

Grand Rapids Area Coalition to End Homelessness

Appeals Panel Minutes

November 3, 2015, 10:30am-12pm

Present: Susan Cervantes (ACSET, Funding Review Committee), Kwan McEwen (GR Urban League, Steering Council), Lyn Raymond (Lakeshore Housing Alliance/Ottawa County CoC), Robert Argue (Housing Resource Network of Berrien County), David Henrion (Greater Lansing Homeless Resolution Network), Tracie Coffman (ENTF- Staff, no vote), Jim Talen (HMIS Administrator- Staff, no vote), Jesica Vail (Coordinator- Staff, no vote)

I. Overview of Funding Review Process

Jesica reviewed how the Local Application and Funding Review processes have worked so far in this funding round and where the Appeal Panel fits in to this process. The Appeals Panel recommendations will be considered and any changes integrated into the Priority Listing by the Funding Review Committee before being available for public review and comment. The Steering Council will make the ultimate decision and vote after reviewing the recommendations and public comments.

II. Overview of Funding Review Recommendations

Jesica reviewed the Funding Review Committee's original recommendations and how they were communicated to applicants. Four projects were initially recommended to be reallocated due to their low score: Genesis/Oroiquis, Kent County/SRA-DP, GR Housing Commission/Home At Last I and Home At Last II (HAL)

III. Appeals Received

Appeals were received for the following projects and reasons:

- A. Genesis/Oroiquis: Scoring error- staff incorrectly scored the project and the corrected score would put the project in line with the scores in Tier 1.
- B. Grand Rapids Housing Commission/HAL I: Rank in Tier 2 does not convey the importance of the project to the community's efforts to end homelessness.
- C. Grand Rapids Housing Commission/HAL II and III: Recommendation for reallocation does not reflect the importance of the project to the community's efforts to end homelessness.
- D. Kent County/SRA-Community Builders: Scoring error- project application was submitted with the wrong performance numbers.
- E. Kent County/SRA-Dwelling Place: Recommendation for reallocation does not convey the importance of the project in the community's efforts to end homelessness.

IV. Review of Individual Appeals: The Panel discussed each appeal separately

- A. Genesis/Oroiquis: Very straight forward grounds for appeal, recommended to have appeal granted and restored to Tier 1. All members voted in favor.
- B. Grand Rapids Housing Commission/HAL I: The scoring and ranking process seemed very objective and straight forward, to grant the appeal would mean the project would have to be ranked higher than projects that scored higher and performed better, including other permanent supportive housing (PSH). The panel recommends the appeal be denied, all members voted in favor.
- C. Grand Rapids Housing Commission/HAL II and III: Because these projects are so similar and operate as one project, the panel discussed them together. The panel felt it was

important not to reargue the case about the PSH needs in the community, but agree that PSH is important to retain when possible. The panel discussed that the project has recently had a new staff person put into this position and allocated more time to do the work. Given the issues the projects have had in the area of Effective Use of Funding, the panel recommends supporting the Funding Review Committee's original recommendation and denying the appeal, all members voted in favor.

- D. Kent County/SRA-Community Rebuilders: The applicant (Kent County) works through a subcontractor (Community Rebuilders) for this project, as it is an old Shelter + Care project that had to be administered through a government or public housing authority. The applicant put incorrect information on the application, which showed the subcontractor had not met performance targets. In actuality, and verified on the Annual Performance Report (APR), the subcontractor exceeded projected performance targets. In this situation, the corrected score would tie this project with the PSH project above it, also a Kent County/Community Rebuilders PSH project, so there would likely be limited impact on its placement in the ranking without other significant ranking changes. Although the impact of this particular decision is limited, this could set a precedent in future applications wherein applicants submit incorrect information that delays or complicates the scoring and ranking process. The point was made that in grant applications to most institutions there is no ability to correct wrong information. With the recognition that it was unfortunate that the work done by the subcontractor was not accurately reflected in this application, the panel voted to recommend denying the appeal, all were in favor.
- E. Kent County/SRA-Dwelling Place: This is a similarly situated project, wherein the applicant (Kent County) works with a subcontractor, in this case, Dwelling Place. This project was originally housed within the Herkimer/Commerce Apartment buildings. In 2012, construction began on this property to create a new PSH project and the residents living in the units from this grant were moved out of the building. As included in the appeals letter, the County sought permission from HUD in October 2014 to move the units into a different building that required renovation before its use. In December 2014, HUD gave an indication that the plan to use these units in the new building would be acceptable. The subcontractor spent funding to renovate the building in response. In an update to the information originally included to the Appeals Panel, the County sent an email informing that 19 units have now been leased. The Appeals Panel discussed the project and noted how potentially damaging it is for a community to have a project unused for this amount of time, the risk it puts those funds in with HUD and the disadvantage it has in scoring well enough in Tier 2 to retain the funding. The panel voted to recommend denying the appeal, all were in favor.
- V. Final Recommendation: The panel reviewed that they were recommending the appeal be granted for Genesis Oroiquis Apartments but that the appeals be denied for the other applicants and projects. All panel members voted in favor.
- VI. Meeting adjourned at 11:49am.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jesica Vail