



INTERAGENCY COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS

CONTINUUM OF CARE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Meeting Summary Notes

Wednesday, February 25, 2015

Attendees	Agency	Attendees	Agency
Ball, Kim	DHHS/Special Needs Housing	Khan, Nadim	DHHS/Special Needs Housing
Bird, Diana	Housing Opportunities Commission	Kirk, Susan	Bethesda Cares
Black, Sara	DHHS/Special Needs Housing	Knott, Lauren	Technical Assistance Collaborative
Blasco, Anna	National Alliance to End Homelessness	Korona, Luann	Department of Housing and Community Affairs
Fuje, Ferework	Catholic Charities	McMillan, Linda	County Council Staff
Frazier-Bey, Jimmy	City of Gaithersburg	Schaak, Gina	Technical Assistance Collaborative
Frederick, Denise	Stepping Stone Shelter	Schiller, Jen	MC Coalition for the Homeless
Hochron, Jean	DHHS/Public Health Services	Sinclair-Smith, Susie	MC Coalition for the Homeless
Hong, Christine	Interfaith Works	Soni, Nili	DHHS/Special Needs Housing
Horton-Newell, Amy	American Bar Association	Todd, Chapman	Zero: 2016-MC Coalition for the Homeless
Huggins, Gloria	DHHS/Special Needs Housing	Williams, Edith	Helping Hands Shelter
Kelly, LaSonya	DHHS/Public Health Services		

INTRODUCTIONS

Nadim Khan convened the meeting followed by introduction.

Susie Sinclair-Smith introduced Chapman Todd the new case manager for the Zero: 2016 Campaign. The goal of the Zero: 2016 Campaign is to end chronic and veteran homelessness in the next two years.

The Committee unanimously approved Priscilla Fox-Morrow as the Vice Chair of the Operations Committee.

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 28 MEETING NOTES:

The Operations Committee approved the January 28 meeting notes unanimously. The notes will be posted to the Interagency Commission on Homelessness website.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Luann Korona reported that HUD has devolved most environmental review responsibilities to the local level i.e. “Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA)” and they are now the Responsible Entity (RE) and are designated as the Certifying Official for environmental review compliance. DHCA will be conducting the Environmental Review (ER) and provide clearance to these sites. A list of Continuum of Care (CoC) funded program was provided by Special Needs Housing and we will reach out to Directors of those programs. DHCA will check their environmental review records to see if the property has already been reviewed. DHCA plans to send a formal letter out to the contact persons explaining the process and their expectations.

A few things that we need to keep in mind:

- ERs must be conducted BEFORE funds are committed.
- Recipients must NOT enter into a lease until the ER is completed and approved by the RE.
- Assuming there is no change in environmental conditions, ERs for rental assistance and leasing projects are generally good for 5 years.
- Every unit needs an Environmental Review Record (ERR), but not every unit needs a new ERR.

Nili Soni is the contact person for the Department of Health Human Services for ERR project.

DEFINITIONS OF A MONTGOMERY COUNTY RESIDENT AND HOW TO DEFINE A VETERAN:

Kim shared a general overview the Behavioral Health Crisis Services' definition of a Montgomery County Resident.

- General proof of residency: A person with an identification card with an address in Montgomery County.
- Homeless Single Adults: Proof of residency to apply for Mental Health programs or monitoring services is a picture identification card or other identification as well as confirmation that the individual has been in the homeless shelter system for at least 30 days (now up to 3 months). A probation letters or a Department of Corrections ICard (a card issued to former inmates allowing free bus ride and service eligibility) are also acceptable identifications.
- Homeless Families: A family that can provide documentation that they "lost permanent housing" in Montgomery County. Lost permanent housing is defined as having a mortgage or a lease for a house or an apartment that went into foreclosure or eviction after 6 months of residence.

The purpose of these definitions is to determine eligibility for benefits and services. Those experiencing homelessness are prioritized because of limited funding to ensure that Montgomery County residents are served first. Non-residents and undocumented residents are provided emergency transitional shelter when necessary; however, the priority is to provide shelter to Montgomery County residents. Transitional shelter is provided to Single Adults for 5 days and Families for 30 days.

→**ACTION:** This information will be sent to the Outreach and Education Committee to consolidate the definition and present to the Operations Committee at the next meeting for further discussion.

PRIORITIZATION OF POPULATION FOR SERVICE DELIVERY:

Montgomery County has signed up for Zero: 2016 with the goal to end veterans' homelessness by 2015 and chronic homelessness by the end of 2016. The question is how do we prioritize – chronic homeless veterans or the medically vulnerable homeless veterans.

Sue Kirk reported that because of the HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Montgomery County much has been done to help veterans (currently VASH reports 5 veterans outside). Sue Sinclair shared that 37 veterans were identified in 2014 PIT. The Housing Opportunities Commission HUD VASH case managers determined that half of the counted veterans were eligible for vouchers and the other half were either dishonorably discharged or did not have documentation to determine eligibility.

Definitions of veteran:

- HUD VASH: Persons in active duty for at least one year with any discharge other than dishonorable.
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF): a person with any length of active service with any discharge other than dishonorable.
- Zero: 2016: A person with any length of active services, any branch of the military (i.e. national guard, coast guard, etc.) regardless of discharge.

Amy Horton-Newell suggested adopting the broadest definition (Zero: 2016) and use this definition as our aspirational goal because it includes veterans we have not served (i.e. the National Guard).

→**ACTION:** The Zero: 2016 definition will be circulated for review by the members of the Operations Committee and be presented for adoption at next month's meeting.

Amy shared that the Homeless Person Representation Project has a Pro Bono program for homeless veterans and the program can assist with discharge upgrade issue.

Jen Schiller reported that MCCH have identified 17 potential veterans. The wait to obtain the DT214 (veteran status documentation) can takes six weeks. Adopting a broad definition would expand the range of eligibility and allow veterans to be served sooner and not delay services until the receipt of the DT214.

UPDATES ON COMMITTEES:

Strategic Planning Committee: At the last meeting the Committee discussed:

- How to align their work with the Federal Strategic Plan
- How the Strategic Planning Committee relates to the other Committees
- The four responsibilities of the Committee
 - Implementations of the Plan by developing an action plan to guide the work
 - Submitting a report in November to Operations Committee and to the full Interagency Commission on Homelessness
 - Identifying gap analysis
 - Reporting on the Emergency Solution Grant (ESG) funds
- Assigning members of the Strategic Planning Committee to other Commissions as liaisons
- Identifying who is missing from the Committee (i.e. Healthcare for the Homeless, Behavioral Health and Crisis Services, Veterans Advocates, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the Sheriff's office)

→**ACTION:** At the end of the week, survey money will be sent out to select members to prioritize the action items. The results of the survey will help to develop an action plan that will guide the implementation of the strategic plan. There will be a two week turn around to gather, analyze and report back the results.

Performance and Review Committee: The last Committee meeting was well represented from the single and family side. The group discussion included:

- What are the performance measure that we have considered previously and how we gather information
- How to incorporate not just the CoC HUD funded programs but all of the funding according to type (i.e. emergency transitional rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing)
- How to develop a baseline of our services through program type
- Examining some of the program vulnerability and barriers and addressing shortfalls and gaps (i.e. employment, childcare, housing locators, etc.)
- Developing a logic model on how we move through the case management system
- Identifying who is missing from the Committee (i.e. a former homeless persons, United Way, Businesses, Behavioral Health and Crisis Services, and other members of the Interagency Commission on Homelessness).
- Presenting finding and a baseline to the CoC operations group.
- Including data gathering regarding gap analysis could be worked on by the Performance Review Committee as well as the Strategic Planning Committee
- Include specific data collection that would be used by the Strategic Planning Committee to advance the strategic plan

Community Outreach and Education Committee: There were 10 representatives. The meeting was an opportunity to inform the group members who are not part of the Operations Committee about our focus and the Strategic Plan. The Committee discussed:

- Working on a definition for veterans
- Defining homelessness and what are the criteria
- What it means to end homelessness
- Working on an information brochures
- Identify seats that need to be filled Behavior Health and Crisis Services and the Silver Spring Veterans Center

SHELTER NEEDS FOR SINGLE HOMELESS ADULTS – DISCUSSION OF SURVEY RESULTS

Last December, the County Council raised the question about the need for shelter availability for single adults during the summer months. Shelter capacity expands during the winter hypothermia sessions necessitating increasing winter shelter beds. How many adults would benefit from shelter services after April 1 when the winter shelter overflow season closes? A survey was conducted of single adults both in shelter and unsheltered to explore the need. There were 377 people who completed the survey (143 women and 234 men). The results were:

Completed the Survey		Eligible and would accept shelter during the summer months		Self-reporting as needing time-limited support services
Women	143	87	61%	50%
Men	234	113		41%

A discussion about the reliability of the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization and Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) continued and the conclusion was the scoring system is a prioritization tool to determine who will be served first. The County assessment tool is used by case managers to determine actual housing placement. The VI-SPDAT tool helps identify the best type of support and housing intervention for an individual by relying on three categories of recommendation:

- **Permanent Supportive Housing:** Individuals or families who need permanent housing with ongoing access to services and case management to remain stably housed.
- **Rapid Re-Housing:** Individuals or families with moderate health, mental health and/or behavioral health issues, but who are likely to be able to achieve housing stability over a short time period through a medium or short-term rent subsidy and access to support services.
- **Affordable Housing:** Individuals or families who do not require intensive supports but may still benefit from access to affordable housing. In these cases, the tool recommends affordable or subsidized housing but no specific intervention drawn uniquely from the homeless services world. (In most cases, this amounts to saying simply, “no case management.”)

The VI-SPDAT helps identify who should be recommended for each housing and support intervention, moving the discussion from simply who is eligible for a service intervention to who is eligible and in greatest need of that intervention.

When self-reporting many in the homeless population will chose no supports because they just want someplace to live. Supports represents to those experiencing homelessness having a case manager visit to ask questions which most want to avoid. To those who self-report “no support” may not need long-term housing support will most likely need intervention services such as employment services, financial assistance, etc.

NEXT MEETING

On Monday, March 16 from 8:30-5:00p a written standard training at Rockville Memorial Library, 2nd Floor, Conference Room will be held to discuss the eligibility, prioritization and vulnerability by the Technical Assistance Collaboration consultants. Montgomery County has a system in place which needs to be collected into written standard to meet HUD requirements.

MEETING ADJOURNED