

MINUTES

Columbus and Franklin County, Ohio

Continuum of Care Membership

Thursday, November 14, 2024

9:00 am to 1:30 pm

In-Person Meeting

Continuum of Care (CoC) Members (in attendance): Chanda Wingo, Michael Wilkos, Jeff Pattison, Juliet C. Dorris-Williams, MarQuan McCarrel, Carlie Boos, Robert Bramlish, Malcolm Turner, Shelia Prillerman, Rei Scott, Meghann Cicola, Shannon Isom, Beth Lonn, Beth Fetzer-Rice, Jim Rose, Christopher Maitland, Marcus Johnson, Graham Bowman (on behalf of Emerald Hernandez-Parra), Walter Dillard, Tiara Ross, Ryan Jefferson (on behalf of Roxann Payne), Emily Savors, Sonya Higgenbotham, Sarah Hatchard, Terri Power, Donna Mayer, Nancy Hashman, Scott Scharlach, Paula Davis (on behalf of Tina Rutherford) and Vivian Turner

Continuum of Care (CoC) Members (not in attendance): Lt. Kyle Kincade, Makaylah Downour, Felisha Lyons, Le-Ann Harris, Nathan Wymer, Desiree Polk-Blank, Courtney Elrod, Kier Scott, Maria Houston, Jonathan D. Welty, Steve Gladman, Alison Marker, Sue Villilo

Community Shelter Board (CSB) staff: Christina Blair, Lauren Hiskey, Steve Skovensky, Sherrice Sledge-Thomas, Asli Buldum.

Guests: Lianna Barbu

Central Ohio Housing Ecosystem

Michael Wilkos presented on the central Ohio housing ecosystem. The presentation included information on who serves on a continuum and the state of homelessness in Columbus and Franklin County.

CoC Housing Continuum

Shannon Isom presented the continuum with a graphic showing what a healthy housing continuum should look like. She then showed what the current housing continuum looks like in Franklin County and Columbus.

Community Assessment Report & Findings

Shannon Isom continued her presentation with information regarding the community assessment report and its findings.

Other Top Performing CoCs Research Project

Michael Wilkos discussed an upcoming research project to interview continuums of care across the country. A sign-up sheet was sent around the room for the project.

Empowerment of the Citizens Advisory Council

Malcom Turner presented on empowering the Citizen's Advisory Council and shared his story.

East-West Unsheltered Training Part 2

Christina Blair provided information on a virtual homelessness workshop that continuum members could register for to be prepared to provide advocacy against the criminalization of homelessness.

Discussion Breakouts

During lunch the continuum members broke in to four groups to discuss to breakout questions.

1. What changes do you think the CoC should make to be more responsive to our current community conditions?
2. How does the CoC develop its own voice to advocate for people experiencing homelessness?

After the breakout group discussion, the members came back together to give the groups an opportunity to report back on their discussion.

1st question responses: What changes do you think the CoC should make to be more responsive to our current community conditions?

Group A:

- More stakeholder involvement
- Stronger outreach efforts to create better track to housing for the unhoused
- More diverse agency involvement outside of the normal scope
- More focus on prevention efforts
- Better coordination of wrap-around services
- Landscape analysis to determine who is working in the space and organizations who might be interested
- Speak in a unified voice as CoC and organizations in the space.
- Bring in more immigrant communities and immigration services
- Create additional pathways to more efforts into prevention
- CoC will identify strategies after research is conducted to bring options back to implement system wide to combat increased evictions in the county and encourage landlord-tenant mediations before evictions are filed which harm tenants.

Group B:

- If NIMBY people sat in this room for a year, could we get them to understand the issues?
- How do we get suburban communities to invest their resources into urban communities?
- How can we make these meetings productive so we're not just checking boxes?
- How do we more collectively and collaboratively speak to the community to get buy-in?
- Be more strategic when bringing people into the CoC through training, onboarding and orientation, education, etc.
- Have more/different sub-committees

- We've been in a bubble and only focusing on the pieces that CSB funds and their performance – we could have more advocacy, awareness, and prevention of the community at large
- Who's missing? Who's voices are we not hearing? What communities are we not talking to? Who's impacted directly?
- Who else should be on the CoC?
- We're so focused on HUD – who else is involved?

Group C:

- Appropriate representation from hospital systems
- Developers – More focus and targeting
- Roommate matching
- Increase faith-based involvement
- Understand the real function of CoC
- Storytelling

Group D:

- DEI – get comfortable being uncomfortable
- Advocacy
- Landlord interventions
- Membership – re-engage, educate, expansion (reentry, justice, Ohio Rise, suburban representation)
- Meetings – increased frequency, outcomes, progress
- Public campaigns

2nd question responses: How does the CoC develop its own voice to advocate for people experiencing homelessness?

Group A:

- Create onboarding to educate members and marketing to educate the community and partners of the role of the CoC.
- More voices of people impacted; lived experience
- Develop voice by defining scope, identify goals and aspirations
- Aligned voice within the CoC
- Include more community voices on the CoC
- Op-Ed or article about the CoC
- Communication Plan

Group B:

- Fully utilize the 44 CoC members to educate the community to try to pass legislation for more funding.
- Having active committees to include voices beyond what HUD requires

- We need more people with lived experience
- We need to include several layers deeper than what HUD requires. We tend to keep reaching out to the “usual suspects.”
- Rebranding as a collective, and separate from CSB
- Showing up at City Council Meetings
- Create tag line, mission statement, logo
- Promote to the community
- Asking for letters of support from smaller grassroots orgs
- Invite City Council Members, community members, grassroots orgs to CoC meetings
- We need to get more collective buy-in
- Have sub-committees that meet more often

Group C:

- Focus on systemic issues not symptoms
- Develop shared language
- Need to define advocacy, unified message, and when to pull advocacy levers
- Need to define advocacy
- Larger conversation around criminalizing homelessness
- How do we change rhetoric around NIMBY?
- Shared language

Group D:

- Coordinate CoC agencies to put marketing folk together to plan coordinated messaging
- Engage with Park & Rec
- Share the data to “drivers” of homelessness in the suburbs to help them see it is a county-wide issue.
- Tell the real stories and children’s stories
- More talking about “housing and”
- Homelessness happens to everyone in the messaging
- Youth stories w/ sponsorships
- Develop voice

There was time given at the end for members to reflect on the retreat experience.

The retreat was adjourned at 1:30 pm.