



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

June 25, 2020
9:30-11:00am

Facilitator:	Casey Gordon		
Meeting Attendees:	<p><u>Attendees:</u> Emily O’Brien (Salvation Army), Alisha Pennington (MDHHS), Alexandria (Nix?), Allie Wenk (Grand Rapids Housing Commission), Brandon Frierson (Volunteers of America), Caleb Rudd (Volunteers of America), Catherine Landers (North Kent Connect), Colette McGuckin, Domenica Dault (Mel Trotter), Dreyson Byker (community member), Erin Banchoff (City of Grand Rapids), Elizabeth Stoddard (Fair Housing Center), Eunice Link, Gabriel Chapla, Jeffrey King (Community Rebuilders), John Wynbeek (Genesis), Johanna Schulte (City of Grand Rapids), Julie Kendrick (Degage), Kathy Besaw (Genesis), Katie VanHevel (Alternative Directions), Laura St. Louis (Disability Advocates), Lisa Cruden (Family Promise), Lt. Mike Waldron (Grand Rapids Fire Department), Jeremy DeRoo (LINC Up), Mary Engle (Mel Trotter), Maureen Kirkwood (HealthNet), Sherrie Gillespie (KCCA), Stephanie Brock-Knoper (City of Wyoming), Tom Cottrell (YWCA), Gayle Witham (VA), Wendie Priess (Flat River Outreach Ministries), Hattie Tinney (Grand Rapids Housing Commission), Steven DePolo (Covenant House), Wende Randall (ENTF), Wanda Couch (Grand Rapids Housing Commission),</p> <p><u>Staff:</u> Courtney Myers-Keaton, Brianne Czyzio Robach <i>(List may not be complete- please contact Brianne if you were on the call but are not listed here.)</i></p>		
Time Convened:	9:32	Time Adjourned:	10:50

Review of Minutes	
Discussion	None
CoC Updates	
Discussion	
<p><u>CoC Program Competition</u> There has not been an update from HUD on this year’s CoC Program Competition. There has been ongoing advocacy throughout the country to transition the program competition into a renewal application, but HUD has not responded either way. Staff will provide updates on the local application process based on HUD guidance as it becomes available.</p> <p><u>MSHDA ESG</u> Round one of MSHDA ESG-CV funds were allocated to two applicants, Family Promise and Pine Rest for emergency shelter and street outreach, respectively. The application has been submitted to MSHDA. Federal funds were recently announced for ESG-CV2, however allocation have not been announced for Kent County. Staff are anticipating another RFQ process. The CoC just received notice for the regular allocation of MSHDA ESG funds. Staff and Steering will be determining steps to release and RFQ for these funds.</p> <p><u>CARES Act Funding</u> There are many funding sources coming into the community from the CARES Act, including MSHDA ESG-CV, CDBG, and CSBG. Much of these funds with the City of Grand Rapids and Kent County are</p>	



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being used for prevention and financial assistance in anticipation of an influx into system once moratoriums lift. In addition, Kent County treasury funds were allocated to address homelessness due to the pandemic. Much of this funding will go through United Way and will be focused on prevention and housing. They anticipate information on the process will be released by July 15.

Advocacy Update:

Advocacy groups are anticipating the release of a proposed rule change to the Equal Access Rule which would allow providers to use biological sex to determine where to house transgender folks seeking access to safe shelter. Public comment is not yet available, but staff will share advocacy information for those interested. If you are interested in receiving information around public comment and resources, visit: www.housingsaveslives.org

Announcements:

There has been an extension of eviction and foreclosure moratorium for federally related mortgages. Michigan has appropriated rent assistance funds for eviction prevention. Funds will be distributed through Salvation Army as the HARA. They will be forming a workgroup with courts, landlords, and other agencies to determine process. Information on the process should be available within the next few weeks.

Upcoming meetings include Youth Committee, COVID-19 Provider Response, Outreach Workgroup, and Data Analysis. Data Analysis will be discussing data reports which the CoC plans to release on our website and to the full CoC.

COVID-19 Isolation Plans

Discussion

Over the course of the pandemic, there have been many changes to isolation plans for those experiencing homelessness. Most recently, the Kent County Health Department (KCHD) opened Fulton Care Center at Fulton Manor. Operations were suspended earlier this month as the number of positive cases have been low and cost is high. One reason the community has been able to maintain low numbers is continuous testing of those staying in a congregate shelter environment. The interim plan is to use hotel rooms through July 15th, after this point the hotel will not renew contract as they want to begin accepting guests.

This leaves the community at a point where collaboration is needed to address isolation plans. There have been meeting with KCHD, shelter providers, and local hospitals which will continue over the next few weeks. One of the first needs is identifying a location for isolation space, ideally in the Heartside area to address transportation and other needs. Staffing needs and supportive services needs will also need to be considered. Kent County will be providing funds but are looking for partnership with agencies to provide services. Staff will keep members updated as conversations continue. In addition, there has been conversation with the FUSE project as participants receive similar services so there is opportunity for collaboration.



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Attendees were given a chance to submit suggestions for isolation locations and additional considerations. If you have thoughts or suggestions, you can share them through this survey or by reaching out to CoC staff. Staff will provide information on upcoming meetings, please attend if you are interested.

Coordinated Entry Update

Discussion

Given the current situation, there have been conversations around how to look at the Coordinated Entry (CE) process to ensure that those who are most at risk are being prioritized into housing. Some communities are using risk-based screening tool or in conjunction with the VI-SPDAT. Conversations are continuing to ensure that there is connection to resources for households who are most vulnerable. Coordinated Entry Committee meets July 7th, hoping to have discussions around FUSE and CE prioritization at the meeting.

There are a few data points staff have been reviewing throughout the pandemic. One of which is the number of calls to HAP. These started to slow down at peak of pandemic, but these are starting to trend back up. HAP is anticipating increases in literal assessment calls and prevention calls as moratoriums lift. In addition, the number of referrals going out has decreased significantly. HAP will begin tracking openings moving forward as referrals are only available if there is an opening. Recently, most referrals have been for prevention. RRH saw a drop during peak of pandemic likely due to lack of openings. PSH has been stagnant, though this resource is limited in the community. Conversations around CE and prioritization have arisen and evolved in weekly provider meeting.

Housing Stability Alliance Update

Discussion

Many members of the CoC have been part of these conversations with KConnect to develop recommendations for a common agenda with road map. Their recommendations include those with lived experience as core of the process as decision-makers and has been divided into different core areas: high-leverage activities, continuous communication, shared measurement, and a backbone entity. The backbone entity will help move this work forward as KConnect pulls back. Staff will include information on workgroups and recommendations in the follow-up communication and encourage all to review the documents.

Wende noted that recommendations are important in addressing the root causes of housing instability across the spectrum and have opportunities for strong advocacy.

Announcements and Updates

Discussion

ENTF – is going through strategic design and implementation process. Part of this process is determining driving values that push their work forward. If you are interested in participating, reach out to [Brienne](#) or [Wende](#) as they are looking for additional voices and feedback.

Covenant House – their female floor is now open for youth ages 18-24. To connect youth, reach out to LoRae Robinson, House Manager, 616-608-1380 (ext. 2010) or Carolyn Allen, Case Manager, 616-



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608-1380 (ext. 2009). Update: they do not take youth with CSCs as they have a school and a daycare on their property.

Fair Housing Center of West Michigan – has new resource materials available regarding assistance animals under the Fair Housing Act, as well as for COVID-19 and housing. They can be found on their website at www.fhcwm.org

Grand Rapids Housing Commission – Jenn Boerman is new to GRHC but has experience with the Ottawa County CoC. Connect with Jenn at jenn.boerman@grhousing.org. Foster to Youth Independence Tenant Protection vouchers are specific for youth aging out of the foster care system ages 18-24 for up to 36 months. Youth will be referred by DHHS and WMPC.

Next meeting: August 27th at 9:30am, staff anticipate that we will be meeting via Zoom.

Adjourn