



STEERING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

May 20, 2022

8:30-10:30

Facilitator:	Lauren VanKeulen		
Meeting Attendees:	<u>Steering members present:</u> Lauren VanKeulen, Tom Cottrell, Holly Wilson, Rebecca Rynbrandt, Victoria Sluga, Susan Cervantes, Tammy Britton, Karen Tjapkes, Ryan VerWys, Jose Salinas, Cheryl Schuch, Elizabeth Stoddard, Wanda Couch, Fran Dalton, Victoria Arnold, Alonda Trammell <u>Steering members absent with notification:</u> Casey Gordon, Adrienne Goodstal, Mark Contreras <u>Steering members absent without notification:</u> Nelson Soto <u>Community Members:</u> Wende Randall (Essential Needs Task Force) <u>Staff:</u> Courtney Myers-Keaton, Brianne Robach		
Time Convened:	8:31am	Time Adjourned:	10:45 am

Approval of Agenda			
Motion by:	Tom Cottrell	Support from:	Cheryl Schuch
Discussion			
Amendments	None		
Conclusion	All in favor, motion passes.		
Approval of Minutes		April 22, 2022	
Motion by:	Holly Wilson	Support from:	Tom Cottrell
Discussion			
Amendments	None		
Conclusion	All in favor, motion passes.		
Public Comment on Any Agenda Item			
Discussion			
None			
Approval of Consent Agenda			
Motion by:	Cheryl Schuch	Support from:	Tammy Britton
Discussion	None		
Amendments			
Conclusion	All in favor, motion passes.		
Petitions and Communications			
Discussion			
None			
FY23 Coalition Budget			
Discussion			
<p>Courtney presented the budget that was presented to Heart of West Michigan United Way's (HWMUW) board. She indicated that it is subject to change if infrastructure changes (to be discussed later in the agenda) are implemented. There are a few areas of note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding is available to support a Program Manager and a part-time Administrative Assistant. - If the HMIS grant is transferred to HWMUW, the line-item amount will change slightly. Some funds will go to HWMUW for administration and HMIS licenses. The remainder will continue to support staffing (currently contracted). 			



STEERING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

May 20, 2022

8:30-10:30

- Built-in projections include increases HUD Planning amounts each year and cost of living for staff.
- Kent County CDBG is this budget but has not yet been awarded.
- Match from HWMUW but will be reducing over the next 3 years. Conversations around match sources are occurring.

Courtney noted that Steering Council would typically approve this budget but recommends waiting for approval as changes would be made if there are infrastructure changes. Agreement to wait.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

FY22-23 MSHDA ESG Funding

Discussion

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) recently released the timeline for their 2022-2023 funding. They anticipate allocation amounts will be released in June. Communities are asked to submit Exhibit 1 by June 17th instead of after the application submission which has been practice in past years. Courtney proposed creating an ESG Exhibit 1 workgroup to review the draft document and provide comments. The draft would also be posted publicly for comment. Members interested in serving on the review team should contact Courtney.

Courtney overviewed application questions and thinks the Coalition is well-positioned to answer questions. There are a few new required attachments including a racial demographics report and Anti-Discrimination and Fair Housing Policies which were in progress when Exhibit 1 was released. Written service standards for Rapid Re-Housing (RRH), Emergency Shelter (ES), Prevention, and Street Outreach (SO) are also required. RRH standards are already in place as is a SO policy that functions as service standards. The policy was not adopted by Steering, and Courtney does not think adoption is needed. Standards for ES and prevention are not currently in place and will need to be developed. Courtney plans to ask draft policies are allowable for the submission given the short time between the release of Exhibit 1 and its due date.

Courtney indicated that funding priorities for the allocation will need to be determined so the Coalition can begin a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process to allocate the funds. One area that has been mentioned is increasing funds for SO. An SO lead agency could also be considered to support all populations, ensure fidelity to SO policies, and share expectations with new providers. Courtney anticipates discussion around funding priorities would occur the June 17th meeting.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

Funding Appeal Policy

Discussion

Brianne shared that work has been done to update the Coalition's Funding Appeals Policy and Process over the last few months as the previous process was interim. A draft of an updated Funding Appeal Policy and Process was included in the agenda packet; Steering Council is asked to approve the policy.



STEERING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

May 20, 2022

8:30-10:30

MOTION to approve the Funding Appeal Policy and Process as presented by Tammy. SECOND from Elizabeth. Conversation around whether to include information on the mechanics of requesting an appeal. Tom feels this would ensure applicants are aware they can access information on how a Funding Review Committee decision was made. Elizabeth noted access to information would be helpful as appeals must include reasoning and any evidence. In practice, applicants can contact Coalition staff to receive feedback on funding decisions. Rebecca proposed clarity in the RFQ around the appeals process. Text will be added in the Appeals Process and Timeline section of the policy indicating that appeals shall be submitted “as outlined in the RFQ”. Victoria Sluga appreciates the increased transparency and ability of agencies to incorporate feedback in future applications.

MOTION to approve the Funding Appeal Policy as amended with a general appeals process statement by Tammy. SECOND from Elizabeth. All in favor, motion passes.

(Wanda Couch left the meeting)

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

Funding Process Review Update

Discussion

Courtney shared that there have been conversations around the funding process for the CoC Program Competition. Staff have been researching processes and metrics used by other communities and have developed draft scoring categories for renewal applications. Funding Review Committee (FRC) has reviewed the updated scoring criteria and an initial draft will be shared with providers for feedback. It can also be provided to Steering with a copy of last year’s scorecard for reference. Another process change that is being considered is inviting providers to present renewal projects to FRC.

Lauren asked if process changes would impact reallocation. Courtney noted that FRC has discussed creating a threshold below which discussion about reallocation is warranted. The Coalition allocated a significant amount of funding in 2015 which was ahead of many communities so reallocation would be considered based on project performance and community needs. She also noted that this coming year could serve as a bridge to prepare providers to shift to a threshold for reallocation.

Tom stated that COVID-19 and relief funds will impact on project outputs. Courtney indicated that this year’s process will likely assume that all providers were impacted similarly. She also indicated that scoring criteria will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with HUD and community priorities.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

CoC Application Review Update

Discussion

A small group met yesterday to discuss the FY21 CoC Application and review the debrief provided by HUD. Discussion included next steps to prepare for this year’s application. Attendees suggested the application process is structured in a way that pulls in expertise from community organizations. Courtney thinks this can be met through a CoC Application workgroup responsible for preparing for the next application and moving work forward. The group would be open to Coalition members. Contact staff if you are interested.



STEERING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

May 20, 2022

8:30-10:30

Courtney overviewed CoC Program Competition Debriefing from HUD. The document can be provided to Steering. Sizable points were lost due to a decrease in RRH beds in the 2021 Housing Inventory Count. The decrease is likely due to impacts of the pandemic and stagnation in the market as RRH funding did not decrease in 2021 and 2022 numbers are similar to 2020 bed numbers. Cheryl feels clarity on the reasons behind the decrease will be important to plan for future years. Courtney plans to reach out to RRH providers to discuss this further. A few points were also lost in the section around bed coverage. Since then, an additional provider has begun to enter data into HMIS which may help improve this coming year's score. However, local VASH vouchers are administered across multiple counties which makes it difficult to enter data into HMIS thus impacting the bed coverage score. This has been a concern locally and by CoCs across the country in previous rounds.

(Jose left the meeting)

Cheryl asked if work with FUSE and the GRACE network can be leveraged to help the Coalition gain bonus points in the upcoming round. Courtney anticipates last year's bonus points will become scored questions in this year's round.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

YHDP Update

Discussion

Courtney shared that the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) application is due June 28th. The YHDP is an opportunity for communities to demonstrate how well they are poised to create a coordinated plan to address youth homelessness. She is hopeful the community will be funded this round. Youth providers have convened to help with application including conducting a youth needs assessment, a provider survey, and weekly meetings to discuss action steps for a strong application.

Cheryl asked if other CoCs who received funding could support and advise on the application. Courtney welcomed connections. The committee has met with Traverse City in the past though their experience was much different as they are a rural community. Detroit was also recently selected for funding and has shared that hiring a grant writer was beneficial to their application. If interested in reviewing the application, contact staff.

Lauren noted that the application period has historically included a process to select a lead agency. This year, the Coalition will not undergo this process to submit the application.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

Draft CoC Infrastructure & Staffing Plan

Discussion

Courtney shared that there have ongoing conversations around the need to increase Coalition staffing. The core responsibilities of the Coalition as a Continuum of Care (CoC) consist of design and operation of a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), governance and structure, system ops and planning, preparing the CoC Application, and implementation of Coordinated Entry (CE)



STEERING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

May 20, 2022

8:30-10:30

processes. She presented a draft infrastructure and staffing plan developed with community stakeholders that increases staffing and addresses these responsibilities:

- Currently, HMIS administration and support are provided by contract. Feedback from providers suggests this capacity is not fully meeting needs. As such, the proposed infrastructure includes a full-time system administrator and help desk specialist.
- The Salvation Army (TSA) is currently the CE lead agency and staff have done a great job in this role. With process changes being made, it may no longer make sense to have all CE staff in a centralized location. The proposed infrastructure addresses these changes and the need for coordination, facilitation, and leadership of CE processes by creating a full-time CE Manager position at the Coalition. Need for a CE Coordinator under the CE Manager has been discussed but not determined. Under the proposed structure, TSA would no longer be the CE lead agency.
- The structure also includes current positions - CoC Director, Program Manager, and a full-time Administrative Assistant (increased from part-time in the current budget). A Data Analyst to incorporate data and storytelling is also included. Funds have been lightly committed for this position but not secured.
- Overall, the proposed infrastructure includes up to 7 FTE staff.
- The proposed funding for this infrastructure has two components. One is shifting the HUD HMIS grant from TSA to HWMUW as HWMUW already fulfills the responsibilities of grant via MOU. The second and larger shift is shifting CE grants from TSA to HWMUW to provide the proposed staffing. An RFP to support components of CE processes would be released for use of the remaining funds.
- The benefits of the proposed structure include a high-functioning and sustainable CoC structure, alignment with the strategic plan, addressing needs for complex data analytics, and ability to meet CE requirements.
- There are several assumptions built into the proposed infrastructure: Coalition staff do not provide direct services, TSA no longer houses an outreach specialist position, TSA will continue to hold prevention funds and can help with coordination of these funds, Coalition staff will manage the functions of a HARA as defined by MSHDA (unless contracted to a different agency).

Lauren shared that she has been working with Courtney and Executive Committee to draft this infrastructure which also has full support from HWMUW and TSA leadership. The proposed infrastructure is about creating a cohesive system to meet needs and not about taking anything from TSA. She thinks it will address piecemealing which can lead to reduced efficacy and resolve concerns with understaffing. Plus, many CoCs across the country follow a similar structure.

Victoria Sluga agreed that a more robust Coalition staffing structure is needed and suggested listing street outreach as avenue for CE access. She asked where collective communication and grant management would fall in the proposed structure. Courtney indicated that these would be under the director (with opportunity to contract) and program manager, respectively.



STEERING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

May 20, 2022

8:30-10:30

Fran asked about TSA's current and future roles and a needs assessment. Courtney indicated that the proposal brings some positions currently housed at TSA to the Coalition. The shift towards Community Housing Connect (CHC) 2.0 is also anticipated to fill in gaps. She has discussed future roles with TSA though this has not been fully flushed out yet. Victoria Arnold indicated that if TSA were to decrease staff, this could limit individuals available via phone and in person. Lauren indicated that this initial draft was informed by evaluating community needs. Courtney indicated she is continuing to ensure nothing is lost in the proposed structure. Fran suggested developing an intersectional graph showing current and future states.

Cheryl thinks the proposed infrastructure will bring significantly more capacity and more efficient use of funding as it brings coordination to the community level instead of the provider level. She noted that CHC 2.0 will need infrastructure and facilitation for implementation which this proposal provides. She advocated that funding for communications remains on the Coalition's radar even though it cannot be funded through this infrastructure. She also agreed that increased staff capacity around data and HMIS is needed. Lauren agreed that increased facilitation capacity will be beneficial in the move towards CHC 2.0 with Solutions Specialists at different agencies instead of a centralized system. (Tom leave)

Ryan encouraged awareness to unintentional outcomes as decentralizing may require more pass off between agencies which can increase subjectivity and variation. Cheryl indicated that this is currently a risk without the structure to centralize coordination. Courtney thinks this proposed structure will bring back some centralization. (Cheryl leave)

Lauren asked about the best next steps in bringing this to the full Coalition. She thinks moving this forward at the June Steering Council meeting would be important. Rebecca asked about engagement with the full Coalition membership. The proposal could be brought to the June membership meeting for final approval, if recommended by Steering Council. Rebecca suggested starting the June Steering Council meeting early to hold a public information session. This would leverage existing meetings and help Steering to hear public comments. The public can also hear Steering conversation prior to a vote at the general membership meeting. (Holly and Fran leave)

Lauren encouraged members to think through the proposal and ask questions ahead of the June meeting.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Other Matters from Steering Council members		
Discussion		
None.		
Public Comment on Any Item		
Discussion		



GRAND RAPIDS AREA
COALITION TO END
HOMELESSNESS

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8:30-10:30

None.	
Adjourn	