

Coordinated Entry System Committee

Meeting Minutes

May 22nd 2018

8:30am - 10:30am

Members Present

Janice Warner
Jennifer Keaton
Shirene Starn-Tapryik
Scott Schnyders
Lisa Waikem
Marcie Bragg
Melissa Terrell
Natalie McCleskey
Kim Stanley
Sylvia Thomas
Teresa Ponchak
Amy Dornack
Lisa Snyder
Amanda Fletcher
Jackie McDougle

Members Not Present

Renee Biggums

Guests

Jonathan Cox (via phone)
Danelle Lightner

I. Welcome

At 8:30 a.m., Natalie McCleskey, committee co-chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Marcie Bragg added HUD Technical Assistance Provider, Jonathan Cox, via phone to the meeting. Committee members introduced themselves, followed by a brief introduction by Jonathan of his experience and current role.

II. Call with HUD TA Provider

- a.) The call with Jonathan began with a discussion around family status changes. The issues had previously been shared with Jonathan as well as the HUD AAQ. Jonathan explained that he also broached the topic on his quarterly calls with HUD HQ and that while they did not provide a very definitive answer it was partly enlightening. Some of the challenges around funding were addressed with Jonathan and the requirement to have evidence of a minor child in the home. It was explained that when DJFS is involved there is more documentation which makes evidence easier to access. However, some cases arising where children simply live with grandparents but there is no proof of the child/ren ever having lived nor beginning to live with the parent participant. Jonathan's response was that our AAQ was too general and was more focused on HMIS than on programmatic issues. He recommended:

- 1.) Send two AAQs – one addressing how to handle RRH cases and one addressing how to handle PSH cases
- 2.) Treat the AAQs as the starts of a conversation – will take several follow ups.

Jonathan explained that RRH and PSH projects have much different responsibilities and must be treated separately. He further advised that in these cases we should seek legal advice and if a participant is not being truthful regarding their family composition they could either be transferred to a different single unit or exited from the project. If they

later can provide evidence of children they could be transferred back to a family unit. A question was asked what “evidence” would look like. Jonathan’s advice was custody papers, social security/SNAPs documentation, case management visits over a period of time (e.g. 3 – 6 months).

At this time, Jennifer Keaton joined the meeting at 8:50 am.

Jonathan recommended further steps we should take:

- 3.) Write a policy regarding course of action in these situations, the circumstances that must be present, what should be done and an appeals process
- 4.) Send in an AAQ – follow up with nuances of the scenario. Again, will need to write back several times so they become more familiar with the problem. May want to offer to jump on a call with AAQ if easier.

For RRH scenarios, only one person needs to be eligible. There is less you can do about it if incorrect family composition as they are in the project for much shorter time frame whereas PSH is for life. We should identify what the problem/concern is: for example, are we concerned they we are paying for a larger unit and therefore wasting resources or concerned that they are lying. Jonathan again encouraged us to contact AAQ.

- b.) The call then moved on to a discussion of a direct referral system. Jonathan cautioned us that when HUD comes to monitor we cannot use his advice as a cause for not meeting HUD’s expectations. He explained that the Ohio HUD Field Office is very focused on Coordinated Entry System’s managing referrals and making the decisions about project placements. They are very clear that agencies should not be controlling the decisions and, instead, wants to see an unbiased, decision-making entity.

Jonathan felt the use of our By Names List meetings could be used to defend ourselves against any complaint from HUD. Via these meetings the CES is in essence deciding who gets referred and to which entity. He reminded the committee that the agency could still have the opportunity to reject the referral. Jonathan also restated that the Field Offices’ view is that if agencies decide exclusively they may choose the easiest people. He felt that the By Names meetings allow for everything to be done in an above board manner. His opinion was that we are exercising due diligence by holding the By Names meetings.

A question was asked about the increased capacity of Coordinated Entry and funding for it. Jonathan reminded the group that CES is not going away, that it is a HUD priority and must be resourced correctly.

A question was asked out how other hotline-based CES handle obtaining third party documentation and verifying eligibility. Jonathan shared that he has heard of shelters, outreach workers and service providers assisting with these activities. A hotline, on its own, does not have sufficient resources. Also, cost factors would have to be determined to justify CES collecting eligibility documentation and then agencies verifying and/or collecting it also. Jonathan raised the concern, which the committee has raised in the past, that the agencies are the ones ultimately responsible for ensuring participants are eligible. Jonathan suggested that agencies could still assist with gathering documentation while allowing CES to still make the final decision.

At this time Jonathan left the call.

The Committee agreed with a comment that HUD is looking to avoid Fair Housing complaints and that by allowing CES to determine referrals this risk is mitigated. They also agreed that we need to determine how we can better move towards the direct referral system that HUD is expecting as it will likely appear in future NOFAs. Jennifer Keaton agreed that more resources are needed but reminded the committee that the CoC has put one more FTE towards CES in the last CoC funding round. There was a consensus that we should look at what the new FTE will be doing. Jennifer shared that they plan to utilize this person as a hotline staff person (taking calls) to free up more of Teresa’s time to work on the referrals/prioritization list.

Jennifer also indicated that the new software has the capacity to populate exits in HMIS and to flag the next person. There is a potential for moving away from the google docs.

In summary, the committee recognized that there is a need to clearly establish our goals for CES, to identify what we want to see happen and that the committee should then facilitate/develop plans. The ultimate goal is that we must do business efficiently.

III. DJFS – Danelle Lightner Sharing Information

- a.) Danelle shared with the group what JFS does to verify who can receive benefits for the children. She shared that JFS is not concerned about custody as it pertains to benefits. They are mostly concerned with who is providing the care and has the parent given some form of permission for benefits to be transferred to someone else. The only time there needs to be proof of blood relation is if that person would be receiving cash benefits. She also shared with us that if CPS is involved and the client is working a reunification plan that the parent can keep the benefits without the kids for up to 6 months as a way to prepare for the children returning. All of the verification of benefits at JFS is done outside of the court of law.
- b.) A question was raised by a couple providers to see if there was any way to get exemptions for the work verification required for food stamps. Both Jan Warner and Lisa Waikem shared stories of clients who were without food because of this rule. Danelle indicated that, if they are not able to work, they would just need some documentation that they have a disability (either mentally or physically). There was an understanding that we would pursue this further to see if we could coordinate with JFS to help clients who need exempted to get exempted with the use of the CoC VOD form.

IV. Approval of April Minutes

- a.) The minutes were sent out but were not approved at this meeting because Marcie Bragg requested that we make a few small changes and send it back out before it is voted on. The April minutes will be voted on for approval at the June meeting.

V. CoC Board Updates

- a.) Melissa Terrell gave an update that the board had approved the changes made to the transfer policy and the transfer form from the last Coordinated Entry meeting. That form is now available on the website.
- b.) CoC local applications for 2018 competition is open and applications are due back to Marcie Bragg by June 1st. ODSA SHP and HCRP Shelter executive summaries are also due to Marcie Bragg by June 1st. The ODSA HCRP Regional application is up on the website and is due to Marcie Bragg by June 8th. They are expecting a \$2-3 Million increase in funding and she is asking agencies doing Rapid Rehousing to begin thinking about applying for this. The focus of the increase will be on transitional age youth and singles.
- c.) The CoC has a planned training for August 20th. Katie Kitchen will lead the training and it will focus on low barrier shelter training.

VI. QA Updates

- a.) Jennifer stated that work groups and by names list meetings continue to meet and we have most of our spaces in PSH and RR openings filled.
- b.) Teresa Ponchak suggested that a group be formed to create a solution for how to deal with sex offenders since they will no longer allowed to be housed at the Refuge of Hope's new building. Melissa indicated that it was an issue that QA was going to address at their next meeting.

VII. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:19 AM

