



**GRAND RAPIDS/WYOMING/KENT COUNTY
CONTINUUM OF CARE – MI 506
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES**

April 23, 2020
9:30-10:30am

Facilitator:	Casey Gordon		
Meeting Attendees:	<p><u>Attendees:</u> Casey Gordon (Kent ISD), Dreyson Byker (Community member), Michael Waldron (GRFD), Johanna Schulte (City of Grand Rapids), Jameela Maun (Community Rebuilders), Dave Gantz (Pine Rest), Katherine Besaw (Genesis), Tom Cottrell (YWCA), Catherine Landers (North Kent Connect), Wanda Couch (Grand Rapids Housing Commission), Rebecca Long (Dwelling Place), Alisha Pennington (DHHS), Julie Kendrick (Degage), Socorro Godoy (Cherry Health), Alisa White (community member), Laura St. Louis (Disability Advocates), Allison Wenk (Grand Rapids Housing Commission), Kelsey Kruis (ICCF), Cecilia Rush (VA), Lisa Cruden (Family Promise), Susan Cervantes (KCCA), Alonda Trammell (Dwelling Place), Karen Tjapkes (Legal Aid), Kendra Avila (3:11), Maureen Kirkwood (HealthNet), Christina Kalouche (Salvation Army), Adrienne Goodstal (Mel Trotter), Stephanie Gingerich (LINC UP), Gayle Witham (VA), Caleb Rudd (VOA), Brian Bruce (Dwelling Place), Sherri Vainavicz (United Way 2-1-1), Karen Leppek (AAAWM), Brad Miller (Fountain Street), Stephanie Brock-Knoper (City of Wyoming), Lisa Blackburn (Dwelling Place), Elizabeth Stoddard (Fair Housing Center), Amanda Sterzick (Family Promise), Emily O'Brien (Salvation Army), Hattie Tinney (Grand Rapids Housing Commission), Tim Beimers (Salvation Army), Brandon Frierson (VOA), Melissa Hoezee (Fountain Street), Julie Cnossen (Arbor Circle)</p> <p><u>Staff:</u> Courtney Myers-Keaton, Brianne Czyzio Robach</p> <p><i>(List may not be complete- please contact Brianne if you were on the call but are not listed here.)</i></p>		
Time Convened:	9:31	Time Adjourned:	10:45

COVID-19 Updates
Discussion
<p>Thank you to everyone for your work in ensuring that those in the community have access to services and resources</p> <p><u>CoC Business</u></p> <p>The majority of recent CoC activity has focused on responding to COVID-19.</p> <p>Currently, staff are waiting for HUD to determine what this year's CoC Program Competition process will look like. Many CoC's across the country, including Lakeshore Housing Alliance in Ottawa County have sent letters to HUD in support of amending the process this year so that providers and CoCs can continue to focus on COVID-19 response efforts.</p> <p>Many agencies have changes to their operations. Providers have been submitting changes in operations to the CoC and staff have been sharing those changes in the weekly updates. If you have not yet submitted or if there are additional changes, please reach out to CoC staff.</p>



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In terms of advocacy, staff are staying in communication with state and other agencies to discuss strategies that will need to be implemented to support a COVID-19 recovery response. If you are interested in staying in learning more, connect with [Courtney](#).

Staff are coordinating weekly check-ins with shelter and housing providers, the Health Department, and the EOC (Emergency Operations Center) to address needs and concerns. Efforts include working to identify isolation and quarantine locations for those who do not have a space to do so on their own. Shelters and EOC have also been looking at de-intensifying congregate shelters, including reducing population size and concentration with the goal of reducing transmission spread and mobility. If you are interested in joining these meetings, connect with CoC staff.

A survey is available for providers. (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3FBSWB8>). The survey focuses on need and capacity in the community to help determine where to focus planning and advocacy efforts moving forward.

HUD has issued a [memorandum](#) regarding the waiver of some regulatory requirements. Reach out to [Courtney](#) if you have specific questions around these waivers. Agencies should notify CoC staff if they decide to request a waiver.

Many committees took a hiatus in March as COVID-19 response was in full swing. Committees are beginning to meet again.

Shelter Updates

Mel Trotter – staff are working closely with the Health Department to address needs and ensure safety. Families in shelter were moved into hotels for the foreseeable future to increase shelter space and keep families safe. Temperature checks and screenings are in place twice a day. All guests and staff in the shelter are required to wear a mask. To allow for distancing within the shelter, all program men are staying at City Life church and women are at Catholic Central High School.

When someone staying at Mel Trotter has tested positive, staff look at which guests have sustained exposure and move them into quarantine space for 14 days. This week, they began testing on all shelter guests. Those who test positive and are asymptomatic will be sent to a hotel for isolation, those who are symptomatic will be sent to the Holding and Isolation Center (HIC) or hospital.

YWCA – Within the shelter, they are working to spread the population out and have established a quarantined space. Restrictions are in place regarding movement in and out of shelter. Staff are still processing intakes and providing housing. They are seeing an uptick in assault behavior against folks staying in TH and RRH. Providers with DV survivors should be aware of higher risk. Safety plans should be in place but may need revision. Call 454-YWCA to reach their crisis line to talk through updating safety plans if needed.

Family Promise – Families in shelter have been moved to hotels. Staff are working with HAP to ensure that all families are screened for COVID-19 exposure as they enter the system. Staff are continuing rapid resolution and diversion conversations with families.



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Degage – women in shelter were moved to a hotel. Screenings, temperature checks, and cleaning are in place. At Degage, breakfast and dinner are available to neighbors. The dining room is open 7-7, social distancing measures are required. Life Enrichment Center is open M,W,F 8:00am-1:00pm for showers, lockers.

Arbor Circle – the Bridge was closed for a short window of time. They are back open and have reduced census to comply with 6-foot separation. They have had to change protocols to meet state regulations, youth must wear masks and maintain social distancing. Assessments are done over the phone and screening/temperature checks are done before entering the building.

ICCF – Set-up of shelter space allows families to shelter in place.

Coordinated Entry

Call volume at HAP has decreased over the past 6 weeks, but referrals are still being made as resources become available.

Discussions regarding how COVID may impact the coordinated entry process and how the system can react to ensure that those who are highest risk are prioritized are ongoing. Community Rebuilders developed a flowchart which starts at the front door of the shelter system and overviews step by step process based on presence of COVID-19 symptoms. In the flow, those who are non-symptomatic receive resources to stay where they are or are prioritized based on risk of complications. Those who are symptomatic or COVID-19 positive are referred to the health care system and isolation.

Conversations around implementing a tool to screen for high-risk of COVID-19 complications are ongoing.

Eviction Moratorium

The most recent executive order continues the eviction moratorium through May 15, except in cases where a tenant poses a substantial risk. Staff at Legal Aid have heard reports of non-judicial evictions, tenants should contact Legal Aid if they are being locked out of their property. The CARES Act also has provisions prohibiting evictions due to non-payment of rent on certain properties including subsidized properties. Evictions are also prohibited on properties that have a federally related mortgage, though it can be difficult to determine if individual mortgage is a covered property. The State of Michigan recently released a court form for landlords to indicate whether they are covered under the CARES Act. Since the CARES Act only covers non-payment of rent, there may be landlords using an additional issue as disguise for non-payment. Legal Aid staff want to work with service providers to try to find ways to identify community members that have a legal case and should connect with Legal Aid. If you are with an agency that is doing prevention work, please feel free to reach out to [Karen](#) and/or Legal Aid staff to talk through this process.

Utility Shutoff Suspension

Consumers Energy and DTE have suspended shutoffs due to nonpayment and extended their Winter Protection Programs through June 1. In addition, the 1-time payment on SER benefits was eliminated.



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Folks can receive additional payments until cap is reached (\$1200 for propane and fuel oil, \$850 for other energy types).

Food Access Updates

Changes to SNAP due to the pandemic include the elimination of the work requirement, and increase to maximum benefit amount, and the elimination of the \$20 daily cap for Double Up Food Bucks. Several online resources with food access location throughout Kent County are available. Neighbors in need of food should reach out to nearby pantries.

Announcements and Updates

Discussion

Kent County Community Action: TEFAP food distribution April 30th from 9-1 at Delta Plex. This will be drive-thru only, traffic control will be in place. They are expecting to serve about 1000 families. In addition, they are taking applications for utility assistance especially for those has utilities shutoff prior to the suspension.

Volunteers of America: Caleb Rudd introduced himself as the new SSVF service coordinator. Recently, VOA received an influx of funding to serve veterans. They are now able to offer hotel stays with fewer restrictions to help bridge gap between permanent housing and are able to provide food and other services to any eligible veteran.

Adjourn