeless although the duration of their continuous or episodic homelessness was less than one year. The decision to eliminate these sections was based on the fact that the individuals and families described in these sections no longer meet the definition of "chronically homeless" that HUD issued in December 2015.

Jean noted, however, that, in the 2015 CoC application, HUD was still asking CoCs whether their PSH prioritization policies complied with Notice CPD-14-012. Thus, Jean concluded that HUD might still be expecting CoC to give priority to individuals and families described in the sections we eliminated, at least when considering them for PSH beds not dedicated or prioritized for the chronically homeless and for beds dedicated or prioritized for the chronically homeless when there are no chronically homeless individuals or families to fill those beds.

After some discussion, the committee agreed to recommend restoration of the eliminated sections but also agreed to revise them to reflect that the individuals and families described therein would be given priority only for PSH beds not dedicated or prioritized for the chronically homeless and for beds dedicated or prioritized for the chronically homeless when there are no chronically homeless individuals or families to fill those beds.

Motion: Teresa Ponchak moved that the Committee authorize Jean to make these changes and submit them to the CoC Board for approval. Margaret Egbert seconded the motion, and it was passed by all present.

There was some additional discussion about the difficulty of applying these prioritization rules in practice, but Jennifer and Teresa indicated that the Hotline would assume responsibility for figuring it out.

Discussion of Other Prioritization Rules and Possible Changes to Help End Homelessness Among Subpopulations Targeted by *Opening Doors*. During the remainder of the meeting, the Committee reviewed HCCSC rules prioritizing the various subpopulations targeted by the *Opening Doors*, and examined the numbers of individuals and families in each subpopulation as reflected in the 2015 PIT count, the 2016 PIT count, and current data. Based on these numbers, the Committee discussed possible changes to prioritization rules and considered CoC application questions about whether we are on track to end homelessness for each of these subpopulations.

1. **Chronically Homeless.** The committee agreed that HCCSC is on track to end chronic homelessness in 2017 and that no changes to the rules prioritizing the chronically homeless should be recommended. In coming to this conclusion, the Committee relied on the reduction in chronically homeless numbers between the 2015 and 2016 PIT counts and information from Jennifer indicating how difficult it is now to document chronically homeless status for those claiming it.
2. **Veterans.** The committee noted that, although PIT counts of veterans showed reduced numbers between 2010 and 2016 and between 2015 and 2016, numbers have shot up recently, making it difficult for us to claim to HUD that we are on track for ending homelessness among veterans this year. Possible reasons cited for the apparent increase in numbers of homeless veterans included the following:
 - Because Akron/Summit County has no VASH vouchers, some of their veterans are being referred to Stark County.
 - The VA's practice of "not letting anyone off VASH" and thereby freeing up vouchers for the use of other veterans
 - At this point, there are no chronically homeless vets and many vets qualifying for both RRH and PSH have low SPDAT scores and are, therefore, not rising to the top of the prioritization list for RRH and PSH.
 - There may be some vets on the central prioritization list that aren't homeless anymore but can't be contacted to verify that they have found housing.

In discussing resources that would help HCCSC end homelessness among veterans, there was consensus that the following would be useful:

- More VASH vouchers. (This will be mentioned in our CoC application.)
- More funding specifically for rapid re-housing of vets so that they don't have to compete with the general population for limited RRH funds
- Redirection of VSC funding away from providing shelter stays in motels and toward rapid re-housing of veterans.

The Committee agreed that the Veterans Task Force should pursue more VASH vouchers and follow up with the VSC about funding RRH instead of shelter.

3. **Families with Children.** The Committee noted that, although there were no unsheltered families with children in the 2016 PIT count, the number of sheltered families with children rose between the 2015 PIT count and the 2016 count. Possible reasons cited for this increase and for the amount of time it takes to rapidly re-house families included:

- The phasing out of transitional housing and the increasing reliance on RRH to address the needs of homeless families with children during 2015 before CoC funds reallocated to RRH became available.
- Staff turnover in the RRH programs and the difficulty of gearing up new RRH programs quickly over the 2015-16 holiday season after reallocated CoC funds became available.
- The lack of coordination between shelter and RRH staff
- The failure of shelter staff to progressively engage with clients and move them out of shelter more rapidly.

The Committee also discussed the CoC application's question about strategies/concrete steps HCCSC will take to ensure that families with children are rapid re-housed within 30 days of those families becoming homeless. Ultimately, there was consensus that it is important for RRH staff to establish a presence in shelters and meet with families there rather than waiting for those families to make an appointment and travel to RRH staff. Tracey agreed to pursue the idea of sending RRH staff into shelters.

4. **Unaccompanied Youth.** All the data relating to unaccompanied youth showed decreases in homelessness within this subpopulation. Accordingly, the Committee gave only brief attention to this group, concluding that there was no immediate need to consider giving it higher priority than others for shelter or housing.

Discussion about How to Handle Basic Accommodation Tenants When It Transitions from Being a Safe Haven to a PSH Project. On behalf of ICAN Housing, Amanda Fletcher asked the Committee to consider allowing the tenants of ICAN's Basic Accommodations (BA) to retain their homeless status following the conversion of BA from a safe haven to a PSH project, which will be called "Cherry Grove." This will make it possible for clients to choose whether they will become residents of Cherry Grove or continue to seek other permanent housing options. The committee endorsed this proposal.

Adjournment. Jean indicated that discussion of the final item on the agenda (rules governing client contributions to RRH) would be deferred until September and adjourned the meeting shortly after noon.