Semi-Annual CoC Board & Committee Report

JANUARY 8, 2015

REPORT PERIOD: MAY-DECEMBER 2014
CoC BOARD

The Continuum of Care (CoC) Board is elected by the CoC Membership to be the CoC decision-making body. Current CoC Board members were appointed or elected into office at the May 2014 all-membership meeting. The Board began its work in the July Board meeting by staffing the CoC committees and adopting a governance structure, a bi-monthly meeting schedule, and the 2014-2015 work plan, which gives the board a structure throughout the year. The Board is also charged with approving funding recommendations and other initiatives seeking CoC support. Below is a summary of Board decisions from May to December of 2014. Board agendas, minutes, and meeting materials can all be found at www.ewashtenaw.org/coc.

MEETINGS

Board meetings are held every other month. Meetings held so far include:

- May 5th, 2014
- July 29th, 2014
- September 10, 2014
- November 12, 2014

THE NATIONAL CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS DATA USE AGREEMENT (DATA USE AGREEMENT)

The National Center on Homelessness among Veterans (the National Center) was hired by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to evaluate the VA’s policies and programs for serving homeless veterans. In addition to conducting a program evaluation and analysis, the National Center will collect data to explore the prevalence of homelessness and services utilization among Veterans. While the study itself will use de-identified data, the National Center will match Washtenaw County records with records at the VA. The CoC therefore needed to submit protected personal information (PPI) from the HMIS for that purpose and define the National Center as the “trusted party.” This would involve routinely submitting emergency shelter data and Supportive Services Veterans Families (SSVF) data.

Although evaluation is one of the permitted activities under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), this decision was carefully considered by the CoC Board. The CoC Board approved the Data Use Agreement and the inclusion of Washtenaw County HMIS data in the study conducted by the National Center in the July board meeting.

2014 EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT (ESG) FUNDING COMPETITION

Washtenaw County had the opportunity to apply for $467,130 in the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) grants funding competition through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). Per MSHDA mandate, this fund largely supports the county’s centralized intake, locally called Housing Access for Washtenaw County (HAWC). The $467,130 included an increase of $36,183 from the 2013-14 ESG award. Due to a short timeline and the fact that the Board did not meet in August when the application was due, the CoC Board gave the CoC Board Executive Committee the authority to approve on behalf of the Board the application and funding recommendations submitted by the Funding Review Team (FRT). This delegation of authority was approved at the September Board meeting.

The FRT made funding recommendations for fund allocations based on sub-grantee performance outcomes, data quality, fiscal management and proposed budget requests. Included in their recommendations was renewal funding for 2013-14 awarded agencies, as well as funding for a new centralized intake position specializing in Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) using the increased funding. This HCV Specialist position is a new MSHDA mandate to be implemented during the 2014-15 fiscal year. As delegated by the Board, the CoC Executive Committee
approved of funding allocations based on FRT recommendations on Monday, Aug 1, 2014. The full report and funding allocations can be viewed at www.ewashtenaw.org/coc.

**SUPPORTIVE HOUSING TAX CREDITS**

At the September meeting, the Board approved submission of a tax credit application for both the West Arbor Project, submitted by the Ann Arbor Housing Commission (AAHC), and for Arbordale Apartments, submitted by Avalon Housing. If awarded, the tax credits would make possible the re-syndication of the Arbordale Apartments supportive housing development in Ann Arbor. The tax credits would ensure ongoing affordability and the completion of necessary upgrades and renovation. The AAHC’s proposal to develop their N. Maple site includes a mix of rehab and new construction. The tax credits would allow AAHC to double their units to 46 and add much needed supportive housing to the community.

**2014 CONTINUUM OF CARE (COC) FUNDING COMPETITION**

Washtenaw County applied for $4,425,476 in renewal funds for the 2014 CoC Funding Competition, funded through the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). Washtenaw County also had the opportunity to apply for a bonus project of up to $655,626 for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for chronically homeless individuals and families. A Request for Proposal (RFP) process was completed and, after careful review of the applications by the FRT, Avalon Housing was selected to apply for this new PSH project. The FRT also looked closely at program outcomes for each renewal project, quality, and HUD fiscal management compliance in order to rate and rank renewal projects. The FRT submitted its funding recommendations for renewal projects and for the new PSH project to the Board for an electronic vote due to the application due date falling between scheduled Board meetings. Recommendations were approved by the Board electronically on October 20, 2014 and the report detailing the entire funding process was approved by the Board at the November Board meeting. The full funding process report and awarded projects can be found at www.ewashtenaw.org/coc.

**ZERO:2016**

At the November meeting, the CoC Board approved Washtenaw County’s application and implementation of the federal campaign Zero: 2016 to end veteran homelessness by the end of 2015 and chronic homelessness by the end of 2016. The Campaign is a follow-on to the successful 100,000 Homes campaign, both spearheaded by Community Solutions, a national non-profit based in New York City. After applying, Washtenaw County was selected as one of 69 communities to participate in the campaign across the county. Selected communities will receive technical assistance and training to accelerate their housing efforts from Community Solutions. Key initiative partners include Veterans Administration, Veterans Affairs, Washtenaw Housing Alliance, both Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Public Housing Authorities, Washtenaw County’s Office of Community and Economic Development, and numerous shelter, housing,, and human service agencies. The campaign will kick off with the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count on January 28th, 2015. During the PIT Count, local volunteers will hit area streets and shelters to enumerate the local homeless population. In addition to counting homeless individuals, Washtenaw County will be integrating an evidence-based survey into that count to identify all its homeless residents and determine the best available resources and housing options to end their homelessness. More information about the campaign and how to be involved can be found at www.ewashtenaw.org/coc.
CoC COMMITTEES

FUNDING REVIEW TEAM (FRT)

As stated above, the FRT completed both the CoC and ESG 2014 funding competitions by reviewing program outcomes, compliance, and data quality in order to make funding recommendations to the CoC Board. Read above for more details or visit our website for detailed report.

While the FRT will not have any review responsibilities until the next funding rounds for ESG and CoC funding in 2015, the FRT is still in need of 1 to 3 additional members. Staff is actively working with current members as well as the CoC Board to identify candidates. Candidates cannot have a conflict of interest with ESG and/or CoC funds and programs (e.g. cannot be part of an agency that receives CoC and/or ESG funds). Any interested individuals should contact Laura Urteaga-Fuentes at urteagal@ewashtenaw.org or 734.544.5302.

MEMBERS:

Jean Carlberg (community member), Sarah Stanton (Habitat for Humanity), Andrea Plevek (OCED), Laura Urteaga-Fuentes (OCED)

MEETINGS:

Meetings are scheduled as needed once the Notice of Funding Award (NOFA) is released for each funding competition. Meetings held during the May-December 2014 time period include:

- August 1st, 2014
- August 4th, 2014
- October 8th, 2014
- October 15th, 2014
- November 20th, 2014

DATA & PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT COMMITTEE (DPMC)

The DPMC seeks to ensure local compliance with HUD Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) data standards, improve agency and community-wide data quality, as well as use HMIS data to inform CoC program/system design and measure progress on community goals and plans to end homelessness. After recruiting interested community members, the DPMC had their first meeting in September 2014. The DPMC has been preparing for three significant data projects: the Zero:2016 campaign, the upcoming 2015 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, and the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR). Because the majority of the work for two of the three projects will not begin until January 2015, meetings in fall 2014 focused on necessary preparatory work, including introductions to the HMIS data management system and the AHAR process. The committee will continue to meet bi-monthly through 2015.

MEMBERS:

Mercedes Brown (OCED), Nicole Adelman (IHN), Marla Conkin (Salvation Army), Ellen Schulmeister (SAWC), Allie Schachter (Ozone House), Greg Pordon (DHS), Marci Scalera (CMHPSM), Barbara Niess-May (SafeHouse), Misty Henderson (MAP), Andrea Plevek (OCED), Laura Urteaga-Fuentes (OCED), Emily Wilson (OCED intern)

MEETINGS:

Meetings held every other month. Meetings held so far include:

- September 18th, 2014
- November 20th, 2014
- January 22nd, 2014
The HAWC Oversight & Evaluation Committee’s responsibility is to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of our centralized intake, Housing Access of Washtenaw County. At their July meeting, they provided feedback on evaluation survey questions and implementation protocol for two HAWC service evaluations. The first evaluation was an electronic survey of community service providers’ perceptions of HAWC service delivery. The second was a “secret shopper” evaluation to provide insights from a client perspective through scripted service calls to the HAWC call center.

At their October meeting, the committee reviewed the results from both evaluations and provided recommendations for improvement, which are outlined below. Based on evaluation results, the committee has made the following recommendations to HAWC leadership and staff:

- Share data with the committee on how many people called in to HAWC and length of phone wait times so the committee can review this against community perceptions revealed in the evaluations.
- In an effort to be transparent and provide clear communication, the committee recommends that HAWC provide the following at each Operations Committee and Barrier Buster meeting:
  - Monthly funding updates to service providers to relate what type of funding is left and who is eligible. This can be provided through email in addition to sharing at meetings.
  - Giving regular HAWC updates at each meeting.
  - Quarterly data updates (including sharing with the CoC at-large).

HAWC has been working with OCED to create a template to share funding updates with the community. This will is currently being reviewed by the committee for feedback. The document will be used to share funding updates with service providers on a monthly basis. HAWC is also developing marketing materials to ensure both service providers and community members know how to access HAWC and what services are provided. These will be reviewed by the committee to ensure a consistent and accurate message is provided through these materials. Further, this committee will be reviewing HAWC Polices & Procedures at its upcoming March meeting, and will make recommendations to the CoC Board for approval on an annual basis (or more frequently as changes are needed).

MEMBERS:
Amanda Carlisle (WHA), Nicole Adelman (IHN), Paul Sher (LSSCM), Renee Smith (City of Ypsilanti), Marla Conkin (Salvation Army), Greg Pordon (DHS), Carole McCabe (Avalon), Ellen Schulmeister (SAWC), Tenetia Pulliam (Salvation Army), Wendy Hatem (RAAH), Andrea Plevek (OCED), Laura Urteaga-Fuentes (OCED)

MEETINGS
Meetings are held every other month or as needed. Meetings held so far include:

- July 11th, 2014
- October 1st, 2014
- December 3rd, 2014 (in-person meeting was cancelled and electronic feedback was provided as needed)