

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Interagency Council on Homelessness

Notes from Meeting of the Interagency Council on Homeless (ICH)

Date and Time: August 14, 2012 2:00pm – 3:30pm

Location: So Others May Eat (SOME) 70 O Street, NW Washington, DC

Approximate Attendance: 150

Welcome and Introductions

BB Otero, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, called the meeting to order.

Public Comment Period

- The first comment was received from a 63 yr-old woman who has an annual income that falls short of the \$19,000 income requirement to secure housing. She has been struggling to find a place to live for several months and currently lives in a month-to-month housing facility; she has visited several government organizations with no success and came to ICH to find out who she can talk to in order to get assistance.
- Another attendee complained that while America is assisting countries all over the world, homelessness remains a major issue in the District of Columbia.
- Another participant noted that the DOES Director has not been present at the last two ICH meetings; he went on to add that DOES is critical in helping to end homelessness. (Deputy Mayor Otero acknowledged the presence of DOES's Chief of Staff who attended on behalf of the director).

Summary of Pre Meeting Discussion

- Schroeder Stribling provided the summary of the pre-meeting, which consisted of a presentation on the development and implementation of the 2012-2013 Winter Plan. The pre-meeting also introduced DHS's plans for integrating the homeless services program with the TANF program. An energetic community discussion followed, which primarily focused on the community's interest in tying the Winter Plan to a more permanent strategic plan for homelessness.

ICH Committee Reports

Executive Committee – Scott McNeilly, Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless (WLCH) & David A. Berns, DC Department of Human Services (DHS)

- Office of Boards and Commissions released a slate of nominees for the ICH to the Council. There was hearing held by CM Graham's committee; however, the Council did not complete this process prior to going on recess so those new members won't become official members until the process is completed.
- The new members received an orientation on August 13, 2012.

Operations and Logistics Committee – Chapman Todd, Catholic Charities

- Continues to meet every 4th Wednesday of the month at 1pm - The August meeting has been cancelled and will resume in September.

Shelter Capacity Subcommittee – Michael Ferrell, Coalition for the Homeless

- Continues to meet regularly and will meet again on Thursday, August 16th at 9:30am at SOME 60 O St, NW.

Strategic Planning Committee – Polly Donaldson (THC) (in proxy for Kelly Sweeney McShane & Sakina Thompson)

- Working on some revisions to the strategic plan as they prepare the 2012-2013 workplan for ICH.
- Meet on the 4th Wednesday at of each month at 2pm at The Community Partnership.
- Working on recommendations for prioritization for PSH production committee.

Youth Subcommittee – Sue Marshall & Steve Baron

- In the process of reviewing the strategic plan to incorporate best practices as it relates to services for youth.
- Currently looking into doing a better count of youth when the Point in Time (PIT) count is conducted in 2013.
- Continues to collaborate with the DC Public School system for additional information on homeless youth.
- Currently exploring additional housing options for youth to be incorporated into this year's plan.
- There will be no meeting in August; The committee will reconvene on September 5th.

PSH Committee – Kimberly Black & John Hall

- Kimberly Black introduced the new chair of PSH committee , Director Kelly (DHCD)
- Held a meeting on August 8th.
- Good progress was made on the MOU; The committee plans to have a finalized MOU by the end of August.
- The next meetings will be on September 5th, Sept. 18th and Oct. 4th at DHCD at 2pm.
- The committee aims to have a Fall rollout for the RFPs.

DHS Update – David Berns

- There are 26 families currently residing in hotels; this number is down from 210 families; All of these families have filed a reasonable accommodations request.
- 153 units currently online at DC General, but 210 families are still in placement there.
- Currently tapping into their network of landlords and other organizations to get affordable housing units for families still living at DC General.
- DHS has finalized the selection criteria for families who will be placed in the local rent supplement program; the criteria will be published by the end of August; will work with the TCP to begin selecting the families and ensuring that at least 100 of those families are housed by Oct. 1.
- Budget for homeless services remains at \$100 million – it is the same as last year; Facing a shortfall of \$7 million budget shortfall in homeless services budget.
- DHS is looking at alternative ways to provide key services within the budget that it currently has.
- If additional funding is not secured by April 2013, severe cuts will have to be made to single adult services and possibly other ancillary services.
- There are approximately 200 families that have been determined as Priority 1 (P1) clients at the start of this year; DHS' Strong Families program staff have been assigned to visit these families and link them to services. Out of 30 families assessed this month, only 3 remained in P1 status, 17 of them were able to access resources to prevent them from becoming homeless. This assessment process will continue as part of the Winter Plan.

2012-2013 Winter Plan Presentation

- Chapman Todd and David Berns presented on the 2012-2013 Winter Plan, followed by a public comment/discussion of the plan.
- Copies of the Winter Plan were distributed at the meeting.
- www.ich.dc.gov provides in-color versions of the charts that were included in the printed copies of the Winter Plan.

Comments on Winter Plan (limited to the voting members of the ICH)

- One member commented against the idea of utilizing the hotels as an alternative to shelters. He suggested that the government refurbish some of the condemned buildings throughout the city and provide shelter for the homeless in the winter.
- Another member noted the significant improvements that were made to this year's winter plan; however, because the government has failed to provide sufficient funding for homeless services, DHS is forced to turn down families that are seeking shelter now. This reality is putting families at great risk now which will result in a large rush of families at the start of hypothermia season. Consequently, he will enter a vote against the plan.
- A representative from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education questioned the process by which families are placed in shelters. Her office was concerned by the number of calls they received from schools about children residing in shelters that were too far away, which was affecting their ability to get to school. The schools bear the financial burden of transporting these youth to and from the shelters. It was requested that the Superintendent's office be involved in the placement of families with school-aged children to avoid the problem this year.
- One participant urged the importance of getting the information out to the public and interacting more with the people so that they understand what services are available to them and what the city is trying to do to help them.
- Another participant is concerned that the plan will fall short again as it did last year. He urged more permanent solutions for homelessness and vowed to vote against the plan.
- Another participant acknowledged this plan as the most aggressive family support plan they have ever had.

Winter Plan Vote

- The Winter Plan was passed by each of the 3 categories of ICH (Community, Advocates/Formerly Homeless, Government), with a majority vote in favor.