Facilitator:	Karen Tjapkes		
Meeting Attendees:	Karen Tjapkes (Legal Aid), LoRae Robinson (Covenant House), Mary Dyke (Family Life Center), Dan Baker (network180), Jennie Compagner (Hope Network), Gustavo Perez (HWMUW), Adrienne Goodstal (Mel Trotter), Lisa Cruden (Family Promise), Elizabeth Stoddard (Fair Housing Center), Hattie Tinney (GR Housing Commission), Erik Ryder (GR HOT), Lauren VanKuelen (AYA), Wende Randall (ENTF), Molly Perez (Kent County Health Department), Tom Cottrell (YWCA), Zenaida Jimenez (Safe Haven), Wafa Haddad (Noors Heaven), Victoria Arnold (The Salvation Army), Casey Gordon (Kent ISD), Dreyson Byker (Community Member), Dave Gantz (Pine Rest), Aaron Stewart, Sherrie Gillespie (KCCA), Rebecca Long (Dwelling Place), Jinnifer Ortquist (MSU Extension), Stephanie Brock-Knoper (City of Wyoming), Marissa Lee (Degage), James Schuen (Pine Rest Street Reach), Jeffrey King (Community Rebuilders), Patrick Buhay (Community Rebuilders), William Weld-Wallis (Community Member), Crystal Kitten (AYA), John Wynbeek (Genesis), Hilary Ortiz (HealthNet), Kaelin Hopson (VOA), Robb Munger, Lindsey Reames (GR Housing Commission), Leora Bain (GLIDE), Doug Booth (HealthNet), Tammy Yeomans (Community Member), Carolyn Allen (Covenant House), Catherine Gage (Disability Advocates), Anna Scott (Community Member), Fran Dalton (Garfield Park Neighborhood Association), Shelby DeVoe, Luke Day (MCAH) Staff: Courtney Myers-Keaton, Brianne Czyzio Robach		
Time Convened:	9:32	Time Adjourned:	10:58

Approval of Minutes		June 24, 2021	
Motion by:	Tom Cottrell	Support from:	Adrienne Goodstal
Discussion			
Amendments	None		
Conclusion	All in favor, motion passes.		
Approval of Consent Agenda			
Motion by:	Lauren VanKeulen	Support from:	Tom Cottrell
Discussion	A consent agenda is used when a group approves a set of documents without reviewing each one during the meeting.		
Amendments	None		
Conclusion	All in favor, motion passes.		
CERA (COVID Emergency Rental Assistance) Program		**Gustavo Perez**	
Discussion			
Gustavo Perez, CERA Program Manager, attended today to provide an update on the CERA (COVID Emergency Rental Assistance) program. Kent County was awarded just over $38M in funds for rent, utilities, and internet for renter households (HH) who are behind on rent or utilities, are below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) and have experienced a COVID hardship (including loss of income,			

increased expenses, or medical expenses). Those applying online can self-attest to a COVID hardship. Partners include KCCA, The Salvation Army, this Hispanic Center, and The SOURCE.

As of this morning, CERA has assisted just over 1,900 HH in Kent County, received just over 4,000 applications with a 72% approval rate. They anticipate receiving 4,000 more through December and are working to increase the number of applications received each month. Payments average just under $1M each week and $4M in assistance will be provided this month alone. MSHDA has provided a way to breakdown demographic data which has helped staff identify areas and populations where increased outreach is needed.

Gustavo anticipates that the first round of funds will be spent down by March. After this is spent down, the county will likely have another smaller second allocation. There is a federal requirement to spenddown first round in order to receive the second round of funds (and this round has not yet passed through the state legislature). Karen noted increased flexibility with federal requirements for the second round.

Once households complete a CERA application, they are assigned a case manager at one of the partner agencies who serves as the main point of contact. Currently, it takes an average of 42 days from applying to receive payment. Individuals who are denied receive referral and resources from partner agencies. Gustavo noted that some denials are due to lack of contact. These HH should go back in and reapply once contact is re-established. If landlords are unwilling to participate, funds can be paid directly to tenants. If tenant needs to move (health, domestic violence), staff are able to email MSHDA and get approval to use CERA to help with rent and deposit for another place.

Wafa noted concern that Arabic and Muslim populations were not included in the demographic data. Gustavo indicated that this data is limited by MSHDA parameters, so these populations would likely fall under "other or multiple races" in the data. CERA applications and case management staff are available in multiple languages. Karen noted that while the data and application languages are restricted by MSHDA, there has been advocacy by local to expand these options. Local promotional materials may be one way to increase accessibility as they are not limited by MSHDA.

If you have questions around CERA, please contact Gustavo at gperez@hwmuw.org.

CoC Program Competition Update	
Discussion	
Courtney shared that the CoC Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was recently released by HUD. Our community's Annual Renewal Demand (ARD) for this round was just over $7M which did include a cost-of-living increase. Staff will be sharing the timeline for local applications in the coming days. The application, which contains the CoC application, applications from local projects, and priority listing is due November 16. There are different local project types; the majority are renewal projects to maintain continuity of services. There is also an option for new projects if there is reallocation as well as bonus projects if additional funds are awarded to our community.	

Courtney overviewed the annual funding process: housing providers submit applications which are reviewed, scored, and ranked by Funding Review Committee. Their recommendation is submitted to Steering Council with time for providers to appeal their recommendation. Steering Council approves the ranking with all projects entered into tiers, with those in the second tier less likely to receive funding. More details available on local application process and timeline will be released by staff. In the interim, current CoC-funded providers are asked to hold September 16th at 9:00am for a meeting to discuss reallocation.

Wafa noted that the application process for federal funds has placed a high burden on their agency in the past. Courtney noted that the local application process would be simpler as CoC staff are responsible for entering much of the detailed information into the portal. Staff can provide support to agencies selected for funding if needed.

Fran asked what type of programs will be funded. They will fund rapid re-housing (RRH) through vouchers as well as Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). Scatter-site PSH uses permanent vouchers. She asked if there has been conversation around exploring funding sources to support more innovative options for different populations. Courtney indicated that the CoC wants to have more of these conversations, but the CoC Program funding is dictated by HUD. One example of innovative programming is a pilot by AYA Youth Collective with direct cash transfers for youth experiencing homelessness. Lauren VanKeulen shared that AYA found this as an equity-based solutions rooted in global research. AYA is partnering directly with agencies to distribute these funds to youth to use as they choose, recognizing that they are experts in their own lives. She noted the importance of ensuring our community is using HUD funds effectively and bringing in funds to support innovation.

If there are questions around the funding process or you would like more information, please contact Courtney (cmyers-keaton@hwmuw.org).

CoC Committees Overview	
Discussion	

Courtney overviewed the overall structure of the CoC and how its various committees are connected to the overall structure. The general membership delegates decision-making around policy to Steering Council. Committees include:
- Coordinated Entry Committee: the role of this group is to ensure good processes in place around access to the system, assessment, prioritization, and referral. Recently, there have been some changes in the family space. Staff hope to have a presentation at the October membership meeting around Community Housing Connect, a new web-based tool, and how it is being used in the family space. A smaller group is currently discussing what it would look like to update the design of the system, potentially with different processes for different populations.
- Data Analysis Committee: this group regularly review system data from HMIS. The group is revamping slightly and plans to begin to identify data points that can be communicated out to the community on a regular basis.
- Outreach Workgroup: this group is composed of staff who do outreach on a regular basis and discusses the coordination of services for those staying outside and in encampments.

- Population-specific committees focus on reaching functional zero for their population:
  - o Ending Veterans Homelessness Committee
  - o Family Functional Zero Workgroup
  - o Youth Committee
- Finance Committee: reviews our statement of activity and the CoC planning budget to better understand line items and make recommendations to Steering Council.
- Funding Review Committee: reviews funding applications and makes funding recommendations. This group is looking for additional members, Members should be from an agency that is not looking to apply for funding from the CoC and must be able to be objective, think critically, and comfortable with making recommendations to the community. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Courtney or Brianne
- Nominations Committee: responsible for helping develop slate of nominees for election and facilitate yearly elections.

Courtney noted that all meetings are being held over Zoom for now and anticipates that all larger committees will be virtual until 2022. To receive committee information or invites, contact Brianne (brobach@hwmuw.org).

Emergency Housing Vouchers	
Discussion	

Courtney shared that partners are making good progress with referrals and vouchers being issued. In our community, these vouchers were prioritized for those experiencing chronic homelessness. Due to influx of vouchers, prioritization was recently expanded slightly to include families with at least one child under 6 who have had two or more episodes of homelessness in the last 2 years. Both prioritizations were based on National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) recommendations.

Courtney noted that partners have done a great job of connecting across organizations to locate and connect with households who were pulled for a voucher. However, finding a unit and leasing up continues to be a challenge. She recognized and thanked partners for the amount of work done to build relationships with landlords to talk about vacancies and to encourage them to accept a voucher as a form of payment. In breakout groups, attendees discuss strategies and resources for landlord engagement. Report-out:
- Suggestion to create a centralized list of private landlords who are interested in participating in voucher programs.
- Lindsey noted that the Grand Rapids Housing Commission has found that Fair Market Rent (FMR) provided with a voucher is not aligning with private market rates. She recently attended a Rental Property Owners Association (RPOA) and heard that many landlords do not want to accept vouchers at FMR when can make more on private market. GRHC is considering appealing FMR once they have collected more data.

CoC Initiatives Update	
Discussion	

Family Functional Zero: Courtney noted that a more comprehensive update will be provided at the next meeting. A group has been meeting with the goal of reaching functional zero for families. A by-

name list (BNL) of all families experiencing homelessness has been established. Recently, the group also identified workgroups around priority focus areas. To get involved, complete the [Partnership Agreement form](#).

Built for Zero: Our community is part of a national cohort with Built for Zero working to reach functional zero for chronic homelessness. The planning team has been discussing processes for creating a quality BNL and is working to document outreach policy and practices. The CoC will have an intern starting soon who will be coordinating this initiative.

CoC Strategic Plan Update	
Discussion	
Courtney noted that the CoC is moving into the implementation phase of the plan. The final strategic plan narrative will be shared with CoC membership soon. Staff are also developing a strategy to share the plan with broader community partners. All content in the narrative is the same as what was shared during the kick-off meeting, the narrative just provides additional details around the process. An implementation team has been established for the current quarter and meeting regularly to review progress for this quarter's rocks/goals which can be found in the [CoC Scorecard](#). The Q3 rocks were develop based as the best first steps to implement the large, community agreed upon goals in strategic plan and highlighted in the [CoC Compass](#).	
Community Partner Announcements and Updates	
Discussion	
Wende shared that Michigan League for Public Policy and Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness (MCAH) host a Source of Income Protections group that is working on statewide advocacy. You can get involved by emailing Julie Cassidy at jcassiday@mlpp.org Luke shared about upcoming MCAH webinars. The first overviews new HMIS data field options for how agencies collect information on gender on Sept. 9 and 17 ([register here](#)). The second will share data from U of M around evictions during the pandemic as well as state and federal policies on Sept. 13 ([register here](#)). Wafa shared that she has spoken with many landlords around why they do not accept vouchers and has heard concerns around the lack of a long-term commitment with MSHDA as well as lack of trust with tenants.	
Adjourn	
Motion by:	Tom Cottrell	Support from:	Wende Randall