

Meeting Minutes

Continuum of Care Meeting

Thursday, November 4, 2021

10:30am – 12:30pm

Virtual Meeting

Continuum of Care (CoC) Members in attendance: Andy Keller, Ben Sears, Beth Fetzer-Rice, Buck Bramlish, Carl Landry, Christopher Maitland, Debbie Donahey, Dennis Jeffrey, Donna Mayer, Felisha Lyons, Frank Beel, Jeff Pattison, John Edgar, Jon Cardi, Jon Welty, Keith McCormish, Kim Stands, Erika Clark Jones, Lisa Patt-McDaniel, Michelle Heritage, Nancy Case, Orvell Johns, Scott Scharlach, Sue Darby, Sue Villilo, Tiara Ross, Mason Laurie, Terri Power, Joy Bivens

CoC Members not in attendance: Dion Robinson, Emily Savors, Hannah Estabrook, Jerome Johnson, Kelsey Strausbaugh, Mark Paxson, Michael Wilkos, Sheila Prillerman, Lark Mallory, Tatyanna Lucas, Tina Rutherford

Community Shelter Board (CSB) staff: Lianna Barbu, Steve Skovensky, Heather Notter

Administrative Issues

Minutes

Keith asked for any corrections to or comments on the minutes from the May 24, 2021 CoC meeting. Michelle moved to approve the minutes, Lisa seconded, and the CoC agreed.

CoC Application

Changes to National Church Residences (N^^) Berwyn East Place Project Plan

The CoC approved a Project Plan for N^^ Berwyn Place East Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) project on December 15, 2020 and prioritized the project for the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) and CoC funding competitions. Lianna outlined changes that N^^ is proposing.

- < N^^ is increasing the number of units from 60 to 88. The number of homeless units (36) remains the same.
- < N^^ is adjusting the funding mix. The CoC prioritized Berwyn Place East second for the 2021 OHFA tax credit application. N^^ did not receive tax credits, but OHFA decided to support the project using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds instead.
- < The project will not need CoC funds for capital development, as originally planned. N^^ is requesting instead CoC funding for supportive services. Lianna explained that this is good for the project and system as a whole because capital funds are not renewable, while services funds can be renewed every year.

FY21 CoC Application and CoC Project Ranking

Lianna reminded the CoC of the process for the annual CoC funding competition and reviewed the CoC's procedures for reviewing, scoring, and ranking project applications. The CoC has been using the same procedures for several years.

- < The procedures consider each project's performance and how much of the allocated funding the project used. Youth Homelessness Demonstration Projects and the rapid re-housing (RRH) project that serves survivors of domestic violence were underspent for FY21 because they were new and ramping up staffing and services. They will spend more in FY22.

- < CSB prepared project ranking options for CoC consideration based on the 2021 CoC Review, Score, and Ranking Procedures. Normally, HUD requires CoCs to rank some projects in a lower tier, putting them at risk of losing funding. This requirement does not apply this year because HUD is providing sufficient funding for all renewal and replacement youth projects. Therefore, the CoC Board recommends one option for the CoC to consider – ranking by total score, which is a more comprehensive measure.
- < Our CoC can apply for \$913,480 in bonus funding for new projects. Per the May 25, 2021 CoC resolution on new permanent housing, the CoC prioritized Community Housing Network (CHN) Parsons Place, CHN Touchstone Field Place II, and N^^ Berwyn East Place for new CoC funding. There are changes to the project budgets based on how much HUD has made available in bonus funding and assessed need for each project.
- < Partner agencies submitted 28 renewal project applications. CSB submitted applications for HMIS, CoC Planning and Unified Funding Agency projects.
- < Partner agencies submitted 4 replacement projects for YHDP programs serving transition-age youth. By replacing the projects, our CoC can take advantage of several regulatory flexibilities HUD has made available to youth projects. The projects will continue to operate as approved by the CoC to provide coordinated access, transitional housing, RRH, and PSH.
- < Lianna walked through the system application narrative, which covers CoC structure and governance, coordination, COVID-19, data collection, system performance, and collaboration with other partners and systems of care.

Jon C moved to approve Option 1, Michelle seconded, and the CoC agreed. Sue D and Beth abstained from the vote.

CoC membership planning to better reflect the population served

The CoC routinely assesses membership to ensure participation is representative of the community served and includes all voices that can contribute to efforts to reduce homelessness.

- < The CoC Board discussed steps to help the CoC better reflect the people we serve and recommends that the CoC conduct a demographic survey of members prior to the next meetings in January 2022.
- < In the January meetings, the CoC Board recommends reviewing the survey results and discussing goals and actions for the CoC to become more representative of the people we serve.
- < CSB will send a survey to CoC members.

Strategic Issues

Prioritization for Ohio Housing Finance Agency tax credits

The CoC needs to prioritize PSH projects for the next OHFA tax credit competition in February 2022. For the 2021 competition, the CoC prioritized CHN Touchstone Field Place, N^^ Berwyn East Place, and CHN Poplar Fen Place. Touchstone Field Place and Berwyn East Place subsequently received support from OHFA using ARPA funding, leaving Poplar Fen Place in need of tax credit funds. No other PSH proposals were submitted for CoC consideration.

Lisa moved to approve prioritization of Poplar Fen Place for the 2022 OFHA tax credit competition, Sue V seconded, and the CoC agreed.

Affordable housing acquisition and rehabilitation through ARP

Michelle reported that the City of Columbus and Franklin County are considering the proposal to use ARPA funding to acquire and renovate hotels/motels for PSH.

City of Columbus shelter surge funding

Michelle reported that the City approved additional funding through the end of the calendar year for the system's emergency shelters.

Mental health/crisis services funding

Michelle reported that the City approved half of the funding needed to embed crisis response specialists in the system's emergency shelters and housing sites to help address the increase in mental health crises over the last two years. CSB, ADAMH, and partners will work with Columbus State Community College to develop a training and certification process for these specialists.

- < The County is considering the request for the other half of the funding needed.
- < Felisha asked about long-term plans for this initiative and about referrals to other community resources and systems.
- < Michelle said that CSB will work with the City, County, and ADAMH on sustained funding for the crisis response specialists. Erika added that we will continuously evaluate the program from the beginning, including assessing the savings from decreased police and EMT responses to emergency shelters and housing locations, to pursue program sustainability.
- < Connections with other community resources and systems of care will be part of the crisis response specialists' role. They will be trying to intervene before a crisis develops and will need to leverage other community supports to achieve this goal.
- < We will also establish a practice group for the specialists to engage in continuous learning, mutual support, upskilling/reskilling, and teach-backs to other shelter and housing staff.
- < Michelle thanked the City for the funding. CSB is looking forward to working with ADAMH, Columbus State, and partner agencies on this initiative.
- < Jon C commented on how this effort will help address the mental health services gap in our community.

Emergency Housing Vouchers

Lianna reported that CSB is working closely with CMHA to fill 304 new Emergency Housing Vouchers as quickly as possible. About 100 vouchers have been issued and 6 clients have been housed. Finding units in the tight affordable housing environment has been very difficult. CSB engaged a consultant to help find housing. Lianna thanked CMHA for their partnership on this effort, including removing requirements that normally apply to public housing vouchers.

System and Community Framework Updates

Community Plan Update

Steve presented the process for updating the Community Plan. CSB has identified priority action areas, including a focus on HUD performance measures to help our CoC better compete in the annual funding competition. Sessions are underway with CSB partner agencies, CoC members, community partners, and other systems of care. The update will be released by the end of 2021.

COVID-19 and overflow update

Steve reported that the number of families that need emergency shelter has increased. To maintain COVID-19 precautions, there is limited on-site overflow and some families are sheltered in a hotel instead. Rapid re-housing partners continue efforts to re-house families as quickly as possible, but are challenged by very limited affordable housing.

For single adults, Southeast and YMCA are adding beds for women and men. CSB is working to finalize a location for sex offender cold weather shelter. Overflow operations will officially begin when nighttime temperatures reach 32 degrees.

COVID-19 vaccine and testing efforts continue throughout the system. CSB has contracted with Lower Lights Christian Health Center for a roaming nurse in emergency shelters to provide outreach and education, COVID-19 vaccines, and flu shots. The Shelter for Isolation and Quarantine will remain open as long as there is a need. The census had decreased, but increased again with the Delta variant.

Lianna presented the annual System and Program Indicator Report. The report recognizes all partner agencies for their work during the pandemic. Netcare Access homeless hotline for families, three Gladden Community House programs, Huckleberry House emergency shelter, and multiple PSH programs were recognized for meeting all outcomes. Columbus VA and YWCA Columbus achieved compliance with CSB's rigorous program standards on their first visit.

- < The negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is evident in all the system dashboards.
- < For the family emergency shelter system, 42% fewer households needed shelter likely due to eviction moratoria, stimulus payments, and enhanced unemployment benefits. The success rate decreased and average length of stay increased because of the extremely difficult housing environment. The employment rate at entry decreased, also likely a result of the pandemic.
- < For single men and women, the numbers served were fairly consistent and the trends for length of stay and success rate were similar to the family system. Self-reported disability among men was high at 47%. Actual disability rates likely are higher.
- < For the emergency shelter system as a whole, the number of Veterans and pregnant women decreased because of prevention efforts that provide assistance before they become homeless.
- < Outcomes for the homelessness prevention system show the positive impact of the expanding Homelessness Prevention Network. The number of households served increased and 88% of households had a successful housing outcome. The number of pregnant women served in prevention programs increased.
- < Results for the rapid re-housing system shows the difficult challenges due to lack of affordable housing. Average length of participation increased. Partner agencies are having a very hard time identifying safe, decent housing that people can afford.

- < The PSH system continues to perform well. The average age of 51 years has increased by 4 years just since last year. The people served in PSH are older and more vulnerable, and require different supportive services.
- < CSB is working on an analysis of outcomes and other data elements by demographics to identify any disparities in our system. CSB will share these new dashboards when available.
- < Jon C asked if the percentage of people who were homeless for the first time is high and Lianna responded that it's consistent with past data.

Keith thanked CSB and partner agencies for working on the CoC application and thanked everyone for the collaboration on all the projects in development.

Meeting Adjourned.