

Meeting Minutes

Rebuilding Lives Funder Collaborative

Friday, January 8, 2016

11am – 1pm

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

Attendees

Rebuilding Lives Funder Collaborative (RLFC) Members: Michael Brooks, Nancy Case, Jeff Cutlip, Sue Darby, Callie Query (*for Karen Days*), Lisa Defendiefer, Joyce Edelman, Robin Harris, Michelle Heritage, Matt Kosanovich (*for Janet Jackson*), Patrick Jarvis, Carl Landry, Tara Tallarico (*for Veronica Lofton*), Teresa McWain, Ryan Hess (*for Marissa Michaels*), Jeff Pattison, Susan Lewis Kaylor (*for David Royer*), Rollin Seward (*for Jim Schimmer*), Steve Sielschott, Deborra Armstrong (*for Chip Spinning*), Kim Stands, Don Strasser, Nicole Harper (*for Councilmember Priscilla Tyson*), Foster Ugbana, Mary Vail

Community Shelter Board (CSB) staff: Lianna Barbu, Amy Price, Heather Notter

Guests: Joy Bivens (Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services), Steve Skovensky (Maryhaven), Colleen Bain and Amy Rosenthal (National Church Residences), Ryan Cassell and Noel Welsh (Community Housing Network), Linda Jakes (Concord Counseling)

Welcome and Agenda Review

Michelle welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda.

Administrative Issues

Michelle asked if there were any corrections to or comments on the minutes from the November 17, 2015 RLFC meeting. Jeff C. moved to approve the minutes, Nancy seconded, and the RLFC agreed.

Michelle provided system updates.

- < Shelter winter overflow operations are ongoing.

- < Navigators and shelters have housed 796 people in the last 23 weeks, or 35 people per week. The list of long-stayers (individuals with shelter stays of over 100 days) has decreased from 277 to 49. The upcoming effort with Cardinal Health Six Sigma black belts will identify opportunities to reduce Navigator engagement time, reducing Lengths of Stay and improving housing outcomes.

- < Both family shelters are still full, which is abnormal for this time of year and very concerning. An enhanced diversion pilot with HandsOn Central Ohio will begin February 1, 2016. Commission President Marilyn Brown's Task Force to Prevent Family Homelessness will kick off in March. The Task Force will focus on upstream services and aim to reduce the number of homeless families in 2016 as compared to 2015. Involvement from all interested parties is welcomed.

Strategic Issues

Lianna reviewed recommendations from the RLFC Board to add to the RLFC one rotating representative from a youth organization and/or advocate, one representative from the jail system, and one representative from a human trafficking organization.

- < The RLFC agreed that Becky Westerfelt from Huckleberry House and Chief Deputy Geoff Stobart from the Franklin County Jail system would be good representatives for the youth and jail categories.
- < Suggestions for a representative in the human trafficking category included Freedom a la Cart, The Salvation Army, and Judge Herbert from the Catch Court (prostitution docket). The group agreed to invite Judge Herbert, given his broad expertise and demonstrated interest in collaborating with the homelessness system.
- < Mary moved to approve the resolution on composition of the RLFC, Matt seconded, and the group agreed.

Lianna reviewed the System and Program Indicator Report.

- < The report, which covers the time period 7/1/2015-9/30/2015, shows a decrease in the number of families served compared to the same time period last year. More recently, however, we are seeing an increase in families needing assistance; this increase will be apparent on the next report. The low success rate is concerning.
- < In the men's shelter system, the number of individuals served has decreased because of the high average Length of Stay. The success rate at exit is okay, but there is room for improvement.
- < The average Length of Stay is also high in the women's shelter system, but the success rate at exit is good.
- < For the Navigator program, the 32% successful housing outcome is positive, especially given that the 10-year goal is 40%. The average Length of Stay is too high, but should decrease as a result of the Cardinal Health black belt focus on reducing Navigator engagement time.
- < Carl asked if the Navigator pathways are mutually exclusive and Lianna replied that they are, but that an individual can move from one pathway to another. Amy added that clients are assigned to a pathway based on their largest barrier to housing.
- < The permanent supportive housing system is operating well. The 184 units added as of July 1, 2015 is the largest increase in the system ever.

Lianna reviewed the Occupancy Report.

- < The 21% occupancy for CAIHS Leasing II is because the program is part of the batch of new units added July 1, 2016.

- < The 56% occupancy for Southeast New Horizons is the result of changing the program's target population.
- < All other occupancy rates are within acceptable ranges.

Robin Harris from the Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services provided an overview of the Ohio Works First (OWF) program and the Prevention, Retention, and Contingency (PRC) program, which together comprise Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) in Ohio. Reduced public assistance was among the causes of increased family homelessness cited in the July 2015 Abt report on family homelessness in Columbus.

- < Available OWF resources did not decrease, but enforcement of limitations (e.g., work participation requirements) reduced the number of individuals receiving OWF assistance. The Department had to strictly enforce work requirements to avoid penalties.
- < Funding for PRC did decrease, but Franklin County has more flexibility with the PRC program than with the OWF program. The County has made several eligibility changes that may improve the Department's ability to help families.
- < Joy Bivens added that the Department is looking forward to the work of the Task Force to Prevent Family Homelessness to identify additional ways to support area families.
- < Nancy asked how many families reached the 3-year limit for OWF assistance. Robin agreed to provide that information to the group.

PSH Project Development

Lianna introduced National Church Residences' (N^^) Project Plan for The Commons at 161 and Community Housing Network's (CHN) Project Plan for Briggsdale II.

- < Amy Rosenthal and Colleen Bain briefed the RLFC on the details of Commons at 161. Jeff C. asked about housing sex offenders and Colleen replied that N^^ is committed to following the low-barrier requirements mandated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). N^^ will comply with state laws regarding sex offenders and will discuss the issue with the community.
- < Ryan Cassell, Noel Welsh, and Linda Jakes briefed the RLFC on the details of Briggsdale II.
- < Lianna reviewed a cost comparison for Commons at 161, Briggsdale II, and previous PSH projects, noting that capital costs are increasing because of higher construction costs and Davis-Bacon implications.
- < Michelle reviewed the draft resolutions on Commons at 161 and Briggsdale II, highlighting the proposed conditions that were recommended by the RLFC Board and the new condition on board participation proposed by CSB. Michelle also explained that the Ohio Housing Finance Agency has encouraged each community to submit two projects for tax credits each year to ensure that the pool is not undersubscribed.

- < Don asked how we can confirm that the projects comply with HUD's low barrier selection requirements. Michelle replied that the projects will be leased through CSB, so CSB will make sure N^^ and CHN use the appropriate criteria.
- < Robin moved to approve the N^^ project plan resolution, Carl seconded, and the RLFC agreed. Carl moved to approve the CHN project plan resolution, Nancy seconded, and the RLFC agreed.

Updates on Rebuilding Lives Project Strategies

- < Matt updated the group on emergency aid, noting that United Way is attempting to leverage the PRC program and Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP). Michelle asked about the timeline for EFSP funds and Matt responded that it is unclear, but that United Way is developing a local board process so they can effectively administer the funds when they become available. Matt suggested it may be time to re-visit the "Coordinate Emergency Aid" strategy to determine what initiatives are needed next.
- < Regarding "Increase Access to Benefits and Income," Amy reported that the approval rate for SSI/SSDI is low. System participants are discussing ways to improve benefit applications. Jeff indicated that SSI and SSDI approval may tighten. Michelle confirmed that the standards are already rigorous and Ohio has a low approval rate relative to other states.
- < Amy described multiple initiatives aimed at employment. Michelle asked Mary about the primary barriers that prevent additional progress on the "Employment" strategy. Mary recommended more collaboration with workforce development systems, better infrastructure (including "one-stop" services), and enhanced relationships with businesses to help them understand the needs and opportunities. Mary emphasized that long-term relationships with clients are important. It's not just helping clients find their first job, it's also staying connected to help clients progress professionally. Jeff observed that some businesses know the addresses of the shelters and discriminate against applicants with those addresses. Lisa commented that the Dominos near one of the shelters has hired homeless applicants.
- < On the Unified Supportive Housing System (USHS), Amy noted that CSB, CMHA, CHN, N^^, and ADAMH will meet at the end of January to do some USHS process mapping.
- < Lianna updated the RLFC on the strategy "Increase Supportive Housing Units," highlighting the challenge of finding available resources to continue adding units to the system.
- < Michelle reported that the "Affordable Housing Campaign" strategy is getting some traction with 12 members of the Affordable Housing Alliance.
- < Amy described CSB's participation in various forums that address Incarcerated Populations and a May 2015 study that examined homelessness among formerly incarcerated individuals.

- < Amy briefly described CHN and ADAMH's pilot program to serve homeless individuals exiting mental health institutions.

- < Michelle described Lutheran Social Services' work since taking over CHOICES, including fundraising for a new facility projected to open in 2018 that will better serve victims of domestic violence. Michelle praised Sue Villilo from LSS for her management of CHOICES.

Meeting Adjourned