



STEERING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

September 17, 2021

8:30-10:30

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| Facilitator: | Karen Tjapkes | | |
| Meeting Attendees: | <p><u>Steering members present:</u> Tom Cottrell, Victoria Sluga, Karen Tjapkes, Dreyson Byker, Victoria Arnold, Hattie Tinney, Casey Gordon, Rebecca Rynbrandt, Adrienne Goodstal, Cheryl Schuch, Erin Banchoff, Elizabeth Stoddard, Susan Cervantes, Alonda Trammell, Scott Orr</p> <p><u>Steering members absent with notification:</u> Lauren VanKeulen</p> <p><u>Steering members absent without notification:</u> none</p> <p><u>Community Members:</u> Wende Randall (ENTF), Vera Beech (Community Rebuilders), Tammy Britton (City of Grand Rapids), James Geisen (DHHS), Pavneet Banga (CoC Intern)</p> <p><u>Staff:</u> Courtney Myers-Keaton, Brianne Robach</p> | | |
| Time Convened: | 8:33AM | Time Adjourned: | 10:32AM |

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| Approval of Agenda | | | |
| Motion by: | Adrienne Goodstal | Support from: | Cheryl Schuch |
| Discussion | | | |
| Amendments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strike ENTF Relationship Recommendation; move to October agenda • Add Family Shelter Update (replace ENTF Relationship Recommendation) • Move MSHDA ESG Reallocation to the beginning (to ensure quorum) | | |
| Conclusion | All in favor, motion passes. | | |
| Approval of Minutes | | August 20, 2021 | |
| Motion by: | Tom Cottrell | Support from: | Rebecca Rynbrandt |
| 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: | Tom Cottrell |
| Discussion | | | |
| Amendments | None. | | |
| Conclusion | All in favor, motion passes. | | |
| MSHDA ESG Reallocation | | | |
| Discussion | | | |
| <p>The CoC had allocated \$128,834 of MSHDA ESG 2021-22 funds to Family Promise (FP) for emergency shelter motel stays. However, MSHDA denied this portion of the application stating that motel stays are not allowable. Motels were covered by ESG in the 2020-21 and CV allocations due to the pandemic. The CoC can shift ESG funding allocations to cover motels by reallocating ESG 21-22 funds from FP to an ESG-CV recipient (The Salvation Army or Community Rebuilders) and vice versa. Funding amounts and end dates would remain the same. Courtney asked for flexibility in determining which agency will be shifted to the 2021-22 funds as she needs to review the Financial Status Report</p> | | | |



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(FSR) at the end of the quarter to determine the best agency. Staff will be looking to ensure this situation does not happen again. Cheryl noted that this has been administrative burden on CoC staff and shelter providers. She feels that advocacy and conversation with MSHDA leadership are important.

Dreyson moved to reallocate \$128,834 of MSHDA ESG-CV funds to Family Promise and to reallocate \$128,834 of MSHDA ESG 21-22 funds, with the authority to determine a new subrecipient (The Salvation Army or Community Rebuilders) delegated to Courtney. Casey second. In favor: 13; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 2 (Cheryl Schuch & Victoria Arnold due to conflict of interest). Motion passes (Casey Gordon left the meeting)

| Action Items | Person Responsible | Deadline |
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Petitions and Communications

Discussion

None

CE Redesign Presentation

Discussion

Courtney shared that this work began a few years ago after Community Rebuilders received Day One funds. The CoC has since adopted the Community Housing Connect (CHC) tool into the Coordinated Entry (CE) system for use with family households. Recently, there has been a discussion around system redesign and a small workgroup has been meeting to recommend next steps. CE Committee recently recommended next steps be brought to Steering Council to affirm.

Courtney overviewed the current CE system and the opportunity to enhance the CE system using Community Housing Connect (CHC). This web-based tool automates CE processes and could be used to automate resource matching. The CHC design allows for quick implementation of changes and improves expanded entry, response time, and equity. Strengths-based, phased assessment and dynamic prioritization, which allows the community to determine how to best use limited resources, can be incorporated within the platform. Vera shared that CHC is currently used to inform the Family Functional Zero (FF0) by-name list (BNL) which lists all families in the community experiencing homelessness and their status after leaving the system. A data dashboard tracks this information and allows for system case-conferencing.

Through an enhanced system, consumers would meet with a Solutions Specialist, receive onboarding to the system, choose from resource options, and transition to housing. Providers who join CHC would put resources on the platform, review and accept referrals, and track and monitor outcomes. Vera indicated that CHC was created not to replace but to enhance CE. She feels this tool removes barriers to increase flow and timely data reporting and allows for collective impact work. Victoria Sluga supported this shared system as it would help increase transparency and visibility across partners.



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In order to implement an enhanced system, roles and funding would need to change. Changing roles would allow agencies to focus on their areas of strength. Committed funding may need to be shifted and additional funding will be needed to implement and support the system. Next steps include developing prioritization processes and governance structure across populations and identifying resources to support data analysis personnel. For individual implementation, common assessment questions would need to be developed for each population followed by onboarding and training.

The goal is to launch expanded system in April of 2022. From there, adjustments can be made based on the data coming into the system. In the meantime, Coordinated Entry Committee will discuss resource development and develop a timeline for implementation for all subpopulations. Cheryl shared that the workgroup believes it is important for Steering to support integration of the enhanced CE system, incentives for participation for non-federally funded programs, and support in efforts to align local and state funders to support this community-wide effort.

(Casey Gordon returned)

While workflows for all populations could be developed in the upcoming months, Vera noted that populations should be brought online only when sufficient resources are available to match demand. Current CE policies do not name a specific tool used for assessment, prioritization, and referral so they may not need to be changed. Incentives for providers would be included in conversations around funding for this enhanced system.

Rebecca motion to approve implementation of enhanced Coordinated Entry system wide (including development and adoption of CHC for use as a CE system tool for all sub populations, where appropriate) and to direct staff to develop an implementation plan in coordination with CE Committee, making changes to policies and documents as necessary based on the implementation plan. Adrienne second. All in favor, motion passes.

| Action Items | Person Responsible | Deadline |
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Isolation Update

Discussion

Courtney acknowledged and thanked those who continue to work to make isolation available for those unable to isolate safely on their own. The contract for the current isolation location ends at end of September but there continues to be a need for isolation due to the delta variant. Shelter providers, Kent County staff, and Courtney met earlier this week to discuss planning for isolation. Courtney expressed concern that the community has continued to rely on short-term planning for isolation. She feels that there is not clarity on the roles and responsibilities of shelter providers and County staff. Isolation spaces serve more than those experiencing homelessness. Adrienne stressed that the County should be the lead as is as is public health issue. Over the past 18 months, the medical community has referred several households unable to isolate at their current space and in need of short-term medical respite to isolation.



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Kent County has indicated that they are willing to support isolation financially and help identify a location, but not with staffing. Mel Trotter staff have provided support for those in isolation, which is taxing on staff, especially as the busy winter season is approaching. The Kent County Board of Commissioners would need to approve use of funds for isolation. Advocacy around the essential nature of isolation and need to approve funding for isolation with commissioners is needed. (Rebecca Rynbrandt left the meeting)

Cheryl echoed the need for this space for the community and noted that America Rescue Plan (ARP) funding is allowed for planning for isolation and quarantine, but shelter providers and CoC staff are not getting paid for time that is spent on long-term planning. Victoria Sluga feels that the conversation needs to include those who are staying outside. To her, this is a health issue and Kent County Health Department should be leading coordination. Moving forward, Courtney feels there needs to be conversation with the county around expected roles and responsibilities, a long-term plan for isolation in the future, and advocacy to the County Commission to approve.

Susan expressed frustration that members are not recognizing that the County is a governmental structure. To allocate funds they must garner buy-in and go through the proper channels. She noted that there are some funds to serve out-county households were offered to cover some expenses and stressed the need to work together on this issue. Courtney noted that the larger issue is that there is not a sustainable strategy and instead crisis planning continues to happen. Susan feels that to do this, the CoC needs to figure out how to work within County guidelines. Cheryl noted that the goal of the meeting was long-term planning before the immediate need arose. Mel Trotter and Kent County have worked through over 7 iterations of isolation but are back at a point of crisis. Conversations need to continue to get through the immediate need to sustainable, long-term planning.

Karen recognized that governmental entities do not always have the structure to allow for rapid response and thanked all for their work on this.

| Action Items | Person Responsible | Deadline |
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Family Shelter Status

Discussion

Cheryl shared that access to shelter for families is currently closed as they are trying to drawdown the number of rooms in use. Yesterday, MDHHS shared that ESP funds cannot be used to fund motels as of October 1, further limiting available funding. Limited funds are available through the City of Wyoming and Kent County (for out county). There is not the space and money available for families experiencing a housing crisis. The family provider group will be meeting on an emergency basis as available rooms are significantly lower amount than the average of 86 that were available in previous months. Family Promise has also been working with the AYA team to provide hotels for youth.

Courtney noted that the CHC dashboard has been showing an increasing number of households coming into system each month. With limited funds and space, she is concerned we will not be able to serve all families. On October 1, 29 rooms will be available for family shelter with that number



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increasing to 34-38 rooms after the beginning of 2022. 42 rooms would be available in late 2022 after construction if finished at Mel Trotter. There is a meeting next week to discuss the current state and whether community resources are available. Lack of funding and space have been discussed in the past few years and COVID provided an opportunity to use funding more flexibly, but these opportunities are ending. Cheryl shared that length of stays are increasing due to lack of housing and low turnover leads to less available beds. Casey shared that the schools have begun hearing from families who are staying outside as well.

Cheryl shared that motels have worked well as emergency space and sees narratives around motel shelter as expensive and not ideal are being recognized as untrue across the country. She would like to request that Steering develop a next step as a body. She suggested meetings with DHHS, MSHDA, and municipalities to put a long-term strategy in place.

Courtney has offered to update state leaders on the current status and planning efforts around family shelter. Cheryl asked to identify next steps to keep the conversation moving forward so the community does not continue to need to plan in an emergency. This will be added to the Executive Committee agenda so Cheryl and Lauren will bring a plan for next steps for long-term plan.

| Action Items | Person Responsible | Deadline |
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| Add Family Shelter Discussion to Executive Agenda | Brianne & Karen | |

Funding Review Committee Appointments

Discussion

There are two community members who are recommended for appointment to Funding Review Committee - Bill Weld-Wallis and Nola Carew. **Cheryl moved to appoint the two recommended members to Funding Review Committee, Casey second. All in favor, motion passes.**

Courtney noted that there may need to be an email vote to appoint additional members in the coming weeks.

| Action Items | Person Responsible | Deadline |
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Other Matters from Steering Council members

Discussion

Casey shared that around 350 Afghan individuals (though number may change) are expected to arrive in West Michigan. Resettlement agencies are asking those with extra living space to consider allowing people to use their spaces. She noted that this is going to take up units in transitional housing spaces and may end up impacting the system.

Public Comment on Any Item

Discussion

None.

Adjourn

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| Motion by: | Cheryl Schuch | Support from: | Tom Cottrell |
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