

HOUSING and SUPPORTIVE SERVICES NETWORK Strategic Planning and Discharge Workgroup (The CoC Board)

Friday, February 13, 2015

8:30 to 10:30 am

Washington County Public Services Building - Room 105/115
155 North First Avenue, Hillsboro, OR 97123

AGENDA

Chair: Annette M. Evans, Washington County Department of Housing Services

Co-Chair: Judy Werner, Lutheran Community Services Northwest

I. Introductions (8:30 a.m.)

II. Approve Minutes (8:35 a.m.)[Action]

A) December 12, 2014 HSSN Workgroup Minutes

III. Business Items (8:40 a.m.)

- A) Emergency Solution Grant (ESG) Program Consultation Process – Lauren Sechrist
- B) Policy request to convert correction and court fees to community service hours – Dennis Erickson and Annette Evans
- C) FY2014 McKinney-Vento CoC Program Grant Application award \$2,720,993 (\$43,440 increase over application request) – Annette Evans
- a. HopeSpring Rapid Re-Housing Program
- D) FY2015 CoC Program Grant Application Timeline – Annette Evans
- a. Review and approve the FY2015 CoC Program Grant Inventory Worksheet (GIW) due to HUD by 2/16/2015.....[Action]
- b. Review and approve the 2015 Housing Inventory Chart (HIC) for submittal to HUD.....[Action]
- E) April 10 HSSN Workgroup Meeting Topics – Annette Evans and Judy Werner
- F) Seek to develop property owner/property manager forum to address challenges in accessing housing – Annette Evans
- G) Discussion on proposed action steps to address barriers to housing. Begin messaging work to address creating access and rights to housing and services.
- a. Barriers Identified by Community Connect Oversight Committee
- b. Barriers Identified by HSSN Workgroup

Future Meeting Discussion:

- H) Draft Continuum of Care (CoC) Program Administrative Plan – Annette Evans

IV. Agency Announcements and Open Discussion (10:20 a.m.)

V. Workgroup Meeting Schedule, 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. – Save the Date

- Friday, April 10, 2015
- Friday, June 12, 2015
- Friday, August 14, 2015
- Friday, October 9, 2015
- Friday, December 11, 2015

VI. Adjournment (10:30 a.m.)

GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR MESSAGING WORK

The HSSN Workgroup (the CoC Board) and the Community Connect Oversight Committee have collectively identified barriers to affordable housing designed to help people use stable housing as a platform for health, recovery and movement to self-sufficiency.

HOUSING BARRIERS IDENTIFIED ACROSS HOMELESS POPULATIONS:

- a) Persons are left out in the cold as county has less than 2% housing vacancy rate.
2/2/2015: \$57,000 per month "under-spending" of federal CoC Program rent assistance funds. Lack of vacant housing units and it appears many property owners/managers are screening out homeless households with background and credit issues.
- b) Persons with a criminal history comprise nearly 50% of the Community Connect assessed households with many owing debt (e.g. court fees and restitution) and loss of Driver License creating barrier to housing and employment.
1/9/2015: 49% of assessed households have criminal history (247 households with 138 literally homeless).
- c) Tax credit housing properties often screen-out people with recent criminal history. Need baseline screening criteria.
- d) Persons age 62+ years becoming homeless and entering the Community Connect system is on the rise given housing rents increase faster than income (e.g. fixed incomes to include social security and pensions). Increase in elderly population entering the DV shelter system.
1/9/2015: 28% of people age 62+ are literally homeless (12 of 43, with remaining at imminent risk of homeless within 14 days).
- e) Housing inventory in Washington County is lacking in 1-bedroom units and affordability.
- f) Persons with landlord debt are on the rise. Stipulated Dismissal Process increases debt owed by households going through eviction process.
- g) Housing application fees range from \$35 to \$60 (e.g. credit and background check) and move-in costs have increased (e.g. requiring 2 or 3 months rent), with few discretionary funds to bridge this gap for households.
- h) SB91 became effective January 1, 2014, and allows landlord ability to require renter's liability insurance. People in poverty and homelessness may not afford the additional cost.

GOAL: Increase access to affordable housing opportunities through the implementation of strategic action steps in alignment with employment and supportive service systems.

Action Steps	Policy/Legislation	Funding	Who	When
Opportunity for alignment with Welcome Home Coalition to create funding resources that will develop revenues to create affordable housing for persons at 30% MFI and 50% MFI	X Local/State	X Local/State	HSSN HPAC Washington County Thrives	12/3/14 HSSN Presentation 1/15/15 HPAC Presentation
Seek new funds to create affordable housing at 30% MFI: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain Share (Local) • \$100 million bond (Governor Budget) • Section 811 (OHA) • Seek local revenue tool 	X Local	X Local/State	HSSN WG HPAC & Cost Study Housing Team	4/16/15 HPAC Meeting
Advocate for increased State of Oregon funding; e.g. Emergency Housing Account (EHA), State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP), Oregon Foreclosure Avoidance (OFA), Governor's proposed budget \$100 million Bonds for affordable housing.	X State	X State	HSSN HPAC Washington County Thrives	
Develop landlord partnerships to serve vulnerable populations through outreach, engagement and education; e.g. Tax Credit Properties may not screen/lease people with criminal history.	X Local		HSSN WG	

GOAL: Integrate systems and deliver client specific services that promote sustainability of housing and self sufficiency through health care, treatment services, education, employment, and increased economic supports.

Action Steps	Policy/Legislation	Funding	Who	When
Advocate for an increase to the Community Service conversion rate (e.g. work off court fees), and create policy to provide persons not on probation/parole an opportunity to work off fees from other jurisdiction.	X Local		HSSN WG Community Corrections. HPAC	10/10/14 Presentation 12/5/14 Community Corrections & Sheriff Office – Legal Review
Seek other public/private partnerships, policy and/or funding: * To pay Landlord Debt, Application Fees, etc. * To develop landlord partnerships that rent to high-risk households; e.g. people with evictions, debt, disabilities, etc.	X Local	X Local/State	HSSN WG Property Owner Forum Subcommittee	Tentative date is March 2015 – Need to push out.
Secure funding to support the faith-based Severe Weather Shelter operations to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shelter Operations Hotel/Motel Voucher Capital Improvement Projects 		X Local	Washington County Housing Services Community Action	11/13/14 Funders Meeting with faith-based shelters 12/5/14: \$33,000 Meyer Memorial award to Community Action; awards to Shelters In Process
Align eligible homeless and persons in poverty with the Department of Labor Reboot NW initiative serving “long-term and unemployed training in manufacturing and IT sector” grant.	X Local		Workforce Development Workgroup HSSN	2/2015 Begin Implementation 3/4/2015 HSSN Presentation

HSSN STRATEGIC PLANNING AND DISCHARGE WORKGROUP

Administrative Board of the Continuum of Care in Washington County

Public Service Building Conference Room 105/115

December 12, 2014

Workgroup

Role: The Workgroup is comprised of public and private representatives of the homeless subpopulations that exist within the CoC geographic region, a formerly homeless consumer representative, and the Emergency Solutions Grant recipient agency. The Workgroup is the jurisdictional CoC Administrative Board, as established by the HSSN Mission and Governance Policy.

Responsibilities: Perform CoC strategic planning, coordinate with and/or assist in State and local discharge planning, review performance outcomes of HMIS and HUD-funded programs, develop housing and service systems alignment, make funding decisions, and approve the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance grant application to HUD.

ATTENDEES:

Burton, Valerie – Luke-Dorf, Inc.

Clevidence, Veronica – Washington County
Department of Housing Services

Evans, Annette – Washington County Department of
Housing Services

Harbin, Angie – Cascade AIDS Project

Hille, Marcia – Sequoia Mental Health Services, Inc.

Knapp, Mona -- Luke-Dorf, Inc.

Matisoff, Lisa – Oregon Department of Human Services

Pero, David – Homeless Education Network/Forest
Grove School District

Schwab, Jack – Good Neighbor Center

Sechrist, Lauren – Washington County Office of
Community Development

Stoller, Rick – Salvation Army Veteran and Family
Center

Stoullil, Vera – Boys and Girls Aid

Valfre, Adolph “Val” – Housing Authority of Washington
County

Voiss, Karen – Housing Independence

Werner, Judy – Lutheran Community Services NW

Winnie, Lana – Lifeworks Northwest

Chair: Annette Evans, Public Agency Representative Annette_Evans@co.washington.or.us

Co-Chair: Judy Werner, Nonprofit Agency Representative jwerner@lcsnw.org

Meeting called to order at 8:30 a.m.

I. INTRODUCTIONS

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion: Approve minutes for October 10, 2014, as amended, changing the acronym HIMS on page 3 to read HMIS.

Action: Mona Knapp

Second: Karen Voiss

Vote: Approved - Unanimous

III. BUSINESS ITEMS

A) Update: Policy and/or Programming Converting Fees to Community Service

The Workgroup continues to define policy and programmatic recommendations to address the need for conversion of criminal justice fees into community service hours.

Washington County Department of Community Corrections is working with County Counsel to review the Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS 137), the options for establishing a conversion rate, the degree to which Community Corrections already works with similar community service activities, and research on other jurisdictions who may have policy and processes for community service.

General discussion:

- Karen Voiss asked if we can request a certificate from the court saying the client was cooperative as the crime itself can also be a barrier.
- Angie Harbin shared there is a pilot program in Multnomah County with the Reentry Transition Center regarding Certificates of Rehabilitation. It was reported there are transitional centers and affordable housing developers putting together a panel to evaluate whether someone is likely to reoffend, and asking landlords to include recognition of the Certificate of Rehabilitation in their screening criteria. It would be up to the landlords to determine which convictions they would accept. It would work very much like Rent Well, but is specifically for those with a criminal conviction. Meyer Memorial Trust is funding the initial pilot, which is just now getting off the ground. Angie reported the pilot program seeks to begin issuing certificates in early 2015.
- Judy Werner stated we've criminalized poverty by giving these people such huge financial burdens upon release. This needs to be part of the awareness we give to people as we work to reduce barriers through policy and programs.
- Rick Stoller will advise the HSSN Workgroup on movement toward the veteran's court model in Washington County that is being discussed.

This topic will be carried forward to the Homeless Plan Advisory Committee (HPAC) for awareness and support of our work to reduce barriers people experiencing when applying for housing, employment, etc.

B) Update: FY2014 McKinney-Vento CoC Program Grant Application requesting \$2,677,553. Application Submitted to HUD 10/29/2014 – Annette Evans

Annette reported we do not have a date for the grant awards. We anticipate hearing awards in early January or February. The first grant expiring on February 28, 2015 is Safe Haven. We hope to have contracts in place before the grant expires.

C) Update: Draft Continuum of Care (CoC) Administrative Plan – Annette Evans

The draft is still in process and there are changes occurring in the Federal CoC Program Interim Rules that Annette needs to review and interpret for inclusion. Once available, Annette will send everyone the link to the draft document on the county website and this item will be added to the agenda for review and recommendation for formal adoption.

D) Identify Strategies and Develop Messaging to Address Greater Access and Rights to Housing and Services

The Workgroup provided comments to the barriers and strategies section matrix (see edits captured in the Goals and Strategies for Messaging Work attached). The Workgroup reviewed the Community Connect Dashboard report on persons assessed by the centralized assessment system in Washington County. This data informs our decisions going forward.

Karen Voiss reported her agency is working with homeless people who need permanent support housing (e.g. legacy Shelter Plus Care); however, they do not score high enough for the program during the Community Connect assessment. The Community Connect system seeks to place people in the right program based on need and barriers as defined by points assigned to Housing Status, Recidivism, Income, Housing History, Employment, Financial Status, Criminal History, and Health Summary. The Community Connect Oversight Committee meets to address specific clients that the score may not align with the housing referral. This client referral will be reviewed at the next Community Connect Oversight Committee meeting.

Due to the rising value of unspent HUD CoC Program rent assistance funds, Annette reviewed Washington County's challenges with other CoC jurisdictions in Oregon. We are not alone! Jurisdictions are reporting similar challenges in housing homeless families, and reported strategies they have adopted to include placing more funds at prevention activities to help keep people in their housing, as well as housing counseling when facing eviction.

Lana Winnie reported many landlords with whom the agencies have traditionally had good working relationships have recently raised their rents, sometimes just barely over the voucher cap, making it that much more difficult. Now that Section 8 is covered under Fair Housing Laws and people under Section 8 can't be turned down, this helps the landlords to not have to serve them. Val Valfre clarified that each housing authority has the ability to raise the Fair Market Rent (FMR) up to 10% above the current market rate for Section 8 vouchers, keeping in mind the rent reasonableness. When you raise the rents that you will pay for, you are also reducing the amount of money you have to pay those rents. The challenge with HUD programs is the requirement to be at FMR or below, because HUD won't pay over their FMR. HUD raised the FMR in October, and while this is an increase, it is not enough to meet current market rates.

Lana Winnie ask if other agencies have experienced landlords requiring renter's insurance for all renters, including those with vouchers. This is requiring them to request reasonable accommodation in order to house these people. Angie Harbin reported SB 91, 2013 Landlord Tenant Coalition Bill became effective January 2014 and states that if a person earns under 50% you can't require renter's insurance even if it's in a general population building.

Karen Voiss reported the need to connect with the state to determine the outcome of Section 811 funding. It was noted that Section 811 provides housing assistance for persons with disabilities, to include non-homeless and homeless households. Annette will follow-up with contacts at the Oregon Health Authority, the division of state government preparing the Section 811 application.

Jack Schwab mentioned that 3% of the levy goes to the shelter network, and without the levy fund the shelter would close. The Good Neighbor Center will be supporting the advocacy work to pass the levy in 2016.

Information from this discussion will be used to compliment the Goals and Strategies for Messaging Work under development. The HSSN Workgroup will prioritize the next steps in February, and align with the work of the HPAC and the cost-study research that will be a tool for recommendations in programming and prioritization of funds.

IV. WORKGROUP MEETING SCHEDULE

Motion: Approve the 2015 HSSN Workgroup meeting schedule.

Action: Judy Werner

Second: Lauren Sechrist

Vote: Approved - Unanimous

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OPEN DISCUSSION

- David Pero announced the next Homeless Education Network (HEN) meeting is December 18. Annette Evans will speak on Severe Weather Shelters and Community Connect, and Patrick Orr with HomePlate will speak on the Point-In-Time Count.
- Angie Harbin reported following the Section 8 bill implementation her agency is realizing reluctance by landlords to take payment plans from Section 8 recipients who have left housing with property debt owed. Instead, they are waiting to file in small claims court and it leaves some people unable to be housed because of this. There was discussion regarding this, and the potential for a strong impact in the future.
- Valerie Burton reminded everyone that Point in Time Count is the last 10 days in January and volunteers are needed to help with the count activities. Project Homeless Connect is scheduled for Friday, January 30th.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 a.m.

To be added to HSSN Workgroup email list, or the HSSN Coordinated and Centralized Assessment System, contact Annette Evans at Annette_Evans@co.washington.or.us.