

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH)

Housing Solutions Committee
Meeting Summary

Date: Monday, February 22, 2021

Time: 2:00 PM

Location: Conference Call

Meeting Participants:

Director Polly Donaldson, DHCD, Co-chair	Richard Livingstone, DHCD
Shellon Fraser, CSH Co-chair	Melissa Millar, Community of Hope
Kristy Greenwalt, CH	Blaise Rastello, Gilbane
Lindsay Curtin, ICH	Nechama Masliansky, SOME
Sarah Malala, Jaydot	Robert Warren, People for Fairness
Dexter Price, TCP	Sarra Mohamed, William C Smith Co.
Sara Cartmill, Community of Hope	Tracy Cecil, Dantes Partners
Anna Fogel, DHS	Hammere Gebreyes, DCHA
Reginald Black, People for Fairness	Holly Dennison Chase, LIIF
Colleen Connor, Housing Up	Lara Pukatch, Miriam's Kitchen
Danilo Pelletiere, DHCD	Mary Ann Floto, United Way
Emily Near, Legal Aid	Lynn Amano, Friendship Place
Erin Wilson, DHCD	Bruce Finland, MED Developers
Adam Kent, LISC	Jennifer McLaughlin, Advocate
Aaron Ford, ICH	Julia Moran Morton, SOME
Brit Ruffin, Legal Clinic for the Homeless	Amanda Chesney, Catholic Charities
Chapman Todd, Jaydot	Christian Howard, DHS
Lyn Williams, Wanda Alston Foundation	Kate Coventry, DCFPI
Melanie Stern, LISC	Kris Sutton, DHS
Moha Thakur, National Housing Trust	Tania Mortensen, DHS
Neal Drobenare, NHP Foundation	Sharlene Castle, Jaydot
Leslie Steen, Wesley Housing	

Agenda:

1. D.C. Government Agency Updates (DHCD, DHS, DCHA)
2. Permanent Supportive Housing Task Group Update
3. Rent Assistance Updates & Discussion
4. Housing Solutions Work Plan
5. Announcements

Meeting Summary:

1. DC Government Agency Updates

DHCD

- December relief plan allocated \$200M federal dollars to DC; Treasury Department [released guidelines](#) this afternoon which will help with final design pieces of rental assistance programs; Sixty-five percent of this needs to be expended by September 30, 2021, the end of the current fiscal year
- The Mayor has created a Rental Housing Strike Force: members appointed in February, meetings held every Friday through mid-March, when recommendations will be made to Mayor about the rental housing market; meetings are open to public, details to participate can be found on DHCD website
- DHCD staff is currently preparing the proposed FY2022 budget; the stimulus package before Congress has the District receiving a state share of aid, which will be significant; receipt of additional federal funds will impact local budgets
- \$38.8M in Section 108 funding from HUD has been awarded; coupled with 4% floor, this funding will enable DHCD staff to stretch HPTF funding
- Some FY 2022 scheduled closings can be pushed up, other projects that were on the waitlist may be reconsidered to move forward with underwriting
- Updated PSH pipeline report will be shared with the email distribution list as a follow up to this meeting

DHS

- Working closely with DHCD on rental assistance and DCHA on lease up timelines and
- Housing placement updates from PEP-V sites: 21% of 2020 PSH vouchers (106) were matched to clients in PEP-V, 131 clients in PEP-V matched with 2021 vouchers; 154 PEP-V clients approved by DCHA in total
- Average length of time for eligibility review of PEP-V clients 30 days and then several weeks for lease-up approval

DCHA

- Working with DHS and DHCD on project-based buildings
- Working through the projects that have been awarded through the Consolidated RFP to be sure DCHA has operating subsidy needed to support LRSP
- PEP-V sprint allowed for collective review of lease-up process; could see pressure points and needed improvements that could be implemented; looking to scale lessons learned across project portfolio (e.g. expediting eligibility review process, more frequent use of self-certification)
- Timeline goal of leasing up within two weeks for PEP-V and 30 days for all others
- Working w/ DHS on a communication tool so service providers and DHS can see updates in real time on application status
- Workforce staffing changes taking place to ensure entire process works more smoothly (e.g. inspections can be scheduled quickly as well as lease-ups)
- Working on better tracking turnover vouchers

2. PSH Task Group Update

- The Team has gathered data on PSH process from predevelopment through construction completion directly from developers
- Report should be ready for the Housing Solutions March meeting

3. Rental Assistance Updates & Discussion

- CHAP expanded in last week to include housing providers (landlords can apply or refer tenants) as well as tenants; requires tenant data and information on income and impact of COVID as well as lease documentation; provision for rent arrears and coverage back to beginning of emergency.
- Still funding for ERAP available; only one provider close to using up allocated funding
- DMPED, DHCD, and DHS working together to walk through new rental assistance programs; tenants need to produce evidence of need (income loss) as well as documentation of rent arrearage; permits for forward paying of rent; landlord cannot apply without tenant involvement.
- To get funds out the door, will need to identify and bring in substantive communicative and outreach efforts; coronavirus.dc.gov/rent is the best resource for available funding streams.
- What is important to keep in mind as agencies implement new rental assistance programs?
 - How can we help assist re-house people? Program design needs to take into consideration that given deficit of affordable units, people have been forced to accept non-traditional units (hotel rooms, single rooms, etc); need to think about how to protect persons living in these non-traditional units, as opposed to just units that are registered as landlords
 - Families with ending FRSP subsidies are incurring significant debt to FRSP when they cannot afford their rental payments; not eligible for ERAP funding to bring these rental debts current; question if they are eligible for new program coming online
 - \$200M tied to specific Treasury Department restrictions and guidelines; question if these guidelines will reflect Biden/Harris administration goals
 - WASA is scheduled to begin its DC utility assistance program for low-income residents (and landlords); is there some similar effort underway with either PEPCO or Wash Gas? DHCD working with Wash Gas on possible arrear forgiveness program, more info to come on this question in future meeting.

4. Housing Solutions Annual Work Plan Roles & Responsibilities

- Discussion of Roles and Responsibilities for this year (see the attached PPT from the meeting with the list

5. Announcements

- The Task Group on intensive site based PSH is now based within ICH Medicaid work group; the Group is close to sharing something back with Housing Solutions Committee, will be at a future meeting.
- Shellon asked that any Committee member who is interested in seeing specific items covered in future Housing Solutions Committee meetings, please reach out directly.
- Calendar invites continue to come from Chapman for next meeting or two; look for reminder emails and updates from Shellon

Next scheduled meeting: Monday, March 22, 2021 at 2 PM; calendar invitation was previously circulated.