

**Minutes of the
Homeless Continuum of Care of Stark County's
September 28, 2016 Central Intake and Assessment Committee Meeting**

Attendance. The following members of the Central Intake and Assessment Committee attended the meeting: Amy Dornack; Margaret Egbert; Amanda Fletcher; Denise Hollenbach; Jennifer Keaton; Tracey Lane; Teresa Ponchak; Shirene Starn Tapyrik; Lisa Waikem; and Jean Van Ness.

Approval of Minutes. Jean opened the meeting shortly after 8 a.m. and requested a vote to approve the minutes of the Committee's August 24 meeting. The minutes were approved as written by a unanimous vote of those.

Report on Meeting with Veteran Service Commission. Lisa Waikem reported on the September 9th meeting between her, Amanda, and Jean and representatives of the Veteran Service Commission. At that meeting, Gary Ickes and his appointed successor, DeAnn Covey, had agreed to redirect funding currently used to support long motel stays for veterans to rapid re-housing for those veterans. Lisa and ICAN staff will be sharing information and materials with VSC staff to guide them in administering the RRH program. A second meeting for this purpose was scheduled for the afternoon of September 28.

Lisa meets regularly with Sylvia Thomas of the Veterans' Administration before the Veterans Task Force meeting every month. She will make sure that Sylvia knows about the RRH program and does not count veterans in the RRH program as homeless in her recordkeeping.

Discussion of Need for Ongoing Services of Agency to Verify Disabilities and Homeless Status. Jean noted that the Continuum was reaching the end of a yearlong pilot project with Stark Social Workers Network (SSWN) to determine whether it would be useful to have an agency verify homeless status – especially chronic homeless status—and disabilities before finalizing ranking on the central priority list. She asked whether, from the perspective of the Hotline staff and the housing providers, this project had been successful and whether we should be asking the Sisters of Charity Foundation to renew funding for the project.

No one on the Committee favored renewal of the project. The consensus among Committee members was that, despite conscientious efforts on the part of SSWN staff, the project was not successful for some or all of the following reasons:

- The no-show rate for clients whom the Hotline referred to SSWN for verification has been huge;
- While SSWN staff did go out to investigate and take photos of sites where clients claimed to have spent one or more nights in unsheltered homelessness, there was often no evidence -- other than the clients' word – that they had, indeed, spent a night at those sites; and
- It had proven very difficult to document chronic homelessness for anyone based on something other than documented shelter stays. As a result, almost all clients on the top of the priority list due to verified chronic homelessness are there based on proof of long shelter stays.

The Committee went on to discuss the desirability of getting more guidance about what constitutes adequate documentation of chronic homelessness. Concerns were expressed about Anthony's warnings

to expect a higher level of scrutiny starting next year. As part of CoC efforts to better document homelessness, Committee members suggested the following measures:

- Working with soup kitchens, foodbanks, clothes closets, and similar programs to gather information about the homeless status of their clients;
- Having a staff member spend 3 hours a week contacting, police, food pantries, schools, etc. in an effort to identify homeless people;
- Asking Anthony for technical assistance and examples of the documentation and standard forms that would be acceptable;
- The development of contact cards for law enforcement, fire department, and EMS personnel so they can be more helpful in providing information about unsheltered homeless persons they encounter;
- “Beefing up” the documentation that PATH staff uploads to HMIS relating to the people they encounter; and
- Working with the Department of Job and Family Services to determine what address they have for persons who have applied for benefits but claim to be homeless and unsheltered.

Discussion of New Ideas about Standardized Assessment Tools/Techniques from NAEH Conference:

Those members who attended the NAEH conference this summer were asked to share with the Committee new ideas they heard at the conference about standardized assessment tools and techniques. During this discussion, Committee members reported the following:

- That the SPDAT was no longer a hot topic of conversation;
- That, increasingly, CoCs were using “hybrid” assessment tools that have an employment piece; a SOAR piece; and a SPDAT piece;
- More and more CoCs are merging because HUDs requirements are so burdensome; and
- In the communities that are addressing homelessness most successfully, it is typical to have at least one member of the mayor’s staff involved in the CoC on a full-time basis.

Discussion of Rapid Re-housing (RRH) Needs: Jean asked Committee members to discuss additional needs for RRH services based on information she had received about a long waiting list among families with children for RRH. During the ensuing discussion, Tracey explained that, in the YWCA’s RRH programs, Tiffany does the assessment and the case manager assigned to a client has 48 hours after the assessment to make an appointment with the clients. Questions arose about the long time RRH clients have to wait for appointments and the amount of assistance they receive in looking for housing. Concerns were expressed about clients qualifying for RRH who rotate among shelters because the RRH

process does not move quickly enough to secure them housing before they exhaust their 90-day limit at a shelter. Committee members recommend the following:

- Re-examine how we prioritize clients for RRH;
- Explore the possibility of establishing two tracks for RRH, including one for clients who are likely to secure employment fairly easily and another for those who are less employable;
- Make sure that appointments are made with Coleman's SSI Specialist to explore the possibility of securing SSI/SSDI for an RRH clients before that client is re-housed; and.
- Pursue more training for case managers.

Adjournment. At this point, the time allotted for the meeting was spent, and Jean adjourned the meeting.