April 10, 2014 Steering Committee Meeting

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AGENDA

I. Call to Order – Celene Meyer
   a) Roll Call

II. CoC Progress Highlight: – Eva Thibaudeau

III. Approval of Minutes – Tory Gunsolley
   a) March 13, 2014 CoC Steering Committee Meeting

IV. Lead Agency Report – Eva Thibaudeau

V. HMIS Administrator Report – Eva Thibaudeau

VI. Old Business
   a) CoC Membership Policy – Eva Thibaudeau
   b) PSH Prioritization of Turnover to Chronically Homeless Policy – Eva Thibaudeau
   c) Voluntary Reallocation Policy – Eva Thibaudeau
   d) Involuntary Reallocation of CoC Funded Grants Policy – Eva Thibaudeau

VII. New Business
   a) 2014 Action Plan, Draft Version

VIII. Public Comments

IX. Adjournment
1. Create a new service delivery model that allows services to be provided in-home or in close proximity to housing throughout the Houston, Harris County and Fort Bend County region by December 2013.

2. Create 2500 Permanent Supportive Housing Units targeted to the chronically homeless and frequent users of services by December 2015.

3. Rebalance the homeless response system based on need (as determined by data analysis) primarily through the reallocation and alignment of funding resources by December 2015.

4. Create and implement a coordinated assessment and triage system to connect people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness to the most appropriate housing model based on the agreed upon definitions and target criteria by 2014.

5. Implement a Change Management Process to minimize the change impacts and avoid distractions.
FY 2013 Tier 1 Renewal Projects Award Announcement

U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Shaun Donovan today announced nearly $1.6 billion in grants to renew support for 7,100 local homeless housing and service programs across the U.S., Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

It was announced that the Houston/Harris County CoC has been awarded nearly $21 million in renewals to support 53 programs in the continuum.

To view renewals in the state of Texas, click here. To view renewals across the U.S., click here.

The grant renewals awarded today support a variety of programs including street outreach, client assessment, and direct housing assistance to individuals and families with children who are experiencing homelessness. HUD will award additional grant funding to support hundreds of other local programs in the coming weeks. Click here to see today's full announcement from OneCPD, with more detailed information about the renewal process, the FY2013 budget, and adjustments to funding.

If you have any questions, please contact Eva Thibaudeau at ethibaudeau@homelesshouston.org.
Parker says city has cut downtown homeless numbers in half

Seventy year-old Lionel Ross lays in a vacant lot at Chartres St. and Franklin St. in downtown Houston, TX Wednesday April 2, 2014. Ross a Houston native has says he’s been homeless for thirty years. Efforts to reduce Houston's chronic homeless population have cut the number of long-term downtown street-dwellers nearly in half.
Efforts to reduce Houston's chronic homeless population have cut in half the number of long-term downtown street-dwellers since 2012, Mayor Annise Parker announced Wednesday.

"Two years ago, I announced that I intended to move the needle on homelessness in the city of Houston," Parker said. "Through our initiative we have successfully placed more than 1,400 chronically homeless individuals into safe and stable permanent supportive housing."

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines the chronic population as people who have been homeless longer than a year or at least four times in three years and who have a disabling condition.

In 2012, when Parker first committed to housing the city's long-term homeless, 1,060 people lived on downtown streets. That number dropped to 768 in 2013, as the first elements of the initiative took effect, fueled by an infusion of federal funds. On Wednesday, she announced that January's annual count of the homeless tallied 529 people living on downtown streets long term.

The mayor acknowledged the drastic drop may seem improbable to some downtown workers because the density of the homeless population in some areas has grown even as the total count has shrunk, in part because of redevelopment.

The full results of this year's count will be released later this month. In 2012, the Houston-area homeless population was 8,538, and more than a third were chronically homeless. In January 2013, the population had decreased to 6,359 with one-in-five people considered chronically homeless.

Ending chronic homelessness, Parker said, "doesn't mean you end homelessness forever, but that no one's on the street because there's not a resource available to house that person."

By the end of 2015, the mayor aims to get another 1,100 chronically homeless people into housing.

Parker on Wednesday also touted a consolidated intake system that launched Tuesday.

Under the system, assessors meet with each person seeking housing, asking when, where and for how long the applicant last was housed, and about issues ranging from drug use to mental health to income and criminal history.
With a few clicks, a screen pops up with colorful cartoon icons of homes or apartment buildings. The screen lists the name and address of each facility, shows whether the applicant qualifies for a spot there and lists how many beds are available. A click of the mouse can send an electronic referral to the property on the spot.

After years of dealing with myriad agencies with their own assessments and rules, many chronically homeless have lost faith in the system, said Heather Muller, of the Coalition for Supportive Housing, and Ana Rausch of the Coalition for the Homeless-Houston, both of whom helped implement and test the new system at the Beacon Day Center downtown. Even the most skeptical sense a change, they said.

"They no longer have to walk in and get lucky," said Mandy Chapman-Semple, the mayor's assistant on homeless initiatives. "Before it was, 'Did I walk into the right building? Did I get the right case manager? Does that case manager happen to know where there's an opening housing unit?"

Chapman-Semple said the intake system is expected to be expanded to other agencies in the coming months.

Downtown homeless population

2011: 1,131

2012: 1,060

2013: 768

2014: 529

Source: Coalition for the Homeless
HARRIS COUNTY
Housing authority rebounds from shambles to efficiency

By Jayne Frazier

Linda Upson said the Harris County Housing Authority was a "labor of love" for clients who had nowhere else to turn. She said the agency was the only place where clients could find a home, food, and clothing.

"I was there behind the scenes, helping them," Upson said. "But once they were in their homes, I was a cheerleader."

Upson said the agency had a "home runs" mentality, with clients who needed help, she would be there, and once they were in their homes, she was a cheerleader.

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Steering Committee Meeting

March 13, 2014

Minutes

Present: Melissa Carroll (Pasadena ESG), Thao Costis (SEARCH Homeless Services- Homeless Services Rep), Tory Gunsolley (Houston Housing Authority), Donna Herron (Consumer Rep), Clay Kibler (Consumer Rep), Marilynn Kindell (Fort Bend County ESG), Rebecca Landes (Northwest Assistance Ministries - Provider Rep), Tom McCasland (Harris County Housing Authority), Neal Rackleff (COH), Takeshia Richardson (Lead Agency Staff)

Absent: Barbara Dawson (MHMRA rep), Daphne Lemelle (Harris County Community Services Dept), Dr. Laura Marsh (VA), Celene Meyer (Episcopal Health Foundation- Private Funder Rep), Stephen Williams (CFTH Rep - Houston Dept of Health and Human Services), Eva Thibaudeau (Lead Agency Staff)

The meeting of the Continuum of Care (CoC) Steering Committee was held on March 13, 2014 at the Neighborhood Resource Center, 815 Crosby St., pursuant to proper notification of all Steering Committee members.

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Tory Gunsolley called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm. Gunsolley conducted roll call. Gunsolley noted that there was a quorum.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from January 7 and February 13, 2014 were presented. Gunsolley called for a motion to approve both sets of minutes. Costis motioned, Landes seconded. The motion carried and the minutes were approved.

Lead Agency Report –Presented by Takeshia Richardson

- Lead Agency staff have attended the National Conference on Ending Youth and Family Homelessness, as well as the Housing First Conference. The Lead Agency will host a debrief for conference attendees on Monday, March 24, 2014 at 2:00 pm that will focus on lessons learned and best practices.
- SSO meetings have happened with both SEARCH Homeless Services and Career and Recovery Resources.

HMIS Administrator Report – Presented by Takeshia Richardson

- The quarterly HMIS Forum will be held on Thursday, March 20, 2014 at 2:00 pm, at the Harris County Department of Education.
- HMIS’ biggest focus currently are performance dashboards.
• Phase 1 of Coordinated Access has been completed and is being moved to ClientTrak to see how it works live.
• HMIS policies and procedures are also being updated through work with the HMIS Support Committee.
• Gunsolley mentioned the editorial in the Houston Chronicle reference collaboration on veteran homelessness initiatives.

Old Business

• APR and Subsidized Rent Policies – Presented by Howard Burchman
  o The first policy would require grantees to provide their APRs using data from HMIS, as manual APRs produce discrepancies.
    ▪ Gunsolley called for a discussion and movement to accept this policy. Kibler moved, McCasland seconded. The motion carried and the policy was approved.
  o The second policy requires complete compliance with HUD in regards to rental charges for PSH units.
    ▪ Tenants will be charged no more than 30% of adjusted income or 10% of gross income.
    ▪ Gunsolley called for a discussion and movement to accept this policy. McCasland moved. Costis seconded. The motion carried and the policy was approved.

• Performance Dashboards Update – Presented by Takeshia Richardson
  o It has been mentioned at past meetings that the Lead Agency will begin publishing performance online, and will begin by publishing de-identified dashboards. The Lead Agency will then work with other agencies to clean up their data

New Business

• Public Comments Policy
  o Gunsolley presented the CoC Steering Committee Public Comment Policy, including such guidelines as signing up before the meeting, and limiting comments to three minutes. The CoC Steering Committee Secretary should indicate when the three minutes has passed.
  o Rackleff commented that if a large number of individuals sign up, time should be limited to one minute. Gunsolley suggested that the policy should read “If more than 20 people sign up to give public comment, then comments will be limited to one minute,” instead of “at the discretion of the chair…”
  o Gunsolley also recommended to strike the word “general” from the fourth bullet of the policy and add “if more than 20 individuals have signed up to speak, time will be limited to one minute per speaker.” Gunsolley also recommended a new bullet stating “Any member of the CoC Steering Committee can move to suspend the policy on public comment to allow the commenter additional time” when their time has expired.
  o Gunsolley called for a motion to approve the Public Comment Policy. A motion was made (Kindell) and seconded (Costis), and the motion carried to approve the policy.

• Preview of CoC Membership Policy – Howard Burchman
  o Burchman noted that because of the funding available to our CoC, it is not necessary for organizations to pay dues, however, there should be a policy for membership. The recommendation is to decide membership by organization participation in 3 out of 4 CoC Provider Forums and 3 out of 4 HMIS Workgroup meetings.
o Burchman noted that this will be enforced by noting the attendance of a designated representative(s) from each organization who will attend the above mentioned meetings. This attendance will be referenced when the CoC Steering Committee makes decisions regarding allocating funding.

o This policy will be updated to allow for organizations to change their designated representative when necessary.

- **PSH Prioritization Policy – Howard Burchman**
  o Burchman presented the PSH Prioritization Policy which states that units available through turnover be prioritized to the chronically homeless first. HUD’s policy is clear – that chronically homeless individuals should be prioritized for housing.
  o Rackleff pointed out that there should be a clause to allow for exceptions. McCasland suggested editing the policy to “only offered to non-chronic if first offered to chronic.”
  o Herron mentioned that the policy seemed excessive to have to go down the list of all chronic individuals before being able to offer the unit to a non-chronic individual. Gunsolley commented that if a project receives funds from the CoC for PSH, they can’t shift use to the non-chronic population, and that if a large amount of chronic individuals turn down a unit, there may be something wrong with the property that would warrant an inspection or intervention of some sort.
  o Burchman added that this policy will reinforce what Coordinated Access is accomplishing, and Gunsolley added that with Coordinated Access, a Housing Navigator will be there with the chronically homeless individual to find them the appropriate housing.
  o Rackleff asked if CoC Meetings were subject to the open meetings act and if agendas were public and posted ahead of time. Richardson said yes they were.

- **Voluntary Reallocation Policy – Howard Burchman**
  o Burchman said that this policy states that providers who meet minimum targets and are doing activity that is lower priority (such as TH or SSO), can voluntarily reallocate their funds to a higher priority use (such as RRH or PSH).

- **Involuntary Reallocation Policy – Howard Burchman**
  o This policy states that grantees who do not meet the minimum targets will be given 6 months to improve performance. Those who do not improve their performance sufficient to meet the minimum thresholds will not be permitted to renew funding in the next NOFA competition, and that TH and SSO grants will be reallocated to PSH or RRH. PSH and RRH grants will remain under that component but be transferred to a replacement grantee.
  o McCasland asked if the policy was too specific in where the money would be reallocated. Gunsolley commented that HUD dictates the priority. McCasland asked if the policy could be reworded and Burchman said that yes, it could be reworded to say that funds will be shifted to “HUD priorities” instead of funding type.
  o Rackleff requested that a simple catalog of policies, motions, and resolutions be created physically and for the website.

**Public Comments**

- Robin Harrison followed up from her public comments at the February CoC Steering Committee meeting. Harrison called for a client grievance process and/or policy for organizations receiving CoC funds. Gunsolley commented that a grievance policy would be a great thing to explore to look at how complaints against CoC-funded organizations are handled at a system-wide level.
Preston Allen with Wheeler Avenue’s TH program commented regarding involuntary reallocation of funding. They would like to explore the option of PSH, but the transition can be costly and guidance is needed. Marilyn Brown (Coalition for the Homeless) commented that 40% of housing in Houston is Transitional Housing where nationally the average is between 20%-25%, and that the system needs to balance. Gunsolley added that the 1115 Medicaid Waiver project could help organizations provide the supportive services of a PSH program. Brown also commented that the Houston community is waiting to be approved for HUD Technical Assistance to assist with the transition from TH to PSH for appropriate programs.

Adjournment
Upon approval, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

________________________
Celene Meyer, Secretary

Approved,

________________________
Daphne Lemelle, Vice Chair for Tory Gunsolley, Chairman

_____________________
Date
A. Work/Affinity Group Activities
   a. Networks, Initiatives and Affinity Groups
      i. CoC Provider Forum
         1. Next meeting is scheduled for May 27, 9am to 10:30am at the NRC
         2. Initial Case Manager Focus Group scheduled for April 30, 9:00am to 10:30am at Harris County Dept. of Education (6300 Irvington) including a panel on the process for working with PHAs
      ii. HMIS Forum
         1. Held March 20th; next meeting June 19, 2pm-4pm at HCDE
      iii. Consumer Forum
         1. Will be held on May 16, from 2pm-3:30pm at the NRC
      iv. Housing Houston’s Heroes
         1. Leadership attended 25 Cities Rapid Results meeting on March 27-28 regarding plan to end veteran homelessness
         2. HHH meeting scheduled for April 11, 9am-10am at the NRC
         3. RRH –HP subcommittee met weekly 3/20, 3/27, 4/3 and 4/10
      v. Youth/Young Adult Affinity Group
         1. Homeless Youth Network Forum May 12, 2014
         2. LGBTQ Homeless Youth Prevention Initiative Kick-off meeting at Montrose Center on April 17 9am-4pm
      vi. One Voice Texas Affinity Group
         1. Housing Workgroup April 23, 9:30am-11am
         2. Children/Young Adults Workgroup April 4, 1:30pm-3:30pm
      vii. Coordinated Access Workgroup
         1. PSH affinity workgroup met 3/26, 4/9 and 16, 23, and 30 scheduled
         2. Transition team meetings April 3, 10, 17, and 24

B. Homeless Data Exchange: Point in Time and Housing Inventory Count Guidance
   a. Homeless Data Exchange Guidance Released on March 31st deadline for submission is April 30, 2014
   b. Data to be submitted by April 28

C. Performance Measurement
   a. Distributed program performance dashboards to all CoC funded agencies with request for follow-up
   b. Scheduled meetings with 11 agencies representing 19 programs.

D. Other CoC Activities
   a. CoC Roundtable scheduled for April 16 from 1-3pm; Coalition staff to represent CoC on conference call

E. Informational Updates
   a. 100,000 Homes “All Hands on Deck Webinar” scheduled for April, 16 from 2:30pm to 3:30pm regarding performance measurement data. We are still in the 2.5% club
A. Work Group Activities
   a. Networks, Initiatives and Affinity Groups
      i. Housing Houston’s Heroes
         1. No meetings held in March 20, 2014
      ii. Coordinated Access Transition Team Meeting
          1. Meets weekly at The Beacon
          2. Implemented Coordinated Access in ClientTrack.
      iii. HMIS Quarterly Forum
          1. Met March 20, 2014

B. Reporting
   a. Continued data analysis and support of the U.S. Veteran Affairs Supportive Services of Veteran Families program and the 100,000 Homes Campaign
   b. Provided HOPWA technical support and system customizations for the City of Houston

C. Other CoC Activities
   a. Developed a process for cleaning up and standardizing the service list in ClientTrack
   b. Continued to review and develop HMIS policies and procedures

D. Support
   a. Site Visits
      | Site                     | Notes                  |
      |--------------------------|------------------------|
      | Star of Hope             | Nothing Venture Nothing Gain |
      | Parks Youth Ranch        | Mission of Yahweh      |
      | HAAM                     | Harmony House PSH      |
      | Shay’s House             | Project Lift           |
   
   b. IssueTrak
      | Count                    |
      |--------------------------|
      | Opened Before March 1, 2014 | 4            |
      | Opened in Period          | 90            |
      | Closed in Period          | 89            |
      | Left Open On March 28, 2014 | 5            |
   
   c. Training
      | Count                     |
      |---------------------------|
      | New User                  | 45            |
      | Refresher                 | 8             |
      | Reports                   | 3             |
      | Data Explorer             | 0             |
      | No Shows                  | 5             |
   
   d. Participating Agencies
      | Count                    |
      |--------------------------|
      | Active                   | 69            |
      | New                      | 0             |
   
   e. Users
      | Count                    |
      |--------------------------|
      | Active                   | 553           |
      | New                      | 38            |
   
   f. Clients
      | Count                    |
      |--------------------------|
      | Enroll at any point      | 21,128        |
      | New Enrollments          | 2,851         |
Purpose:
Membership in the CoC allows for participation in the selection of the Steering Committee and the ability to participate in setting policies for the CoC. Additionally, organizations that are members of the CoC will receive additional points in renewal and new project funding competitions. Previously membership was based on dues payment. The receipt of planning funds from HUD has, for the time being, eliminated the need for membership dues. Therefore this policy will base membership on participation in a minimum threshold of provider input forums and HMIS forums.

Each member organization in the CoC will be required to designate two ‘authorized representatives’ in addition to the CEO/ED who are always authorized to represent the organization. An authorized representative must have sufficient authority to speak on behalf of the member organization. Each year the member organizations must designate their authorized representatives to the CoC. Staff members other than authorized representatives are welcome to attend meetings but to ensure continuity of participation, only the participation of authorized representatives will count toward meeting CoC membership requirements.

Members will be required to participate in Provider Input Forums and HMIS workgroup sessions each year; organizational members of the CoC will be expected to have authorized representatives attend at least three-quarters of the four annual Provider Input Forums and four annual HMIS Workgroup sessions.

Policy:
Membership in the Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care is open to all organizations and individuals seeking to prevent and end homelessness in Houston/Harris County and surrounding areas. Members of the CoC are able to vote for Steering Committee members and on key policy issues and receive additional points when competing for new or renewal funding. Organizational members of the CoC must meet minimum participation thresholds by designated authorized representatives in order to maintain their membership. These thresholds are: participation by authorized representatives in a minimum of 75 percent of quarterly Provider Input Forums and quarterly HMIS workgroups. Failure to meet participation thresholds will result in forfeiture of CoC membership.

Effective Date:
Immediate upon adoption by Steering Committee. Participation will be tracked starting as of Jan. 1, 2014. Member organizations that have not met minimum participation thresholds at the completion of the year will lose their CoC membership.
Purpose:
This policy reflects the commitments made in the 2013 CoC application to HUD. The application specified that 100% of beds that become available through turnover of units will be prioritized to the chronically homeless.

This policy is consistent with the implementation of Coordinated Access which will prioritize chronically homeless people for referral to permanent supportive housing based on the vulnerability index and other assessment tools.

Policy:
The chronically homeless will be given priority for permanent supportive housing beds as vacancies become available through turnover. This applies to all PSH projects receiving funding through the Houston/Harris County CoC. Vacant beds/units may only be offered to non-chronically homeless persons if there are no chronically homeless people in the CoC who meet the criteria specified for the project in the grant agreement with HUD. All referrals through Coordinated Access will be prioritized for chronically homeless.

Effective Date:
Immediately upon adoption by the Steering Committee.
Purpose:
HUD allows CoCs to ‘reallocate’ funding from existing grants and activities (supportive services only, transitional housing) to higher priority activities (permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing for families and coordinated access). Reallocated CoC grants are funded by HUD provided that the proposed activities are eligible and the grantee qualified.

Because of funding limitations, reallocation is one of the few (and sometimes the only) means of developing new PSH or RRH units and/or adding to Coordinated Access operations. In the 2013 HUD application, the CoC committed to developing 50 beds in 2014 and 2015 of PSH through reallocation and committed to housing 450 families in 2014 and 500 in 2015 through rapid rehousing.

These goals are more achievable with the cooperation and support of CoC grantees. To encourage grantees to participate in reallocation, this policy will allow grantees to voluntarily reallocate funding to activities allowed by HUD and designated as in alignment with CoC Strategy by the CoC Steering Committee and the Lead Agency. If the new activity is in alignment, the grantee will able to remain the grantee in the reallocated project.

This policy will not apply to grantees who have failed to meet minimum performance thresholds for project renewal. Please see policy on “Involuntary Reallocation”.

Policy:
Existing CoC grantees with Supportive Services Only [SSO] or Transitional Housing [TH] grants may voluntarily reallocate their grants. Grants may be reallocated either to permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing or coordinated access. To qualify for voluntary reallocation, the grantee must have met the minimum performance standards established by the CoC and receive the endorsement of the Lead Agency and the CoC Steering Committee stating that the new project is in alignment with system needs. Grants that are not able to meet minimum standards will be subject to involuntary reallocation process.

Policy Effective Date:
The voluntary reallocation policy will be in effect for the 2014 NOFA competition and subsequent competitions.
TX 700 Continuum of Care (CoC)
Policy on Involuntarily Reallocation of CoC Funded Grants

Purpose:

On an annual basis, HUD sets performance benchmarks for Continuum of Care funded grants. These benchmarks cover permanent housing placement and retention, employment of program participants, access to mainstream benefits, and other factors. The success of grantees in meeting these performance benchmarks is weighted heavily by HUD in assigning a score to the CoC application. The score assigned by HUD to the CoC application determines the amount of additional funding that the CoC may be able to obtain from HUD. As a result, provider performance is critically important to the CoC.

Additionally, HUD is emphasizing the use of evidence based practices – uses of HUD homeless assistance that have been demonstrated to be effective in ending homelessness. The current documented effective strategies are permanent supportive housing for long term and chronically homeless and rapid rehousing for families. As a result, HUD is encouraging CoCs to expand their level of investment in these proven strategies.

To assist in directing HUD CoC resources toward effective strategies, each year, the CoC will set minimum performance levels that must be achieved by each CoC funded grantee. The minimum standards will be set at a level that will identify the lowest performing providers. Over time the minimum will be adjusted higher to ultimately reach, if not exceed, the HUD benchmarks.

Policy:

On an annual basis, the CoC will establish minimum performance thresholds for each program component (Transitional Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Rehousing, or Supportive Services Only). These minimum thresholds will be established with the participation of funded providers. These thresholds will represent the minimal acceptable performance level. It is expected that this minimum performance level will be increased over time. Grantees that do not meet the minimum threshold will be given six (6) months in which to improve performance to meet the minimum thresholds. Grantees that have not improved performance sufficient to meet the minimum thresholds will not be permitted to renew funding in the next NOFA competition. Transitional housing and supportive services only grants will be reallocated to permanent supportive housing (PSH) or rapid rehousing (RRH). PSH and RRH grants will remain under that component and a replacement grantee identified. Funds designated for reallocation will be competitively awarded to new grantees; PSH and RRH grants will be competitively awarded to new grantees to continue providing PSH or RRH services.

Policy Effective Date:

For the 2014 competition grantees will receive their performance scores; grantees may voluntarily re-allocate their grants but involuntary reallocation will not be used in this competition. Involuntarily reallocation will be in place for the 2015 NOFA competition.