

INTERAGENCY COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS

Meeting Summary Notes

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

Members (Present)

Ahluwalia, Uma S.
Berner, Debra
Bohorquez, Marta
Brissett Chapman, Sheryl
Davis, Betsy
Fox-Morrill, Priscilla
Fredericks, Denise
Green, Robert
Horton-Newell, Amy
Kaufmann, Louise
Khan, Nadim, A.
Kirk Susan
Leventhal, George

Onley, Virginia (rep.
Bridget Newton)
Pesquera, Marcos
Roynestad, Brian
Seidel, Stanley
Sinclair-Smith, Susie
Snuggs, Clarence
Spann, Stacy
Thames, Jeffrey O.
Tracey, Brian
Wilds, Moses

Members (Absent)

Crowel, Raymond
Delegate Craig Zucker

Staff

Ball, Kim
Black, Sara
George, Leslie
Hochron, Jean
Huggins, Gloria
McMillan, Linda
Matthews, Stacey
Salem, Pofen
Sierra, Sharon
Soni, Nili

Guests

Bader, Mehnuz
Barker, Kacy
Dabbs, Brea
Frazier-Bey, Jimmy
Stanaitis, Nikki
Truchon, Debra
Welty, Robert
Wynn, Layla

Welcome | Introductions | Approval of December 17, 2014 meeting notes

The December 17 meeting notes for were approved unanimously as written.

Regional Summit on Homelessness

Principals Isiah Leggett, Rushern Baker and Muriel Bowser held a Regional Summit on Homelessness on Tuesday, March 17 at Progress Place in Silver Spring. The purpose of the Summit was to establish a Regional Coordinating Council on Homelessness with Executive level membership from each of the jurisdictions (Montgomery County, Prince George's County and the District of Columbia). The jurisdictions will collaborate to establish and charge the development and implementation of an actionable plan to work towards permanently ending homelessness in the Washington Metropolitan Area.

The presenters stressed that homelessness cannot end without attacking its root causes and the summit paved the way to collaborate regionally in four strategic areas, each offering opportunities for sharing of data and best practices, regional planning and development, collaborative client focused system of services and joint funding and fundraising. The principals and jurisdictions are committed to solving homelessness for every person and laying the foundation to do that work.

Four Cornerstones or strategic areas are:

1. Affordable Housing
2. Workforce Development (Livable wage jobs)
3. Economic Development
4. Supportive Services (both service coordination and benefit access including specialized chronic homeless and behavioral health responses)

➔ **ACTION:** Nadim Khan will report back to the Commission with the time-line for implementing the Regional Coordinating Council on Homelessness.

Comments:

George Leventhal commented that a regional collaboration will expand Montgomery County's ability to house clients by adding the ability to work across regional boundaries. If there is limited housing in Montgomery County, we could explore the availability of housing in Prince George's County or Washington, DC. In addition, ensuring that the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) systems communicates with each other, the County would be able to learn the history of clients who are being served here but whose homelessness began in Prince George's or the District. This collaborative effort would expand our reach and improve our effectiveness.

Nadim Khan shared that Montgomery County has additionally signed up for the National Zero: 2016 initiative. Zero: 2016 is a movement of communities working to end veteran homelessness by the close of 2015 and end chronic homelessness by the close of 2016. Coordinated by Community Solutions, the national effort supports participants in optimizing local resources, tracking progress against monthly housing goals, and accelerating the spread of proven strategies.

Committee Report

Community Outreach and Education – Co-Chairs: Jimmy Frazier-Bey | Leslie George

Jimmy Frazier-Bey reported that the Community Outreach and Education Committee have drafted the Homeless Services Guide (a draft copy was distributed).

- The question was raised whether the Homeless Services Guide will replace the yellow card distributed by the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless. It was discussed that even though the yellow card is handy for distribution, the new Guide is up to date and comprehensive. It is the goal to have the Guide translated into different languages and be distributed to providers, police and residents, etc.

→**ACTION:** The Outreach and Education Committee will explore how to format and fold the new Guide to so that the current information in the new guide can be handy and easy to distribute.

The Community Outreach and Education Committee have defined veterans for the use in the Zero: 2016 campaign as follows:

“A Veteran is any individual experiencing homelessness who has served on active duty in the United States Military, regardless of discharge status. The active duty requirement is not time restricted, which means that it applies to any length of service beyond training/boot camp.”

- The question was raised about the term “active duty” which excludes members of the Reserves and National Guard. It was suggested to use the more hospitable term of “uniformed services.” It was clarified that the definition is not being used to determine service eligibility but is specific for counting residents for the Zero: 2016 campaign. For the Zero: 2016 campaign, “active duty” is an appropriate. For the purpose of providing services, the Department of Health and Human Services serves all “uniformed personnel” including those who serve in the Reserves and/or National Guard.

Performance Review Committee – Co-Chairs: Denise Fredericks | Sharon Sierra

Denise Fredericks shared that the Committee has accomplished the following goals:

- Discussed gaps in representation including a former homelessness person and auxiliary service providers -recruitment for these underway.
- Aggregate data around the HUD Performance Measures should be appropriate to program type; Emergency Services would have different measurements than Permanent Supportive Housing.
- Prioritize data points that impact client success.
- Reviews will include both extracting data from the HMIS and program analysis (an understanding of service delivery).

In addition the Continuum of Care is in the process of writing written standards that will help to define processes in providing services, collecting data, etc.

Strategic Planning Committee – Co-Chairs: Susie Sinclair-Smith | Sara Black

Susie Sinclair-Smith shared that the Strategic Planning Committee will prepare a report in November detailing the fiscal year’s work. The work accomplished by the Committee to date:

- Established Strategic Planning Committee’s, role, accountability framework, and membership needs
- Compiled information to identify first-year priorities of ACTION PLAN to implement Montgomery County’s Strategic Plan to End Homelessness

Veterans Issue:

- Susie Sinclair Smith announced that Chapman Todd is the manager of the Zero: 2016 campaign that goal is the end veteran homelessness by December 2015.

- To accomplish this goal, veterans will be placed on a priority list for permanent supportive housing.

Operations Committee – Co-Chairs: Nadim Khan | Priscilla Fox-Morrill

Nadim Khan shared the following accomplishments to date:

- We have received Approval of the CoC Governance Charter from the CoC Community Wide Meeting held on February 25, 2015.
- Point-in-Time Survey was conducted on January 28, 2015.
 - Numbers are being tabulated and report is being developed.
 - COG Board will receive the final report on May 13, 2015.
- We are in the process of developing Written Standards for CoC Operations.
 - The goal of written standards is to provide understanding and transparency on all the HUD projects

The target to complete the standards will be May prior to the HUD renewal applications

→**ACTIONS:** A formalized written standards draft will be developed by May and will be presented to the Commission before the June meeting.

Discussion: Ad-Hoc Committee on Solutions for Homeless Families

Nadim shared that in the last year there has been a 60% increase in families experiencing homelessness in Montgomery County. In January 15, there were 88 households sheltered in motels (overflow shelters) as compared to January 2014 when there were only 55 served. A large number of these families are young adult households (18-24 year olds).

The length of stay for families in motels increased from 72 days in January 2014 to 86 days January 2015. The cost to shelter families in motels is \$100 a night per room with large families using multiple rooms. Uma stressed that there is a need to explore different options because of the cost; but more importantly, because raising children in a motel is not beneficial. In addition, there are safety concerns when housing families who are victims of domestic violence who are sheltered in motels because the Betty Ann Krahnke (BAK) Center is full or the family has been discharged from the BAK after completing their length of stay. Dr. Sheryl Brissett Chapman expressed there is a need to consolidate competing approaches to help homeless young mothers with children. There is a need to help these young people to understand family stability and achieve self-sufficiency something most were not exposed to growing up. This is an average of 3 families per month transferring from the BAK to motels.

The County has three family shelters and limited motel shelter services. Family shelter statistics:

Family Shelters*	Year Round Capacity	Total Beds Available
Greentree Shelter	13 Families	42
Helping Hands	8 Families	23
Stepping Stones	6 Families	29
Total Year Rounds Capacity	27 Families	94 Beds
Motels	60 Households	150 Beds

*An additional 15 families can be served through the County's Betty Ann Krahnke Center for victims of domestic violence.

What Montgomery County has done to date?

- FY14—Federal Emergency Solution Grant provided Rapid Re-Housing for 15 family households.
- FY14—Housing Initiative Program served five additional families.
- FY15—County Rapid Re-Housing Program served an additional 20 family households.
- FY15—Rapid Re-Housing Request for Proposal was out and proposals are being reviewed to serve an additional 20 Young Adults households
- Special Needs Housing initiated Intensive Team Meetings (eight meetings held in January) with participation from Child Welfare Services, Behavioral Health, and other vendors to staff families in hotel over 90 days.
- An Ad Hoc Committee on Solutions for Homeless Families was created that meets monthly to discuss best practices and explore ways to resolve this issue, such as the following:
 - Increasing access to Rapid Re-Housing

- Exploring shared housing program models— i.e. “Operation Match” connecting young Moms to share apartments
- Increasing employment counseling services
- Increasing housing locators who are familiar with local landlords and who can help families
- Reducing Poverty—most family homelessness is due to poverty
- Organizing community-wide education about homeless services
- Creating a tip sheet or organize a training to help case managers and clients to rate landlords to avoid families renting with landlords who have dishonest practices
- Helping people to identify fraud on Craig’s List
- Assisting people receiving IRS audits. Many families are unaware of audits because they do not have a permanent addresses and did not receive notification
- Helping people (particularly young Moms) get on the path of self-sufficiency
- Teaching head of households parenting skills
- Developing poverty strategies to help people prevent homelessness

Discussion of Commission Goals

After a lengthy discussion, Commissioners proposed the following tasks/goals:

- Explore the concept of pursuing Social Impact Funds/Bonds where private entities lend funds to States or local governments with the debt being repaid out of the quantifiable reduction in associated costs
- Develop a framework for cost estimations.
- Set up mechanisms where hidden costs are transparent allowing the public to see that the County houses people and dollars are being used appropriately.
- Examine the problem of poverty. Housing exists in the County; but affordable housing is difficult to find especially for those who need support.
- Prioritize employment opportunities for veterans and provide supports to help them to retain their employment.

→ Creation of a Resource Development Committee – Co-Chairs Brian Tracey | Clarence Snuggs

The Committee will explore available resources in the County to provide services. Explore “low hanging fruit” projects that could help individuals and families avoid homelessness with the lowest impact. An example of a project would be working with building developers to incorporate affordable housing units in their projects that would allow people who are homeless to live and benefit from support systems.

Amy commented that the Commission will explore creating a “Step-down Care” program house for persons who are medically vulnerable. There is a model in Seattle where chronic alcoholics are provided efficiencies in a building where they receive support services from city-paid nurses who staff the facility around the clock. The model is providing a cost saving because staffing is provided by local hospitals. The Commission will be exploring the possibility of starting a similar “Step-down Care” program in Montgomery County with the help of local hospitals.

Next meeting

Wednesday, June 24 at 3:30-5:30 p.m. at the Rockville Memorial Library, 21 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland, 1st Floor Conference.