



INTERAGENCY COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS

Meeting Summary Notes Tuesday, February 6, 2018

Members (Present or Represented)

Ahluwalia, Uma
 Brice, Jonathan
 Chapman, Sheryl
 George, Melissa (representing Robert Green)
 Harris, Amanda
 Leventhal, Councilmember George
 Rock, Shane
 Roynestad, Brian
 Schuchman, Abe
 Seidel, Stan
 Sinclair-Smith, Susan
 Snuggs, Clarence
 Stiegler, Liana (representing Senator Craig Zucker)
 Swan, Fred (representing Stacy Spann)
 Thames, Jeffrey
 Tracey, Brian

Members (Excused)

Emerson, Kim
 Horton-Newell, Amy
 Kauffman, Louise
 Miller, Eneshal
 Newton, Bridget

Members (Absent)

Crowel, Raymond
 Wilds, Moses

Guests

Afework, Endrias
 Arroyo-Lefebvre, Paloma
 Bohorquez, Margarita
 Ezrin, Debbie
 Fabrizio, Chelsea
 Fassanelli, Antonia
 Flowers, Michele
 Ingram, L. J.
 Longbrake, Derek
 Rinker, Roberta
 Rose, Lynn
 Spencer, Eugene
 Stone, Mike
 Todd, Chapman
 Wellington, Janice

Staff

Anderson, Denise
 Anderson, Mary
 Ball, Kim
 Black, Sara
 George, Leslie
 Huggins, Gloria
 Kelly, LaSonya
 Matthews, Stacey
 Rickford, Eric
 Sierra, Sharon
 Soni, Nili

Welcome and Introductions – Brian Tracey

Brian convened meeting with welcome and introductions.

Inside (Not Outside) Update – Nili Soni and Chapman Todd

The Inside (not Outside) campaign is dedicated to ending chronic homelessness for individuals and families in Montgomery County by March 31, 2018. The effort is being led by the Interagency Commission on Homelessness (ICH). Individuals experiencing chronic homelessness are those who have been on the streets or in shelters continuously for at least 12 months and has a disability.

Currently, Montgomery County has housed 278 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and we currently have 97 individuals left to house.

Individuals Experiencing Chronic Homelessness as of February 6, 2018	
Unassigned or Unaccepted by Housing Provider	25
Assigned but not Accepted by Housing Provider	34
Accepted by Housing Provider – Move in Pending	36
Currently Inactive (Cannot be located)	2
Total Individuals to be Housed by March 31, 2018	97

Weekly updates of the campaign are being sent to a list-serve every Friday. All were encouraged to check in with Nili Soni to be added to the list.

Lease up Events: There is a lease up event scheduled Thursday, February 8 and will include landlords and all chronic individuals on the CES chronic homeless list. The hope is to house 20 individuals on Thursday. There will be another lease up event on Thursday, March 8. All were encouraged to share any ideas on potential housing complexes or landlords that may be willing to participate in the March 8 event.

Unassigned or Unaccepted Individuals: The challenge is that 23 out of the 25 individuals listed above as unassigned or unaccepted are undocumented residents. Identifying housing placements for undocumented individuals because of federal regulations is difficult.

Uma Ahluwalia stated that Montgomery County can use local and federal dollars to house undocumented homeless residents but the County cannot be the placement agency. This is because of a permanent supportive housing (PSH) regulation that prohibits the County from acting as a placement agency. However, HUD has clarified that it is allowable for non-profits to place undocumented individuals. It is also allowable for the County to refer undocumented individuals to non-profits for placement. Uma emphasized that the County relies on County-funded homeless providers to do the work of housing placements.

Dr. George Leventhal recommended an amendment to the Housing Initiative Program (HIP) regulations that will eliminate any prohibition of the use of County’s funding to house residents because of immigration status.

The issue of an amendment was tabled until further discussion.

Youth Homelessness in Montgomery County – A Panel Discussion

<u>Homeless Youth Panelist:</u>		
Uma S. Ahluwalia	Director and Facilitator	Montgomery County, Department of Health and Human Services (MC DHHS)
Myrtle Barrie-Jemmott	Child Welfare Services	MC DHHS, Children Youth and Family Services
JoAnn Barnes	Chief	MC DHHS, Children Youth and Family Services
Dr. Jonathan Brice	Associate Superintendent	Montgomery County Public Schools – Office of Student Affairs, Support and Engagement
Stuart Campbell	Director	Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development – Office of Community Programs
Dr. Sheryl Chapman	Executive Director	National Center for Children and Families
April Kaplan	Executive Director	Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families
Eric Masten	Director of Public Policy	National Network for Youth
Lisa Merkin	Administrator	MC DHHS, Children Youth and Family Services – Child Welfare Services
Jacob Newman	Managing Director of Montgomery County Programs	Latin American Youth Center
Debby Shore	Executive Director	Sasha Bruce

Uma provided context by sharing recent efforts and engagements of the County to address homelessness:

1. Adopting the Housing First model
2. Joining the 100,000 Homes Campaign (November 2013)
3. Eliminating homelessness for residents with chronic medical issues (about 15 people)
4. Eliminating Veterans Homelessness by reaching functional zero (December 2015)
5. Currently, addressing chronically homeless individuals with a goal of ending chronic homelessness by March 31
6. Next steps, addressing Youth Homelessness and Family Homelessness

Some questions that need to be discussed today:

- How many youths are in shelter and how many couch surfs?
- What is the definition of youth homelessness? How do local and federal definitions differ?
- What is the face of youth homelessness?
- What can the County do to help and what can we accomplish within the short budget time that we have?
- How do we know where our resources are and what is the best way to proceed?

Definition of Youth Homelessness:

Eric Masten of the National Network of Youth shared that the network is a national membership organization comprised of homeless youth providers. The network's program focus is on serving youths and young adults who are at risk of and experiencing homelessness. The organization is administered by the Federal DHHS. The network's definition of *youth homelessness* is broad and includes homeless youths who is couch surfing to a young person living on the streets. The HUD's definition is stricter applying only to youths living on the streets.

Stuart Campbell of the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Office of Community Programs shared that the State adopted the broader definition of youth homelessness which includes youths who couch surf and those on the streets. However, because the State receives Federal HUD funding, the Federal stricter definition also applies. The DHCD uses State dollars for the broader expansive definition but Federal dollars and State match dollars are used in adherence to the stricter HUD definition of serving only youth on the streets with no roofs over their heads.

Debby Shore of Sasha Bruce expressed that youths who couch surf are in unstable situations. These are not cases of people coming together and doubling up. Rather, these are vulnerable youths who are often in circumstances where they are being exploited.

Dr. Jonathan Brice shared that the Montgomery County Public Schools' (MCPS) definition of homelessness is very broad. When a young person (with or without a parent) presents at a school and identifies as homeless, they are entered into the MCPS homeless system. Currently, there are 1,276 students in the system with 130 identifying as unaccompanied. An *unaccompanied youth* is a young person experiencing homelessness who is alone without a parent or guardian. Many unaccompanied youths are from the LGBTQ community and are being ostracized by their families and have been forced out of the family homes. There is a need for a system to help to repair these family relationships; and, if that cannot be done, to find these students stable housing. A drop-in center would provide additional resources and support for these young people.

Dr. Sheryl Chapman emphasized that youths experiencing homelessness who live with their families are also in need of empathy. They, too, experience instability due to mental illness, criminal activity, poor school performance, poverty, negative family relationships, living in shelters, etc. Many of these youths

have children and most are African American which are concerns that need to be addressed. Sheryl stressed that youth experiencing homeless who are with their family does not lessen the need for empathy and attention.

Dr. Leventhal stressed the need for discussion to quantify the problem to develop budget items that will fund resources to address the needs of youths and their families experiencing homelessness. Today's deep dive discussion into the issue will help to quantify the need which will lead to resources to help those who are suffering.

April Kaplan of the Collaboration Council for Children, Youths and Families shared that there are 8,000-9,000 disconnected youths. *Disconnected youths* are young people who are not in school or working. These youths are not necessarily homeless.

MCPS coded as <i>homeless youth</i> (with and without parents)	1,276
MCPS coded as <i>unaccompanied youths</i>	130
Youth and Families who are homeless	Unknown
<i>Disconnected Youths</i> (young people not in school or working) not necessarily homeless	8,000-9,000

Program to Serve Young People who are Homeless:

Jacob Newman of the Latin American Youth Center (LAYC) shared that the center was founded 50 years ago in the district and has expanded to other communities because of the emerging need. The LAYC programs range from harm reduction through street outreach to transitional and independent living arrangements to foster care programs. The LAYC takes a holistic and positive youth development view because youths are the best ones to express what they need and want. Jacob also shared that he worked in a program in Seattle, Washington where there was a drop-in center that had a barista and art therapy program in the day and at night bed rolls were placed and the space became a shelter. A drop-in center would be a resource to help youths who are 16-24 years old experiencing homelessness because many have co-occurring issues (mental health, hormonal, behavioral, etc.). Many of these young people are vulnerable to gangs and/or being exploited financially or sexually to be allowed to couch surf.

Debby Shore shared that the Sasha Bruce program's pillars are prevention, street outreach, short-term sheltering focusing on reuniting young people with their families and identifying longer-term living alternatives for those who cannot return homes (i.e., permanent supportive housing). Sasha Bruce has launched a family-oriented intensive service which is an expansive preventive effort. Also, Sasha Bruce started the drop-in center 43 years ago to get people off the streets, to provide meals, to get people connected and to teach them how to stabilize their lives. The center provides the front door to young people (16-24 years old) who have been on the street for a long time.

JoAnn Barnes expressed that Child Welfare Services has seen youths who are placed in foster care run away and become homeless. Myrtle Barrie-Jemmott from the transitioning youth programs shared that youths age out of foster care at 21 and exit into stable housing (i.e., back with their families, college or permanent supportive housing). The challenge is that many youths who age out cannot afford the cost of housing in Montgomery County.

April Kaplan shared that the Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families has three outreach workers on the streets engaging young people. The street outreach workers gather information on laptops about the youth's life domains and provide resources and referrals. Also, the drop-in center or

reengagement center provides alternative educational programs, GED classes, work training and certification programs. The system of care provides services to disconnected youths (16-21) who have a behavioral health issues which include comprehensive care management, referral to obtain a behavioral health diagnosis and a non-crisis call-in line.

Stuart Campbell shared that homelessness is a State priority and DHCD is now the lead agency for homelessness. State programs and grants (i.e., the emergency solution grant and the rental allowance program) were recently moved from Department of Human Services to DHCD. This has resulted in State funding of \$10.5 million for homelessness. The State has carved out funds to focus on youth homelessness and provides grants to several jurisdictions for programs targeted to assist and house youths. In addition, the Host Homes Program and Rapid Re-housing for youths are being explored to house unaccompanied youths experiencing homelessness.

One specific program is the Youth Reach which counts homeless unaccompanied youths to identify services. This year is the third count which will include 13 out of the 16 Continuum of Cares (CoCs) which includes Montgomery County. Last year, the Youth Reach survey identified 865 unaccompanied homeless youths within the 10 CoCs surveyed (13% age 17 and under; 87% age 18-24; 68% Black; 22% White; 54% Male; 42% Female; 23% LGBTQ; 3% Transgendered). The 865 youths were compared with the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) number for youth and the number increased to 2,332 unduplicated numbers.

Dr. Chapman stated that there is a need for transitional housing because of the challenge of market rents. What is needed is longer term transitional housing and more capacity to extend the housing for child welfare exits and youths who were put out; the majority because of being among the LGBTQ community.

JoAnn Barnes expressed that there is a need to work “upstream” to prevent young people from becoming homeless or entering a life of human trafficking. Some of that work is being done by the Positive Youth Development program. There is a need to work with those “parenting” unaccompanied youths in the community to provide resources so they can help these young people become stabilized and prevent further homelessness.

Question and Answer:

Shane Rock: How many of 1,276 students that MCPS counts as homeless are being captured in HMIS? Nili Soni shared that the 1,276 number that MCPS count are homeless students under 18 and most are with their families. In HMIS, there are currently 104 homeless youths with 62 young parent families (18-24) being captured as homeless. Dr. Brice commented that a data-sharing agreement is being worked out between MCPS and Montgomery County DHHS. This agreement should be finalized by June 30 and will help to track homeless youths across the County.

Jeffrey Thames asked is a homeless youth drop-in center needed in Montgomery County? Uma expressed that there needs to be further study based on the information shared to come up with a set of recommendations regarding a homeless youth drop-in center.

Abe Schuchman asked for examples of evidenced-based practices to guide the solution of addressing youth homelessness?

- Increasing affordable housing options
- Providing education components
- Employment opportunities that will help young people earn an income to afford housing

- Rapid rehousing that meets the needs of young people. Their needs differ from adults.
- Transitional living that helps youths make developmental steps
- Providing permanent supportive housing

Brian Tracey shared that a youth drop-in center would be an additional resource to help youths but the appropriation of funding should go beyond opening the doors and be sustainable to continue operation. A quantitative and qualitative view is important. Quantitatively looking at the cost per persons helps to get funding. A qualitative view helps to set priorities where the funding goes. There is a need for private funding. Brian recommended that a representative from the ICH be on the County's Economic Development Council.

Susie Sinclair-Smith shared the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless (MCCH) has been providing emergency shelter for 41 youths. MCCH has conducted focus group with the youths to learn how to best serve them. The Coalition has learned that the youths are isolated and lonely many formerly living outside in tents.

Dr. Leventhal emphasized the need to work quickly to secure funding for a Youth Drop-in Center. The election in November will bring changes in the county, department and council. Projects that have not been started will be delayed. George encouraged the ICH to start the process of opening a drop-in center by clearly defining the need so that funding can be secured. The challenges the County faces in serving these young people is typical across CoCs and jurisdictions. However, housing options for young people can be creative because young people ages from 17-24 will share housing, double up and live in dormitory-style housing.

Announcements:

Antonia Fasanelli of the Homeless Person Representative Project shared that the general assembly voted to establish the Ending Youth Homelessness Act of 2018. The act will ensure that thousands of youth in Maryland who are on their own without stable housing or family support are able to meet their basic needs for shelter and safety.

Uma announced that on February 12 the Affordable Housing Conference is doing a roundtable on health and housing. Registration is still open.

Nili Soni announced that the Montgomery County Youth Reach Count is from April 2-14.

Amanda Harris emphasized the need for a full continuum of services (i.e., drop-in center, transitional housing, transportation, rapid rehousing, etc.). Amanda shared that the HUD Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) is a new initiative designed to reduce the number of youth experiencing homelessness. The YHDP competition is opened and applications are due by April 17, 2018. The program offers \$43 million where each community can apply for between \$1 million and \$15 million. The program will provide the opportunity to implement new and innovative project models with the planning and implementation of a Coordinated Community Plan. Amanda will reach out to providers for assistance in the application process.

Uma stated that the ICH will review all the information from today's discussion and plan out the next steps. More information will be shared at the March ICH meeting.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, March 13, 2018, | 3:30-5:30 p.m. Location Rockville Memorial Library, 21 Maryland Avenue, 2nd Floor Conference Room.