

Coordinated Entry System Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 27th 2018
10am-12pm

Members Present

Janice Warner
Jennifer Keaton
Teresa Ponchak
Amy Dornack
Lisa Waikem
Tracey Lane
Jackie McDougle
Marcie Bragg
Melissa Terrell

Members Excused

Scott Schnyders
Shirene Starn-Tapryik

Guest

Tammy Geiger

Members Not Present

Renee Biggums

I. Welcome

At 10:00 a.m., Natalie McCleskey, committee co-chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

II. Approval of Minutes from January Meeting

Natalie asked the committee to postpone the approval of the January meeting minutes until the March meeting. Jean Van Ness, past chair, is working on compiling notes from the January meeting and drafting minutes from her notes.

III. Time of CES Committee

The current 2018 schedule for the Coordinated Entry System (CES) committee takes place from 10am to noon on the fourth Tuesday of every month. There were concerns from committee members regarding scheduling conflicts for this time of day. The committee discussed moving up the meeting time to 8:30am to 10:30am and continuing to hold meetings on the fourth Tuesday of every month. The committee agreed to move up the meeting time and continue holding the meeting on the same day. The Stark Housing Network (SHN) will check the availability at the Goodwill Community Campus for the time and dates requested.

IV. Acknowledgement of Approved Policies

The revision of CES policies were approved by the Homeless Continuum of Care of Stark County (HCCSC) board on January 9th 2018. The policies were mandated to be in operation by January 23rd 2018 by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); the policies have been in operation since the HCCSC board approval in January. The revised CES policies can be located on the www.starkcountyhomeless.org website.

The SHN will be providing trainings for the HCCSC policies and procedures during the summer of 2018. The SHN will solicit feedback from the Quality Assurance committee for the top training needs for each agency; the SHN also solicited feedback from the CES committee regarding additional trainings that should be provided. A small group of volunteers from the CES committee will decide what trainings are presented. The SHN expressed the possibility that the policies will be broken up and presented by additional agencies. For example, Coordinated Entry staff may be asked to present on CES policies. The SHN plans to have a policy training in mid to late summer.

Discussion:

There was discussion on the types of training the SHN should offer to HCCSC providers. The committee decided that the SHN should offer a system-wide Continuum of Care (CoC) policies and verification of disability (VOD) training. The attendance for the VOD training should be open to include case managers from Coleman and CommQuest. It was suggested the trainings that the SHN will provide should be opened up to more agencies and not just those that are CoC funded projects. Jennifer offered to assist in the training process. The committee discussed the transfer policy and whether to allow for use of a transfer request letter or to require the transfer request form.

Motion: Teresa motion to present the transfer form to the Homeless Continuum of Care Board for approval. Natalie seconded the motion; and the motion was carried by the members present except for Tammy, who abstained. Tammy is standing in for Shirene.

V. Summary of Call with Anthony Forte (HUD)

Natalie addressed the committee regarding correspondence between herself, Anthony Forte (HUD Regional Representative), Scott (CES co-chair), SHN, and CES. Natalie described Stark County's CES to Anthony and a concern was raised regarding the HCCSC's compliance with HUD's CES regulations. Anthony's concern was in regards to Homeless Navigation not referring applicants directly to projects at entry. Anthony expressed that the ideal system would provide direct referrals from the CES and that is the direction HUD wants to see communities moving towards. Stark County's CES refers applicants for shelter and prioritizes applicants for housing projects. Prioritizing applicants on the priority list could result in error with applicant eligibility and leaves room for by-passing names that are highest on the list. Provisions for policing projects (when pulling names from the priority list) are included in the HCCSC policies. During the 2017 HUD competition, the Recipient Approval and Evaluation (RAE) committee reallocated funding to CES for additional personnel. The additional CES personnel will assist in monitoring the priority list. Actions Triggering Response from System has been re-added to the policies stating that all violations will be investigated by Collaborative Applicant and passed along to RAE for further review. Anthony shared that other CoC's Coordinated Entry Systems (in both Ohio and nationally) are performing assessment, documentation, and eligibility up front and sending referrals to projects based on bed inventories. The Stark County CES is slightly different than these other models. The model Anthony is encouraging does not place applicants on the list until all documentation is received. Our CES model assists those most vulnerable and in a collaborative manner helps applicants through the process of obtaining all documentation needed for housing services, not just those who are motivated. Anthony stated that he did not believe Stark County was out of compliance with HUD regulations but that if we wanted to remain competitive we should consider making changes that move us towards a direct referral system.

Amanda joined the meeting at 10:34am.

Discussion:

If Stark County were to move towards direct referrals from CES, all project providers would still need to determine eligibility and continue due diligence for all applicants. Natalie clarified that in the model Anthony is recommending, documentation of eligibility rests with the CES. However, there was awareness by all that should someone be entered into a project that was ineligible it would be the Housing Provider at risk of non-compliance and facing a requirement to return funding. The By Names meetings, for permanent supportive housing (PSH) applicants, seem to be working well to place applicants in the appropriate housing project.

In was discussed that the HCCSC should provide a By Names meeting to all project types, including for rapid rehousing projects. There was a lot of discussion around rapid including uncertainty about the number of vacancies occurring, who can be served in rapid and the general struggles of housing folks in rapid programs. The committee discussed reviewing rapid re-housing projects to plan for improving participant success and outcomes. An assessment of the current SPDAT range for rapid projects will be considered and an action plan will be shaped. The Quality Assurance (QA) committee, in April, will be focused on rapid and will provide an opportunity to discuss the rapid applicant list and methods for improvements. **Jennifer has offered to gather recidivism rates for rapid projects.**

VI. Filling PSH Family Vacancies

The committee discussed a shortage of families scoring for PSH and pulling higher SPDAT scoring rapid applicants for PSH. The HCCSC policies *D.3 section X. Acceptable Deviations from Prescribed Priorities* and *D.2 section IV. Use of Central Prioritization Lists to Refer and Select Persons for Shelter, Housing, and Services* allows for pulling applicants off the list that are lower ranked provided that all HCCSC procedures have been exhausted. These policies do not define clearly a procedure for pulling applicants from the rapid list to place in PSH units but do appear to provide flexibility to do so. It was agreed that Housing providers should attend the By Names meeting held weekly and discuss this on a case by case basis to gain HCCSC system approval before pulling applicants from the rapid list for vacancies. It was also agreed that for the time being all eligible families on the PSH list should have the opportunity for a face-to-face meeting to ensure they have been given every opportunity possible to accept an open PSH unit following a discussion at the By Names meeting of the applicable vacancy/ies. It was also agreed that families should be rescored on their SPDAT every 30 days. Teresa will ensure there is a date on the SPDATs so everyone is aware of when the first one was conducted.

Discussion:

The committee discussed housing vacancies for families. These vacancies should occur on a more regular basis; family units have a pattern of many vacancies at one time and then not having vacancies for a period of time. Concerns were raised that when we do not have family vacancies for a period of time, the families are deteriorating due to various reasons, such as mental health or substance use.

VI. Housing Promotion Meetings- for those working with private landlords

The committee discussed the Housing Promotion Meetings and the challenges agencies have with private landlords when attempting to get their buy-in related to these meetings. Housing promotion meetings should be held for all participants and these meetings may look a little different with private landlords. The committee discussed some of the challenges with private landlords, such as a lack of patience from the landlords or lack of contact in an appropriate time frame to stop eviction. The housing promotion meetings are meant to be a tool to limit turn over. The use of transfers for evictions was discussed and it was determined that a housing meeting take place before the eviction process if possible. The purpose of these meetings is to gather information on the underlying issue of why the applicant was unsuccessful in their current housing project. Conversations with participants and housing providers will limit uncertainties of how to move forward with participants on a case by case basis. These instances could also be brought before the QA meetings for discussion prior to evictions and at the first sign that a participant is likely to be unsuccessful.

VII. Update on the Quality Assurance Workgroups

The topics/items discussed at the QA workgroups should be brought to the CES committee for discussion. Reporting from the QA workgroup will be a monthly agenda item for CES.

IX. Thoughts on Direction of / ideas for CES Committee in 2018

The committee should discuss trainings for the HCCSC and review the HCCSC Governance Charter for guidance. Jean's previous Annual Plans for each committee was helpful in keeping committee's on track. There is new guidance in the CES policies that the system will solicit feedback from participants that have been through the CES process (this should be done annually, during the first quarter of the year). It is the Collaborative Applicant's role to develop a questionnaire for three groups of project/CES participants and to designate a facilitator for the groups.

X. Adjournment

With no further business to be discussed, at 11:55am the meeting adjourned.