

## Meeting Minutes

### Continuum of Care (Rebuilding Lives Funder Collaborative) Meeting

Monday, February 5, 2018

12:30pm – 1:40pm

Community Shelter Board

#### Attendees

Continuum of Care (CoC) / Rebuilding Lives Funder Collaborative (RLFC) Members: Becky Westerfelt, Carl Landry, Deborrha Armstrong, Jennifer Martinez, Emerald Hernandez, Emily Savors, Val Harmon, Jeff Pattison, Sally Shaffer, Mark Paxson, John Edgar, Jon Welty, Matt Kosanovich, Lisa Patt-McDaniel, Callie Query, Mary Wehrle, Michelle Heritage, Paula Haines, Rhonda Grizzell, Robin Harris, Sheila Prillerman, Sue Darby, Veronica Lofton

Community Shelter Board (CSB) staff: Tom Albanese, Lianna Barbu, Heather Notter

#### Welcome and Agenda Review

Michelle welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda.

#### Administrative Issues

Michelle asked for any corrections to or comments on minutes from the December 12, 2017 RLFC meeting. Jon moved to approve the minutes, Carl seconded, and the RLFC agreed.

Michelle explained that Emily Savors, Kim Stands, and Steve Gladman suggested changes to the dissemination of meeting packets and other information prior to meetings.

- < Emily said that priority issues and presentations by provider agencies should be early on each agenda, so that we don't run out time for important discussions.
- < The CoC/RLFC would benefit from a pre-meeting summary of what will be discussed at the meeting. The volume of material to review before each meeting is too high.
- < Michelle expressed appreciation for the feedback. HUD requires the CoC governing body to review a lot of material, and it's difficult for CSB to balance HUD's requirements with the group's ability to digest such large amounts of information. CSB will make the material more clear and user-friendly.
- < Emily reiterated that it's important for each CoC/RLFC member to read the summary and, when more information is needed or desired, to review the applicable portion of the packet.
- < CSB will send out a summary prior to each meeting and CoC/RLFC packets will be posted on CSB's website.

Michelle described a proposal for shared leadership of the CoC/RLFC that was discussed at the last CoC/RLFC Board meeting. The proposal recommends that the chair of both the CoC/RLFC and CoC/RLFC Board be elected from the membership of the CoC/RLFC Board by a majority of CoC/RLFC members for a two year term. The chair would lead and facilitate meetings. CSB staff would continue to provide meeting support.

- < CSB staff would schedule meetings and provide meeting materials and ensure that the CoC/RLFC fulfills all HUD requirements.
- < Robin expressed support for the proposal. Carl was positive about the idea, but was curious about how it would work logistically.

- < CSB will draft changes to the governance documents for review at the May 23, 2018 CoC/RLFC Board meeting and the June 5, 2018 CoC/RLFC meeting. Michelle requested that members provide suggestions about who from the CoC/RLFC Board should be nominated.

### **Strategic Issues**

Michelle reviewed a comparative analysis of national homelessness data with local data. Overall, the data indicate that Columbus is appropriately focused on serving the most vulnerable homeless individuals and families in our community.

- < The Point-in-Time count of homeless individuals decreased in Columbus and nationally. Columbus has proportionally fewer unsheltered homeless individuals than nationally.
- < Like last year, Columbus serves more women, more children and young adults, more disabled individuals, fewer Hispanics, more African Americans, and larger families than the national statistics. More individuals come to the homelessness system from homelessness and fewer from institutional settings.
- < Homelessness episodes end more quickly in Columbus, with lengths of stay lower than the national averages. However, the average length of stay increased compared to the prior year, which is of concern. Michelle explained that providers are having increasing difficulty housing people quickly. Sue confirmed, adding that landlord requirements for renters are higher than they used to be. Landlords are asking for more money up front, straining available resources and narrowing the options for housing. Michelle said that some landlords are asking for guarantees that renters can afford the housing over the life of the lease. Tom explained that while efforts to increase household income are important, we don't want to screen people out of rapid re-housing programs because of income. The system's priority is getting people into stable housing quickly.
- < The number of families that were already homeless increased, probably because the system is not currently providing timely face-to-face diversion. CSB is hearing instances of families staying in cars in parking lots of big box retailers, like Walmart, which is very difficult for Outreach team to find. Rhonda suggested distributing the number for the Homeless Hotline among police for when they find families staying in cars. Michelle appreciated the suggestion and will follow up with Rhonda.

### **PSH Project Development**

The CoC/RLFC has to prioritize projects for the annual Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) application for tax credits, which is due February 15.

- < During the December 12, 2017 meeting, the CoC/RLFC reviewed a new permanent supportive housing (PSH) project for youth proposed by CHN and Huckleberry House. OHFA notified CHN and Huckleberry House that their project is the first priority project for OHFA's new youth set-aside; therefore, the RLFC does not need to prioritize this project for the regular PSH pool.
- < HUD did not award rent subsidies for N^^ Commons at 161 in the FY17 CoC competition. Without rent subsidies, the project is not viable as PSH. N^^ has decided to not pursue this project as PSH and instead will pursue a senior project.
- < CHN Parsons Place is the only other PSH project in the pipeline. OFHA requires that projects have rent subsidies for at least 50% of the proposed units at the time of application. CHN has 25 HUD subsidized units at the current Parsons Avenue project, which can be moved to cover 25 of the 62 Parsons Place units. CHN will apply for rental assistance funding in the

next CoC competition for the remaining units. CMHA provided CHN with a backstop commitment, in case CoC rental assistance funds are not available.

- < CHN also has a development funding gap for Parsons Place. Franklin County and the City of Columbus agreed to give CHN additional development funds. The City and County have also agreed to provide development funds for CHN and Huckleberry House's youth PSH project.
- < The CoC/RLFC Board recommends that the CoC/RLFC designate CHN Parsons Place as the CoC's first priority project for the OHFA application. Carl moved to approve the resolution, Matt seconded, and the CoC/RLFC agreed. Becky, Jon, and the alternate representative from Twin Valley Behavioral Health abstained.

### **System Updates**

Tom reported that for the first time the average length of time to housing for veterans is under 90 days, one of the federal benchmarks for measuring efforts to end veteran homelessness.

- < Veteran system members have been focusing on long-term homeless veterans and there are now only 4-6 chronically homeless veterans in our community. Providers continue to work with these individuals.
- < Carl added that the insights and lessons we are gaining from the veterans work will translate well to other populations. Tom agreed. The system has made progress on veterans because it is sufficiently resourced to serve this population. The veteran system is a proof of concept for what we can do with appropriate resources and robust collaboration.
- < Some providers will start shifting resources from shelter and housing to homelessness prevention. The Veterans Service Commission is also working on prevention by focusing on veterans who are not literally homeless, but are at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Tom provided updates on youth homelessness work.

- < HUD released a funding opportunity for the Youth Homeless Demonstration Program again this year. Our community applied for this grant last year and scored well, but barely missed receiving a grant. The youth committee has decided to apply again.
- < The application will be a team effort and requires that we dedicate a full-time position to youth system work. The new position would oversee development of a youth plan (due to HUD within 4 months of receiving the grant) and subsequent implementation of the plan.
- < We will have to identify local resources to fund this position and the planning process. Mark asked how much is needed. CSB estimates \$180,000 for the position and planning process.

System partners are working to establish a Homelessness Prevention Hub based at Gladden Community House, to centralize, coordinate, and enhance prevention efforts.

- < The hub will sharpen targeting and has additional funding for pregnant women.
- < Michelle explained that prevention efforts for pregnant women are being coordinated with other ongoing efforts and research in the community.
- < Robin updated the group on a pilot prevention project for families being planned for the Linden neighborhood. The intent is to knit together programs and services that already exist into a prevention system that uses common screening tools and data.

CSB released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Homeless Hotline on January 12, 2018. The RFP is an opportunity to re-set expectations. Several entities have expressed interest and applications are due February 23.

The Point-in-Time Count was conducted on Wednesday, January 31, 2018.

Tom thanked those who participated in the Community Plan retreat on January 16, 2018. CSB will disseminate the meeting record soon.

- < CSB and various community co-conveners have set up meetings for the *ad hoc* workgroups that will take the input from the retreat and develop strategies and actions for the new Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness.
- < Michelle asked CoC/RLFC members to consider participating in an *ad hoc* workgroup and to let CSB know if there are others who should also be involved.
- < The new community plan will come to the CoC/RLFC for review in the next meeting (June 5).

**Meeting Adjourned**