

## **Philadelphia Continuum of Care (CoC) Advisory Committee**

Monday, November 6, 2017, 9 – 11 am

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **Present Committee Members**

Leslie Archer – ACHIEVEability  
Habibah Smith – ACF/RHY/FYSB  
Brandon Trombetta – Bethesda Project  
Mark Jones – CATCH, Inc.  
Sarah Maguire – CCP  
Aimee Della Porta, Natalie Proud – Covenant House PA  
Syreeta Jones – Department of Human Services  
Sandra Guillory – Depaul USA  
Anne Marie Collins – Drueding Center  
Jason Miller, Krystle Okafor – Families Forward  
Quinzelle Bethea – Forget Me Knot Youth Services  
Margaret Triandafyllis – Free Library of Phila  
Terrine Anthony, S. Sok Sarom – FRP  
Marsha Cohen – Homeless Advocacy Project  
Carla Williams – Horizon House, Inc.  
Wesley Bryant – Men & Women for Human Excellence

Sterling Johnson – Mental Health Partnerships  
Brenda Dawson – PathWays PA  
Kelly Durand – People's Emergency Center  
Rachel Falkove – PIHN  
Rachel Yoder – Project HOME  
David Dunbeck – PHMC  
Jim Piasecki – RHD  
Susan Brotherton, Bruce Livingston – Salvation Army  
Richard McMillen – Sunday Breakfast  
Virginia Sims-Riley – UESF  
Shani Meacham – Valley Youth House  
Kathy Salerno – Veterans Multi-Service Center  
Robert Emberger – Whosoever Gospel Mission  
Nikki Drake – Women Against Abuse  
Joseph Hill-Coles – Youth Service Inc

#### **Absent Committee Members**

ACT UP  
The Attic Youth Center  
Broad Street Ministry  
Catholic Social Services  
Center City District  
Center for H.O.P.E.  
Dignity Housing  
Eddie's House  
Episcopal Community Services  
Gaudenzia  
Hahnemann Hospital  
HELP Philadelphia  
Homeless Assistance Fund, Inc.  
JEVS Human Services  
Juvenile Law Center

Lutheran Settlement House  
Pathways to Housing PA  
PCRC/TURN  
Philadelphia FIGHT  
Potter's House Mission  
Raise of Hope  
School District of Philadelphia  
The SHARE Food Program, Inc.  
The Sheller Family Foundation  
The Village of Arts and Humanities  
West Chester University  
Women of Excellence  
Women's Community Revitalization Project  
Youth Build Charter School  
Youth Transition Center

#### **Present Office of Homeless Services (OHS) Staff:**

Roberta Cancellier  
Kataney Couamin  
Leticia Devonish  
Sara Pagni  
Gina Ruggieri

Hillary Shayne  
Jessica Sones  
Gbolade Soneyin  
Leah Staub  
Lauren Whiteleigh

**Background Materials:** The following background materials were sent to Committee members on Monday, October 30, 2017: the meeting agenda; September 6th Meeting Minutes; Background for CoC HMIS Subcommittee Report: Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) and Data Quality Plan – Monitoring Highlights; a summary of 2018 Point-in-Time Count Plans; 2017 Point-in-Time Count Report; summaries of new CoC policies being put in place: *Standards for Providing Assistance under the Continuum of Care and Emergency Solutions Grant Programs, Coordinated Entry and Assessment-Based Housing Referral System (CEA-BHRS) Policies and Procedures Manual, Philadelphia Continuum of Care Nondiscrimination Policy*; and a one-pager on Philadelphia’s Coordinated Entry & Assessment-Based Housing Referral System (CEA-BHRS). Additionally, the email included a link to the full draft Nondiscrimination Policy. On Wednesday, November 1st, Committee members received another email with an updated full version of the *Written Standards*.

**Materials Distributed at Meeting:** Meeting agenda. During the discussion, each group received three copies of the questions on which to take notes.

**Materials to be Distributed with Minutes:** Meeting PowerPoint presentation.

**Welcome and Introductions:** Rachel Yoder (Advisory Committee Chair) began the meeting at 9:05 am with a welcome and introductions. The group broke up into small groups for community meetings.

**Approval of September 6th Meeting Minutes:** Habibah Sulyaman-Smith moved to approve the minutes of the September 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Anne Marie Collins seconded. The Committee unanimously approved the minutes.

**Report from CoC HMIS Subcommittee:** Brandon Trombetta from Bethesda Project reported on the first meeting of the newly revived CoC HMIS Subcommittee, which occurred on Wednesday, November 1st.

The first topic discussed, at some length, by the Subcommittee was the signed consent requirement in the new HMIS policies and procedures approved in September (effective October 1<sup>st</sup>). Providers need: (1) specific guidance on how to enter the data for these participants into the system without including identifying information; (2) suggested language to support why it is important for participants’ data to be shared. The Subcommittee also needs more information from providers about whether anyone is refusing consent and if so, how frequently.

The Subcommittee reviewed and discussed the Data Summary for the draft Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) submitted to HUD on 10/30. The draft indicated significant room for improvement in data quality. The OHS HMIS team sent spreadsheets to each OHS-contracted provider, detailing all data quality errors on elements included in the AHAR, accompanied by step-by-step instructions on how to resolve each error. Additionally, all OHS contracts for FY18 included a requirement to submit monthly data quality reports, which encourages providers to work with their data and fix their data-quality issues in real time.

Brandon and OHS staff briefly reviewed what the AHAR is: a report to Congress on the extent and nature of homelessness in the United States. Its elements include participants’: gender, age, race, ethnicity, disability status, veteran status, household size, household type, living arrangement prior to program entry, length of stay, destination at exit.

Advisory Committee members discussed what data is included—only from EH/SH/TH/PSH projects participating in HMIS, not prevention. Capturing data from intake when persons are turned away was suggested as a topic for a future HMIS Subcommittee meeting. Providers participating in the HMIS November Subcommittee meeting supported implementing the same data quality monitoring process

across the board – monthly submissions, whether or not a project is subject to an OHS contract, with quarterly progress reports to providers.

The HMIS Subcommittee welcomes new members who are working with HMIS in the field. The next meeting will follow final AHAR submission, to discuss the plan for implementing data quality monitoring for all HMIS projects. [Update: meeting has been re-scheduled for 10:30am on January 8<sup>th</sup>.]

**Voices of Youth Count Report:** Jessica Sones, OHS Youth System Coordinator, and Joseph Hill-Coles, System Navigator at Youth Services Inc and member of the Young Adult Leadership Committee (YALC), presented to the Advisory Committee about the Voices of Youth Count Report (VOYC) study conducted by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago to provide a broad and deep understanding of youth who are homeless or unstably housed, in advance of the report's release on November 15<sup>th</sup>.

This was a National Prevalence Study, using Gallup polling methodology to determine national prevalence estimates of youth homelessness & housing instability (ages 13-25). Philadelphia was one of twenty-two cities selected in the Summer of 2016 to be further examined with a [Youth Count, Brief Youth Surveys, and Provider Surveys](#). In five cities (including Philadelphia), researchers conducted [in-depth interviews](#) with youth who had experienced homelessness or housing instability.

Voices of Youth Count introduced a new methodology for point-in-time counts of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness (which we have continued after the study): young adults with experience with homelessness survey other young people about their experiences with homelessness. This methodology has increased accuracy of our count and provided a more thorough picture of youth homelessness. In total, 569 Philadelphia homeless & unstably housed youth ages 13 to 25 were identified on the night of the August 2016 Youth Count, 300 from the street count, 263 of whom participated in the brief survey, and 269 via HMIS data from their shelter/transitional housing provider. The Brief Surveys showed that LGBTQ youth, youth with prior system involvement (foster care, juvenile justice or criminal justice) and African American youth are over-represented within the population of youth experiencing homelessness.

Key Findings from In-Depth Interviews about trajectories and experiences of homelessness with 39 young people from Philadelphia:

- 75% of youth reported that their homelessness began between ages 13-18
- Most common reasons for onset of homelessness: Foster care, Family homelessness, Chronic Parent-Child Conflict, Parental Struggles – mental health and addiction
- 35% of youth experienced the death of a parent or caregiver
- “Homelessness is not an event”
- LGBTQ youth, foster youth, and justice involved youth had significantly higher-than-average dangerous/adverse experiences (abuse, discrimination, survival sex, trafficking) while experiencing homelessness.
- In Philadelphia, 97% of youth described some form of couch surfing while unstably housed.
- Youth often had to engage in risky behaviors while couch surfing in order to remain housed.

Locally, the YALC, Philly Homes 4 Youth, OHS, and others plan to use the release of VOYC to educate stakeholders and raise awareness about youth homelessness, and to move forward youth system goals, highlighting the need for a youth-friendly continuum of housing & services for young people, the need for family-based interventions for youth at risk of and experiencing homelessness, and the crucial role of schools in identifying youth at risk of and experiencing homelessness and connecting them with resources.

Jessica, Joseph, and Advisory Committee members were surprised by the minimal discussion of parenting youth in the Report. However, the HMIS data was only for unaccompanied youth, which undercounts the number of youth in the system by excluding the parents, and some speculate that parents are more likely to enter the system than unaccompanied youth.

**Strategic Planning:** Anne Marie Collins, Executive Director of Drueding Center and member of the Charrette Planning Subcommittee, reported on the Strategic Planning process to date and going forward.

The Philadelphia CoC, led by the Office of Homeless Services, is working with CSH (Corporation for Supportive Housing) to develop a strategic plan for our community's efforts to make experiences of homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. The plan's content will be based upon community input, and information will be gathered through a number of channels, including several input sessions, a needs assessment based on available data from multiple sources, and an in-person Charrette—a full-day gathering in December, that will bring together representatives of as many stakeholder groups as possible to develop recommendations that will form the backbone of the written Strategic Plan.

The plan will make clear our shared vision, mission, goals, and performance targets, and will be used by the community to direct activities and resources to address homelessness for all populations. We have had a very siloed approach. This process will bring different silos together and will be based on community input and engagement.

The Charrette Planning subcommittee is working to identify who should be at the Charrette. Because of limits to the number of possible participant, the subcommittee is working to ensure that all individuals invited to participate represent multiple systems/sectors/constituencies. Everyone who participates will be required to bring input to the table gathered from the constituencies that they represent, as well as to engage in additional prep for a common base understanding of the work to be done on that day.

The subcommittee will also be organizing a number of input sessions targeting different systems and constituencies and incorporating the feedback from the input sessions in a meaningful way on the day of the Charrette.

A question was raised about what new information we can gather that makes this process different and worth undertaking. Lauren Whitleigh, Director of CoC Planning, noted that our system has been operating without a map, without an overall vision into which different strategies fit and support each other. We do not necessarily need more information – we need to develop a full-system approach. This plan will promote a community-wide agenda for making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring that aligns efforts under one umbrella/ plan and uses clear, specific, measurable objectives and strategies to guide our community's collective efforts over the next five years. It will help us to map out the available resources and services to address the problem; the critical gaps in these resources and/or services; the opportunities to maximize, streamline, and target existing resources; and strategies for deepening collaboration between stakeholder groups and identifying and accessing additional resources and funding to fill the system gaps. One big goal of the process is to unify philanthropic interests and sort out what government dollars can and can't fund and where private foundations can fill gaps.

We will also use the planning process and the plan itself to help move the homeless services system toward fully implementing the guiding principles of our community's Coordinated Entry and Assessment-Based Housing Referral System (CEA-BHRS) and their related behaviors, which are:

- **Housing First** - households at-risk of or experiencing homelessness are housed quickly without preconditions or service participation requirements

- **Housing Focused** - assistance provided to households at-risk of or experiencing homelessness is focused on moving to and maintaining permanent housing
- **Prioritization** - assistance is prioritized based on vulnerability and severity of service needs to ensure households needing help the most receive it in a timely manner
- **Person-Centered** - a trauma-informed approach that is dignified, safe, and incorporates participant choice is utilized

The Advisory Committee broke up into groups, each focused on one of these principles, to discuss each of the following questions:

- What are the driving/ positive forces moving our system (prevention, outreach, shelter, transitional housing and permanent housing) toward embodying this guiding principle?
- What are the restraining forces, obstacles, and barriers to change that are keeping our system from embodying the guiding principle?
- What can our community do to bolster the driving/ supportive forces to overcome the restraining forces, obstacles, and barriers to our system embodying this guiding principle?

The discussions focused a great deal on the need for support if we are to transform our system to embody these principles. All groups discussed the need for education and training, of staff and partners at all levels, even providing “case management” for landlords (and about lacking the resources to do adequate training on their own).

The Advisory Committee members see that we have been moving in this direction as a system, but that we are far from reaching our goal. They had questions about what holding these principles means for their programs’ specializations and ensuring that we have appropriate assistance for differing needs, recognizing that we continue to lack adequate affordable housing or resources to assist all who need assistance with affording their rent. They are not sure how best to incentivize households to engage with services, though they are working on it, and want training to include both what trauma-informed care is and is not, as well as how to hold participants accountable. They raised questions about whether the principles may conflict with each other in some cases and whether funding requirements may conflict.

They noted that everyone experiences trauma and that staff members’ own adverse experiences may create mindsets that conflict with centering the participants’ experiences and responses to trauma, not to mention the challenge of letting go of the illusion of control. They were realistic about expecting confusion and possibly chaos during implementation of CEA-BHRS and general system transformation, needing encouragement for optimism and guidance for reporting success, and the growing importance of paying attention to impact measures and increasing communication with partners.

A fifth group discussed what additional principles we might want to guide our planning and visioning. The group did not want to add many official principles, as that could become burdensome and create rigidity when one of the group’s key values was flexibility, with constant reassessment informing continuous quality improvement. They emphasized that in applying any principles, we should be transparent with our data and our decision-making. They also thought cultural competency was an important thing to keep in mind.

**Updates:** Sara Pagni, Senior Project Manager , Coordinated Entry & Special Projects, reported that Coordinated Entry and Assessment-Based Housing Referral System (CEA-BHRS) Policies & Procedures were going to be disseminated on the day of the Advisory Committee meeting, with a link to a survey for feedback and a goal of CoC Board approval in early-mid December so that training can begin. Training will focus first on access/assessment, then focus later on receiving referrals, etc. Sara announced that

the Youth-designated Access Point contract has been awarded to Valley Youth House and the Attic Youth Center.

Leah Staub, CoC Board Program Manager, noted that background materials included a summary of the current plan for the January 2018 Point-in-Time Count and a summary of the [Written Standards](#) (with the full Standards sent later in the week) that the Board would be considering the following week, and that OHS was accepting any feedback anyone has on these materials.

Roberta Cancellier, Deputy for Housing Services, reported that Winter Initiative beds had started coming online on November 1st and that there would be a total of 423 Winter Initiative beds under contract with the Office of Homeless Services this year, including beds for families. She indicated that the full list would be shared with the minutes. It is as follows:

<i>Provider</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Beds</i>
Bethesda	Trinity	22
Gaudenzia	Hutchinson St	66
Gaudenzia	House of Passage	20
Prevention Point	Point of Refuge	10
Project HOME	1515 Fairmount lower level	10
Project HOME	St. Columba's	5
Project HOME	Women of Change	5
UAC/SELF	Philadelphia Nursing Home	40
Resources for Human Development	Fernwood East	Up to 70
Broad Street Ministry	315 Cafe	Up to 100
ODAAAT	Code Blue - 2432 W. Lehigh Street, 3rd Flr - Sanctuary	Up to 50 Code Blue Only
Horizon House	Navigation Center	25 (capacity expands from 50 to 75) Code Blue Only
<b>Total Winter Initiative beds with Homeless Services contracts</b>		<b>423 max</b>

Additional winter resources include:

<i>Provider</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Beds</i>
Project HOME	Kailo Haven	10
Bethesda	Old First Reform Church	30

Lauren Whitleigh, Director of CoC Planning, noted that the CoC Board was expected to approve the [Philadelphia Continuum of Care Nondiscrimination Policy](#) the following week, which draws directly from federal and local nondiscrimination and equal opportunity law. She highlighted the fact that under this policy, providers cannot not discriminate on the basis of gender, which means that programs that serve families with children must serve any family with a child, regardless of the gender of the head of household, and that programs serving only adults have to serve all adults, with a limited number of exceptions for shared sleeping or bathing facilities. She invited Advisory Committee members to join a workgroup of 10-15 providers to plan for implementation of the policy, propose solutions to anticipated challenges/obstacles, and inform the training and technical assistance materials being developed.

**Announcements:** Quinzelle Bethea announced that Forget Me Knot Youth Services has a drop-in center for youth that offers much of what used to be offered at YHEP, such as shower and laundry services.

**Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 11:03am.