



STEERING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

November 19, 2021

8:30-10:30

Facilitator:	Karen Tjapkes		
Meeting Attendees:	<u>Steering members present:</u> Karen Tjapkes, Holly Wilson, Tom Cottrell, Scott Orr, Rebecca Rynbrandt, Dreyson Byker, Susan Cervantes, Elizabeth Stoddard, Victoria Arnold, Casey Gordon, Adrienne Goodstal, Hattie Tinney, Jose Salinas, Scott Orr, Lauren VanKeulen, Mark Contreras, Alonda Trammell, Cheryl Schuch, Erin Banchoff, Victoria Sluga <u>Steering members absent with notification:</u> none <u>Steering members absent without notification:</u> none <u>Community Members:</u> Wende Randall (Essential Needs Task Force), Tammy Britton (City of Grand Rapids), Pavneet Banga (CoC Intern) <u>Staff:</u> Courtney Myers-Keaton		
Time Convened:	8:32am	Time Adjourned:	10:43am

Approval of Agenda			
Motion by:	Tom Cottrell	Support from:	Adrienne Goodstal
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Casey asked to discuss Committee Updates in the consent agenda - Courtney asked to move the Advisory Council update to the beginning - Tom noted that the budget document is not in the packet 		
Amendments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Committee Updates will be item 13 - Advisory Council will be item 7, all items will move down by one - Staff will send budget report via email; it will not be approved with the consent agenda 		
Conclusion	All in favor, motion passes.		
Approval of Minutes		October 15, 2021	
Motion by:		Support from:	
Discussion			
Amendments	None		
Conclusion	All in favor, motion passes.		
Public Comment on Any Agenda Item			
Discussion			
None			
Approval of Consent Agenda			
Motion by:	Rebecca Rynbrandt	Support from:	Tom Cottrell
Discussion			
Amendments	Budget report will not be approved as it was not included. Neither will the committee updates as they are pulled for discussion.		
Conclusion	All in favor, motion passes.		
Petitions and Communications			
Discussion-			
None.			



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Advisory Council Update		
Discussion		
<p>Courtney shared that the creation of the Advisory Council (AC) is part of the strategic planning process. In the past, action boards had indicated interest in involvement with the decision-making process but did not always feel comfortable engaging at Steering Council. It was decided that an AC may be better space for engagement.</p> <p>Dreyson has been discussing ideas for the AC with DL from AYA and Joe from Mission Matters and presented a draft of their design. The AC will be an inclusive space for anyone with lived experience to engage and will ensure that CoC decisions are informed by those with lived experience. The team envisions a ladder type structure with differing levels of involvement. They plan to recruit members in Q1 of 2022 and begin meetings in Q2. In the longer-term, they hope to have opportunities for focus groups and townhalls.</p> <p>Courtney noted that there will be a connection with AC and action boards but this structure has not been flushed out yet. Action boards will likely still exist in the structure but would have the ability to pursue actionable items outside of the scope of CoC planning. The vision is that AC would be open to those groups and that action boards would be a connection as AC is working on initiatives and seeking feedback. Courtney noted that like action boards, AC members will receive a stipend for their time. She anticipates the CoC's community engagement budget line will need to increase.</p> <p>Cheryl noted that the current governance structure has held seats for action boards. She urged the group to consider the need for population specific feedback and suggested connecting with agencies who currently have action boards/advisory groups. Her suggestion is to formally tie action boards to the AC to ensure that population-specific groups are included in opportunities. There may need to be changes to the Governance Charter to include the AC and identify their relationship with Steering, but are not needed prior to launching.</p> <p>Victoria Sluga supported the creation of the AC. She feels it would be important for a clear understanding of the time commitment at different levels. Courtney noted that AC may have a structure like the CoC with a larger membership with additional groups for more engagement and some type of leadership structure.</p>		
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Family Shelter Status		
Discussion		
<p>Courtney noted that this topic has been discussed at length in the past. Funding for COVID mitigation allowed shelters to increase capacity over the past 18 months, but now family shelter space is extremely limited due to limited funds. While there have been many conversations around addressing long-term needs in the past, short-term/immediate needs need to be discussed.</p>		



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Cheryl shared that current family shelter capacity lower than the past few years. In the past, shelters have received private funding to meet emergency needs. This year, local funders have been reluctant to fund shelter as it is an allowable use under current federal funds. She feels the CoC should formally engage to meet the immediate need and asked the group to discuss the best course of action.

Lauren stated that AYA is also seeing an increase youth and parenting youth experiencing homelessness. There are about 100 youth on the by-name list (BNL) who are unsheltered, 50 of these are families. The largest problem for the AYA team is lack of available resources for youth. Casey is also hearing about families staying in cars and outside from school liaisons. She expressed concerns with the Coordinated Entry design approved a few months ago as schools are seeing vulnerable families not being connected to a resource. The by-name list shared at the last Family Functional Zero meeting had no chronic or unsheltered families on this list indicating that vulnerable families are not being connected leading to an inaccurate count of families experiencing homelessness. It is important to track and know the community need, especially if seeking resources.

Courtney highlighted that Community Housing Connect (CHC) was designed with a focus on housing and works well for this purpose. She was surprised to learn the platform was not tracking unsheltered families and shared that solutions are being discussed for gathering this data and connecting families to safety planning. Even with sufficient resources, a safe space is needed while households work to lease up. Lauren noted that limited funding is the reason for limited shelter rooms.

Rebecca noted that updated guidance for HOME-ARP funds was just released. She sees this as an opportunity for municipalities to collaboratively discuss how to use funds. Cheryl supported this idea and is willing to provide data and information on successful models. Erin indicated a planning process must be followed for HOME-ARP, so the funding it is not available to meet immediate needs. However, they are working with Community Rebuilders to explore supporting family shelter through a current contract. Cheryl suggested a formal communication from those receiving ARP funds that acknowledge this gap and need for support.

Susan asked for any data to be separated by families within and outside of the City of Grand Rapids. This is possible. About 22% of families served by Family Promise are out-county. Rebecca indicated that the City of Wyoming provides support to agencies for families originating within the City and in need of shelter. As some zip codes are split between municipalities, she suggested agencies geocode address to determine eligibility.

Conversation about the current family BNL dashboard as it is not capturing information on those in need of shelter. This could be added as a disclaimer or data could be included from other sources. Casey feels that the switch to CHC has made it difficult for vulnerable families to connect to resources and is not meeting the community's needs in its current form.

Rebecca Rynbrandt offered to coordinate a conversation with local municipalities around coordination of HOME-ARP funds and how to communicate the lack of immediate funds.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
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Coordinate meeting with municipalities re: HOME-ARP funds	Rebecca Rynbrandt	
Refugee Resettlement Update		
Discussion		
<p>Courtney indicated that a process has been outlined between partners. Currently, 15 households are staying in hotels. Refugee agencies are providing case management and Family Promise has taken on the payee role for hotels. CoC and HWMUW staff are handling payments, reauthorizations, and reporting. Funding is available through MSHDA ESG-CV funds. Around 45 additional households are expected which will deplete funds quickly. Additional funds have not been awarded, but the allocation amount should be shared in the coming weeks. Most of the administrative funds from this upcoming allocation will be allocated to Family Promise for HMIS data entry.</p> <p>MSHDA is asking agencies to reallocate funds without an amendment. Courtney acknowledged that this is risky as it would put MSHDA and the CoC out of compliance with agencies currently under contract if funds are not provided in a timely manner. HWMUW and agencies are moving forward with good faith but feel as though they were not given a choice as refusing funds could be seen as refusing to help families in need.</p> <p>Cheryl noted that this topic goes back to the desire for a conversation with MSHDA around lack of dialogue with local entities. As the Program Competition has ended, CoC staff can re-engage.</p>		
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Governance Charter Changes		
Discussion		
<p>Courtney shared that there is a desire to ensure that recommended changes to the Governance Charter are done in an intentional and inclusive manner. She proposed a timeline and process for a group of stakeholders to review the charter and suggest changes. Erin supported this process and feels an ad-hoc group would result in a robust product. She suggested a concerted focus on aligning the charter with the updated strategic plan. Lauren feels the intentional timeline is beneficial.</p> <p><u>Fiduciary MOU</u></p> <p>Last year's MOU was included in the packet. Courtney shared that United Way (HWMUW) has asked whether specific CoC responsibilities around the budget should be included. Rebecca wondered whether the CoC is at a point where a fiduciary agreement would be more appropriate than a MOU. She also suggested some sections of the MOU could be updated to highlight mutual responsibilities (Conflict of Interest section, others). Karen indicated that entering a fiduciary agreement may be difficult as the CoC is not a separate entity.</p> <p>Finance Committee is meeting in December. They will review the MOU and discuss where changes should be made. An updated MOU will be brought back to Steering Council.</p>		
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Review fiduciary MOU and suggest changes	Finance Committee	



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Welcoming Committee/New Member Orientation		
Discussion		
<p>Courtney reflected that recent CoC membership meetings have been challenging as some attendees do not have much context on CoC functions and operations. This leads to side conversations which are important but may not be appropriate when specific agenda items need to be discussed. She suggested a mentor-type opportunity for Steering members to connect with new members, help introduce people to the space, and answer questions. It would be important to ensure the group feels inclusive and is a space for everyone to ask questions. Other ideas from members include having space on the website for overview and orientation videos and slide decks, developing an FAQ, and quarterly orientations. Adrienne and Lauren supported the creation of the group and are willing to participate.</p>		
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
CoC Program Competition: Update & Learnings		
Discussion:		
<p>Staff submitted the CoC Application by the Program Competition deadline of 11/16. Courtney shared that it was a large undertaking for all everyone involved. She noted that one area that will likely receive a low score is the HIC (Housing Inventory Count) coverage. This is now disaggregated by project type and our community has a lower PSH coverage rate as VASH vouchers are not required to be entered into HMIS. She will work with Daniel and VA staff to ensure they are entered for the next HIC. There is also low coverage with youth transitional housing as Covenant House is not entering into HMIS. This has been discussed in the past, and Covenant House has expressed interested in entering data. Staff will continue to monitor these data elements.</p> <p>Staff have identified areas to improve future competitions and feel increased staff capacity will help. Opportunities include offering provider trainings on how to increase system performance measures, offering diversity trainings and ensuring equity is woven throughout the CoC process, and improving funding process. Staff also plan to engage with community members for input.</p>		
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Committee Updates		
Discussion		
<p>Casey highlighted high numbers of unsheltered youth, many who were previously stably housed during the family shelter conversation. Cheryl asked whether the CoC should analyze data on recidivism as part of Data Analysis conversations to discuss which interventions are working and how to ensure households receive the right intervention when first entering the system. Courtney indicated that this analysis may be a role of the Data Analyst once hired.</p> <p>Lauren shared that AYA has some internal and anecdotal data around youth returning to the system. Lack of supportive services once youth are housed seems to be a leading cause for returns.</p>		
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline



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Other Matters from Steering Council members			
Discussion			
<p>Adrienne shared that Mel Trotter signed a lease in partnership with the City of Grand Rapids for 200 Division (old Goodwill building). They are working to open it as a day center and overnight shelter starting in early December. Capacity will be 75. It will be available 24/7 for all populations, including couples. Organizations that served as warming centers prior to COVID are not back online yet, limiting space. Also, the opening of a new isolation location was delayed until the end of the year. The current contract was extended, but they space is at capacity and they are working to identify an overflow location.</p> <p>Alonda shared that Dwelling Place has 18 open units at Ferguson that they are struggling to fill. She is concerned with the low number of referrals they have received. Dwelling Place will be penalized if they are not leased up soon. She asked anyone working with someone who is chronically homeless with a disability to send that information to her and HAP. Households need to have a birth certificate to lease up. Courtney has been working with partners to help support this push for referrals. A list of those who may be eligible has been shared so outreach and shelter providers can make connections and ensure proper Releases of Information are in place. Alonda voiced concern with the process and length of time as Dwelling Place has committed to use centralized intake and will have to respond funders if the deadline is not met. Victoria Arnold is asked to look into ensuring referrals are being sent over. Residents in other developments can be transferred to open units if they choose to do so. They have also been working with Community Rebuilders and HAP to identify households in other projects who may be better suited for PSH. (Karen, Adrienne, Mark, and Elizabeth left the meeting)</p> <p>Hattie shared that Grand Rapids Housing Commission has the same deadline. They also have 18 units open and are having a hard time filling units. They think one reason is that folks are choosing portable vouchers, which have increased due to Emergency Housing Vouchers. She will reconnect with Dwelling Place and see how both agencies can help one another.</p>			
Public Comment on Any Item			
Discussion			
None			
Adjourn			
Motion by:	Hattie Tinney	Support from:	Alonda Trammell