

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Interagency Council on Homelessness

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

Date and Time: October 16, 2012 2:00pm – 3:30pm

Location: Thrive DC – 1525 Newton Street, NW

Approximate Attendance: 100 approximately

Welcome and Introductions

Allen Y. Lew, City Administrator, called the meeting to order.

Public Comment Period

- One man stated that he was pleased with the pre-meeting and the discussion of the failures and successes. He also invited everyone to attend a demonstration of homeless people in front of Wilson building on October 29th.
- A 25 year-old homeless woman originally from Nigeria stood up and stated that it makes no sense that a citizen of the US is homeless. She admitted to using drugs for 8 years and having lost her children, but she was asking for help to become a productive member of society.
- A homeless advocate addressed the issue of finding affordable and safe housing for homeless people around the city. Sometimes the landlords have been unwilling to cooperate and make the home suitable to live and keep up with maintenance of the properties. *The advocate was then referred to a government official to further assist her.*
- Another homeless man brought up the issue of public safety around the shelter facilities; there have been several acts of violence that took place over the past few months. The conditions are deteriorating and homeless citizens residing in these shelters deserve to feel safe.
- Another advocate mentioned that it is sad that the veterans of this country are homeless.
- A meeting attendee stated that the DC Government needs to focus more on affordable housing and really produce the housing that is sorely needed for the homeless citizens in DC.
- A homeless advocate mentioned that DC needs to do whatever it can to keep the homeless services day program open. The \$7 million homeless budget deficit is unfair especially since we are expecting a \$140 million surplus in the overall budget. “We must put the \$7million back into the budget or else we will have a serious public health crisis on our hands.”
- Another homeless man expressed the difficulty he is experiencing about getting enrolled in social service programs (eg. TANF) and the bureaucracy he deals with every time he tries to apply for services that he needs.

Summary of Pre Meeting Discussion

- Schroeder Stribling provided the summary of the pre-meeting, which focused on updates to the annual work plan. There was a spirited conversation regarding the updates, comments included: Encouragement to move from micro-solutions to macro-solutions with regard to affordable housing and jobs; Concern with regard to the numbers of people still on the DCHA waiting list; a need to focus more on the unmet needs of women and people who don't have special needs; a need to increase active and effective referrals to service programs.

ICH Committee Reports

Executive Committee – David A. Berns, DC Department of Human Services (DHS)

- Executive committee met week prior to set the agenda for the pre-meeting.
- All 20 ICH board nominees were confirmed by the DC Council.

Operations and Logistics Committee – Chapman Todd, Catholic Charities

- Winter Plan – the final version is up on the ICH website: www.ich.dc.gov. It will be moved to a better location soon.
- Trainings for people involved in the provision of services during the winter season were held on 10/24 and 10/25; hosted by TCP.
- Alert calls will take place during the colder winter months; there will be a 3pm daily assessment on the forecasted weather; people can be added to the notification email list by speaking to Darrell Cason: Darrell.cason3@dc.gov
- There will be a coordinated effort to plan for the continuation of homeless transportation and services during the inauguration period; the planning will commence in November.

Shelter Capacity Subcommittee – Michael Ferrell, Coalition for the Homeless

- Continue to meet monthly to discuss emergency shelter for men and women and low-barrier shelters.
- Forwarded recommendations to the Operations and Logistics Cmte for inclusion in the Winter Plan and they were accepted.
- Next meeting is scheduled for 10/11 at SOME at 9AM.

Annual Strategic Plan Update –Kelly Sweeney McShane, Schroeder Stribling, Tom Fredericksen, Sakina Thompson

2012 Baseline Data

- A handout was distributed to summarize this data.
- Some of the new guidelines for outcomes measurement: reducing length of homeless; reducing recidivism; increasing income in employment; preventing homelessness following institution exit or release; reducing families who become homeless through eviction, etc. (There was an excerpt on the complete list of measure included in the handout)
- Overall goal is to understand what our baseline is against those outcomes and to see if we can move toward improving on those measures.
- Number of homeless households we are serving: 874 families served this year (up 50% from last year) Transitional housing: 459 families (down 13% from last year); Individuals in shelter: 9,100 men and women served (up 6%);

- Time people are homeless: For Individuals - 110 days in emergency shelter; 97 days for individuals in transitional shelter; For Families – 162 days in emergency shelter ; 464 days in transitional shelter (down from last year)
- Recidivism – In emergency shelters 5%-9% return rate; 20% of families in shelter have been in the system for a year or more. (see the handout for more details)
- Additional information is posted on the ICH website

FY2012 Work Plan Report

- Created a shorter summary version of the 2012 work plan review
- Reducing length of homelessness- the City has addressed twice the number that was projected for the 2012 plan
- # of units in the DHS PSH program has increased in 2012 to 1,123 units
- Connected with 5,000 families to employment services; 112 of those were self-identified as homeless
- 3,121 households received funding through ERAP and other services to prevent homelessness
- 90% housing retention rate in 2012

Draft Amendment to Strategic Plan

- There have been several evolutions to the plan over the years; there have been recommendations received with regard to amendments
- A draft will be presented at the next ICH meeting, along with the 2013 Annual Work Plan

Next Steps for FY13 and FY14

- All Agency Directors represented in the strategic plan should work with their staff to establish what their 2013 and 2014 goals are going to be

Youth Subcommittee – Sue Marshall & Steve Baron

- Did not meet the past month; previous month did a site visit in NE that served unaccompanied youth and parented youth between 18-24. The program was very impressive and had a good track record of getting young people employed and self-sufficient.
- Will meet again on the first Wednesday of November.
- The youth sub-committee is working on a new work plan that will involve better services for homeless youth.

PSH Committee – Kimberly Black King & Michael P. Kelly

- Since the last ICH meeting this committee has met twice; focused on the Consolidated RFP and updates to their need assessment.
- November 6th is the next PSH meeting; would like to meet in advance of 11/6 to discuss the need assessment.
- Consolidated RFP – will produce a greater opportunity to maximize available dollars to supply more housing for the Spring season; there will be no Fall and Winter RFP for PSH because the money will be consolidated into a Springtime RFP that will include federal dollars; the MOU for this will be finalized by the next meeting.

DHS Update – Fred Swan

- Hypothermia season prep – In full swing; new vehicles for the hotline; DPW has provided DHS with a ADA compliant vehicle for the Winter season; blankets have been delivered; DHS has new cards that will be given out that will include the new 33 N Street address for shelter services; Will be posting flyers up at the current VWFRC center to get people ready for the relocation. Will work with the Hotline to pick up people who may not have heard about the move. The actual move will take place sometime mid-November.
- Homeless Integration w/ TANF – Started Oct 1; Family Services staff, along with ESA staff on-site at VWFRC working with families who are coming in for services. Currently helping them to complete their assessment and Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP), Priority Status, etc.
- La Casa- a 45-unit permanent supportive housing development for men exclusively; the ground-breaking will be taking place soon; hoping to be operational by FY14.

SuperNOFA Update – Sue Marshall

- Chapman Todd and David Berns presented on the 2012-2013 Winter Plan, followed by public comment/discussion of the plan.
- Super Notice of Funding Availability (SuperNOFA) – involves over 50 organizations
- Just completed the preliminary application phase
- The ICH has been named the governing body of the application structure; several representatives of the taskforce were present at this meeting and made themselves known to the attendees
- Several working groups have been established to support this effort
- Going to have a facilitated focus group with consumers of the services we provide to ensure that the services continue to reflect the population's needs
- November 14th will be the next focus group session

Update on Family Housing Solutions Grant – Polly Donaldson/Kelly Sweeney McShane

- Now able to offer services that are filling the gap for the families that are receiving local rent supplement vouchers, as well as services under the re-housing program. This presents an opportunity for multiple agencies to collaborate with one another and provide comprehensive services for homeless families.
- Two full-time assessors have been hired to assess 500 families in the homeless system. The “SPDAT” tool has been implemented and the individuals have been trained to utilize this assessment tool.

Comprehensive Housing Strategy Taskforce Report

- 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.

Overview of Thrive DC

- Thrive DC provides crisis services for the homeless and other critical services for the homeless population.

Public Comments

- One advocate wanted to know if the facility at 801 is closing – Fred Swan assured her that it was not closing and he also paired her with one of his staff members to address her other concerns.
- One attendee pointed out that none of the homeless advocates in the room are a part of the taskforce of the SuperNOFA program. He also wanted to know how many people are on the DCHA waiting list; the answer is 67,000 people on the waiting list currently.
- One attendee challenged the ICH members to go to the service centers and speak to the customers directly to see what their needs are and get them connected to the help they need.