



**GRAND RAPIDS/WYOMING/KENT COUNTY COC
STEERING COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

April 19, 2019

Facilitator:	Casey Gordon		
Meeting Attendees:	<u>Steering members present:</u> Casey Gordon, Deanna Rolffs, Becky Rynbrandt, Shannon Bass, Susan Cervantes, Beverly Ryskamp, Karen Tjapkes, Tom Cottrell, Adrienne Goodstal, Jeffrey King, Erin Banchoff, Lauren VanKuelen, Lisa Cruden, Elizabeth Stoddard, Scott Orr, Shontaze Jones <u>Steering members absent:</u> Alonda Trammell, Kwan McEwen, Hattie Tinney, Pilar Dunning, Brianna Lipscomb <u>Community Members:</u> Michelle VanDyke <u>Staff:</u> Courtney Myers-Keaton, Wende Randall, Brianne Czyzio		
Time Convened:	8:33	Time Adjourned:	10:47

Approval of Agenda		April 19, 2019	
Motion by:	Beverly	Support from:	Tom
Discussion			
Amendments	Add: Data Reports to Steering (9a) – Request by Erin		
Conclusion	All in favor by acclamation with no dissent		
Approval of Minutes		March 15, 2019	
Motion by:	Lauren	Support from:	Erin
Discussion	Action Items from last month have been completed		
Amendments			
Conclusion	All in favor with acclamation with no dissent		
Approval of Consent Agenda		April 19, 2019	
Motion by:	Karen	Support from:	Lisa
Discussion	Currently, this only includes the annual calendar. Data reports could become a standing item, depending on what is discussed in 9a. Rotating committee updates are typically presented at the full CoC meetings.		
Amendments			
Conclusion	All in favor by acclamation with no dissent.		
Public Comment on Any Agenda Item			
Discussion			
None			
Petitions and Communications			
Discussion			
None received.			
ESG Financial Assistance Report			
Discussion	<p>For This report was provided by Salvation Army. A representative of Salvation Army was not present at this meeting, but any questions can go through Courtney and she will bring responses to the next meeting. Erin was able to discuss information on City of Grand Rapids ESG. For City of Grand Rapids ESG, last year's contract was extended until the end of January. The current contract was executed in early March. Agencies receiving these funds are just getting started. The contract end date for this cycle is 12/31/19. There will be additional funds available in July that will overlap.</p>		



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Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Emergency Family Shelter Waitlist	Lisa Cruden	
Discussion		
<p>The chart shows the households who called HAP requesting family shelter since November. Starting in November, Family Promise has been helping Salvation Army with bringing the waitlist down. As of now, a shelter waitlist does not exist. It was suggested that a report similar to this one that looks at the housing priority list of individuals could be included with the consent agenda.</p> <p>Currently, the process is to connect a family in need of shelter to Fulton Manor. If capacity is full at Fulton Manor, they put families in a hotel for a short amount of time. Before referring to Family Promise, HAP has already started the diversion process.</p> <p>A question was raised about the capacity of Diversion and the process of implementing Diversion. Cruden affirmed that the first contact families have at shelter is a continued diversion conversation. There are currently 20 available "slots" for diversion. Once at capacity, the goal is to have 40-50 families able to go through diversion each month. The diversion program has been in place for about 18 months. They are also working to connect with mainstream resources to see what other funding resources are available. It was noted that the Fulton Manner project has a full-time-equivalent staff person working on Diversion. Diversion starts at Salvation Army with the HAP. It was noted that face-to-face conversations is most affective when working with clients on Diversion. There may not be capacity at HAP to do diversion in a hands-on manner that is more effective. Perhaps the Coordinated Entry committee could look at capacity and how it drives the work is able to be done.</p> <p>Members encouraged the community to move to expanding the diversion conversation to individuals. Mel Trotter has a program in place where they problem-solve with people experiencing first time homelessness in hopes of diverting them. Community Rebuilders has started Rapid Resolutions, a funding mandate from the VA. This program provides diversion resources for veterans. Chairwoman Casey suggested we have an opportunity to have a large group discussion as to how different diversion programs in the community can voluntarily work together and asked Courtney to work on organizing such a conversation.</p>		
Strategic Plan		
Discussion		
<p>At the last meeting, an ad-hoc committee was approved for eviction prevention resources. An invite will be sent out next week to different organizations that are important to have around the table. Some organizations identified are Salvation Army, Rental Property Owners Association, and Kent County. The committee will look at the scope of eviction prevention and how to increase resources in the community.</p> <p>The diversion team that was part of the CoC was the diversion pilot team, but this pilot should not be</p>		



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responsible for ensuring the community meets the strategic plan goals. With the differing efforts in the community, it would be a good to have a team that can ensure projects work together voluntarily even if they are not from the same funding source.

Data Reports to Steering

Erin shared a concern Steering Council is not receiving regular data reports. Courtney shared that the Data Analysis committee has asked “What data would help inform Steering Council conversations?”

It would be helpful to have basic system performance information provided regularly. System performance data should come from the HMIS Administrator so that Steering Council members are aware of how the system is functioning. For the strategic plan, Steering Council could look at baseline data year over year, and then quarterly to track progress (like a dashboard appendix). Other helpful data: information related to racial equity including an analysis of outcomes by race, reports being prepared (e.g. homeless count, PIT, etc.). Discussed that whenever possible, Steering should be provided data before it is released to outside agencies/individuals.

Data Analysis would like guidance on what data Steering Council would like them to review. Another point to consider, should the data analysis committee respond to raw data or to analyzed data? Wende shared that at yesterday’s Data Analysis meeting, Mark Woltman, from KConnect, presented annual count data layered with Kent County census data and racial data. This analysis showed large inequities in who is accessing the homeless system in Kent County. The data had not been analyzed in this way and shared previously.

Becky asked if it was the intent that our HMIS Administrator was to serve as a data analyst? If not, then it was noted that the CoC does not have a data analyst on staff or through a contract. Perhaps this is an opportunity to work with local colleges/universities. Steering should also receive regular reports on data required in the CoC Program application.

Staff and Data Analysis Committee will provide quarterly updates on data related to the system performance measures listed in the prioritized goals of the strategic plan.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Implement a system or process to ensure that Steering receives regular reports that include, but are not limited to data related to the system performance measures listed in the prioritized goals of the strategic plan.	Daniel in conjunction with Courtney	

Funding Review Committee

Discussion

There are vacancies to fill on Funding Review Committee. There are currently 5 members, and the ideal size is 7-9 members. Appointments will need to come directly from Steering. This committee is not a large time commitment for members, but there can be short turn-around periods for committee members read all the applications. At the direction of Executive, CoC staff are in the process of reaching out to potential candidates. Steering members noted that it would be helpful to engage



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someone from the healthcare space. Elizabeth Stoddard is willing to join the committee. It was noted that reaching outside the housing space could help broaden perspectives. It was noted that new members, particularly those not currently active in the immediate work, must be provided orientation. It can be hard to bring new members up to speed with the language of the housing space.

Becky moved to appoint Elizabeth Stoddard to the Funding Review Committee, Beverly seconded the motion. Results: 15 in favor, 1 abstention (Elizabeth Stoddard due to conflict of interest)

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Refer potential members to staff	All Steering	

ESG & VAWA – New Requirements

Discussion

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) requires all agencies receiving CoC, ESG, and other covered funds to have an Emergency Transfer Plan. MSHDA is requiring CoC's to develop a community-wide Emergency Transfer Plan no later than September 9, 2019. There is a model HUD template. This plan could be incorporated into CoC application process to make sure all agencies are thinking about this intentionally.

Karen moved that CoC staff coordinate a group to draft an Emergency Transfer Plan from the ESG guidance and look at the issue for recipients of CoC and ESG funding. Beverly seconded. All in favor by acclamation with no dissent.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Draft an Emergency Transfer Plan	Staff/Courtney	

RRH Standards and Benchmarks

Discussion

The CoC's Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Standards and Benchmarks are based on National Alliance to End Homelessness RRH standards. They are benchmark measures that tie into the strategic plan. Locally, benchmark three seems to be difficult to measure. As reported, it is a combination of RRH returns and emergency shelter returns. If separated, it is a system wide benchmark. It is difficult to gauge performance of individual projects from a system-wide measure. CoC staff will take this concern to Daniel Gore and/or MCAH (Michigan Coalition to End Homelessness) to see if this can be tracked with HMIS data. If not, a different indicator can be decided upon.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Speak with Daniel/MCAH to see if reports for project-specific returns are available.	Courtney	

LIHTC Process

Discussion

Our current CoC Letter of Support policy on Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) process requires developers to present at a full CoC meeting. Developers are running into limited timeline issues and are looking for more depth in the discussion from presentations.

Last time MSHDA's Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) was updated, the local policy was not updated after. MSHDA's intent is for the applicant to initiate conversation with the CoC regarding a potential permanent supportive housing development. The initial meeting is to be the start of discussion and is



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not intended to be used to seek CoC approval. In the past, there was discussion in Executive of whether the full CoC is the best place for developers to present information. An initial smaller group meeting with the developer would allow for more thorough discussion. This would be followed by presentation to Steering. In addition, applicants are required to have an MOU in place with the HARA and other service providers. Steering should have information about the MOU. The internal CoC policy is a barrier. As a community, it is important to remove barriers for affordable housing developers.

It is a cumbersome and complex process that developers go through to submit an LIHTC application. Presentations at Steering would allow for more flexibility in the process.

The process should ensure that developers are not treating CoC approval as an afterthought and balance the CoC part with the other parts of the process. It would be helpful to talk to developers around what the process looks like for them and how/where the CoC fits in the process. If the process included the CoC's expectations and what information a developer should present, this would allow developers to think about the CoC presentation earlier in the process.

Conclusion:

Karen motioned to suspend the current LIHTC Letter of Support policy for a period of 90 days to allow LIHTC applicants to present at Steering Council in the next 90 days as part of application process. During that period, CoC staff will review the current policy in conjunction with QAP requirements and bring proposed revisions for review. Tom seconded. All in favor by application with no dissent.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Review the current policy in conjunction with QAP requirement and bring proposed revisions for review	Courtney	

YHDP Update

Discussion

Chairwoman Casey provided a historical context on the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP). Our community has applied for funds for the past two years; however, were not awarded. If selected, the community would develop a coordinated community plan and then receive funding for specific projects. She noted that last year, there were many negative effects around the decision process for a lead agency.

Over the past month, Executive Committee has looked at safeguards to ensure the same issues do not arise. Youth providers continue to have diverging points of view for what receiving YHDP funds mean for this community and the role and attributes needed for a Lead Agency. As such, Executive feels that Youth Committee should strongly consider the selection of a neutral agency as lead agency, one who is not a service provider and who has experience with convening community partners.

Executive's suggestion is that Steering Committee delegate the authority to the Youth Committee to make the decision for the selection of a Lead Agency. Heart of West Michigan United Way is a neutral agency that Executive suggests the Youth Committee consider. If the Youth Committee decides to not go with United Way, then it is recommended that they go through the Funding Review process to



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identify the lead agency. United Way, because of conflict of interest, cannot apply through the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process.

Wende noted that United Way leadership is willing to take on the role if specifically asked to but will not seek the role. It was noted that some do not view United Way to be a neutral agency, and selection of United Way as lead agency may create discord.

It was noted that all youth providers are interested in being part of the YHDP team. Courtney stated that based on conversations, it is not known who would apply for lead agency. There is a short timeline to decide on this process as the YHDP application is due on May 15.

Is it the role or function of Steering to review applications of the RFQ process to determine that the lead agency has the capacity to convene the community? Jeffrey reminded the Steering Committee that Funding Review Committee was chosen to review applications last year as it is a neutral group. Last year, the thought was that a youth agency should lead the process.

Discussion ensued. Since then, youth providers learned that some communities used a different community agency, not necessarily a youth affiliated agency, as the lead agency. Last year's process was developed to be broad and open to additional community agencies. There may be agencies waiting for the RFQ process to continue the same as last year. A question was raised if not using Funding Review would be considered changing the process mid-stream? The CoC needs some way to determine whether the agency has a capacity to be the lead agency. It was also noted that choosing a neutral agency eliminates providers from acting as the Lead Agency. There was a comment that CoC Steering Council has the ultimate decision as Youth Committee's or Funding Review Committee's decision would come back to Steering for approval if not specifically delegated by action.

The fact that the community is struggling to choose who should lead the process could indicate this community is not ready. Becky voiced frustration expressed that, knowing the CoC's intent to apply for funding this year, that the lead agency process was not reviewed earlier in the year and solidified well before the NOFA was released after the contention with last year's process. This was affirmed by other Steering members.

The RFQ and RFP are enticing community agencies to participate for the good of the community, but do not guarantee the reception of funds. Agencies would likely need to go to their boards, there is likely not enough time for this. The flawed process will become apparent in the application, reducing chances of being awarded the grant. Discussion identified that the Lead Agency is most like a Contract Administrator on behalf of the CoC for the Youth Demonstration Project. It was noted that an RFQ and RFP process allowing for an applicant for the Lead Agency to describe how they are a neutral party, without conflict of interest, who can confirm their capacity to perform as such may be vetted and affirmed. As Steering Council, the group needs to decide how they are going to assist in repairing the fractures in the community and identify what work to be done in the meantime to make sure there is a process in place for next year.



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Wende noted that the United Way is not interested in serving as the Lead Agency if such an appointment would be considered controversial. There was concern that Youth Committee or Steering Committee could have a contentious vote to choose United Way.

Conclusion:

Becky motioned to recognize that community needs the funds from the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project grant, but in order to be most successful, the CoC will delay submitting an application until next year. Beverly seconded.

This topic will be added to May agenda to continue discussion.

Results:

Yes: 13

No: 3

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Add as an agenda item to the May meeting	Casey	
Any other matters by Steering Council members		
Discussion		
<p><u>Kent County Community Action:</u> Got their letter from HUD. They were awarded \$1.4 million for CRA and TRA projects. This will be reviewed by the board on Thursday. All of their MEAP dollars have been pulled, effective immediately, they are no longer able to assist families with utility payments. There will be a legislative meeting on Monday. Susan will send out ways to advocate. Every 3 years, KCCA conducts a Community Needs Assessment. They should have the client survey going by the first of May. They will to send it out to agencies to encourage responses.</p>		
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Public Comment on Any Matter		
Discussion		
None		
Adjournment		
Karen motioned to adjourn, Susan seconded. All in favor by acclamation with no dissent.		