



INTERAGENCY COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS

Housing for all = A Stronger Montgomery

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/homelessness

HousingForAll@montgomerycountymd.gov

Bi-Monthly Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 11, 2019 | 3-6p

Rockville Memorial Library, 1st Fl Conference Rm, 21 Maryland Avenue, Rockville 20850

Members

(Present or Represented)

- Chesney, Amanda
- Crowel, Raymond
- Glass, Evan
- Habte, Asmara G.
- Harris, Amanda
- Hong, Christine (Rep. Shane Rock)
- Jansky, Lee (Rep. Louise Kaufmann)
- Johnson, Ebony (Vice Chair)**
- London, Sharan
- Miller, Eneshal
- Roynestad, Brian
- Rueben, Ruschelle
- Sinclair-Smith, Susan
- Talley, Angela
- Zucker, Craig

Members (Excused)

- Pinero, Roberto, Chair
- Guests**
- Allen, Tiffany
- Belk, Ralph D.
- Blackwell, Jennifer
- Brown, Marcus R.
- Castro-Conroy, Carmen
- Demarais, Frank
- Di Negro, Melissa
- Ezrin, Debbie
- Fasanelli, Antonia
- Fenster, Aaron
- Garcia, Rebecca
- Gies, Mary
- Grinnell, Jennifer
- Hall, Tori
- Jansky, Lee

- Killian, Stephanie
- Kouneski, Caroline
- Krakar, Haifa
- Lopes, Kecia
- Lowet, Peter
- Martin, Audrey
- Martin, Ruth
- Mattenia, Julie
- McMillan, Linda
- Mendez, John
- Okhominina, Omore
- Pontzer, Kathryn
- Swan, Fred
- Todd, Chapman
- Trombka, Aron
- Wylie, Debra

Staff

- Adhanom, Rozina
- Ball, Kim
- Branda, Ilana
- Dagne, Lelena
- George, Leslie
- Huggins, Gloria
- Sierra-Koscinski, Sharon
- Soni, Nili

Welcome | Introductions | Approval of the Minutes: Ebony Johnson

The meeting minutes for Thursday, July 11, 2019 were approved as written after the correction of the staff person representing Councilmember Evan Glass to Valeria Carranza.

Public Comments:

Kathlyn Pontzer from the Victim Services Advisory Board testified to ask for a 1-year transitional housing program with 3 months extension to accommodate 20 individuals (young female-headed households affected by domestic violence) to help achieve progress toward growth. In addition, asked for the following to serve:

1. Help break the cycle of violence and dependency
2. Deliver supportive case management services
3. Afford time to build needed life skills (e.g. education, GED, vocation, parenting)
4. Provide increased trauma recovery and empowerment, and
5. Officer a resolution of housing barriers (e.g. legal problems, identifying appropriate long-term housing)

Antonia Fasanelli, Executive Director of the Homeless Person Representative Project, announced that HPRP opened a legal clinic for homeless and unstably housed veterans in Gaithersburg. The clinic will run the fourth Tuesday of every month from 12-3 by appointment. In October will be handling VA disability benefits, pension benefits, criminal record expungements, all specifically for veterans.

2019 Continuum of Care (CoC) Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA): Linda McMillan and Stephanie Killian
Federal HUD funding comes through the County in a collaborate application and then the funding goes directly to the applicants.

The Montgomery County CoC is available for the following funding:

- Estimated ARD \$8,982,609
- Tier One: \$8,475,947
- Bonus : \$449,130
- DV Bonus: \$350,357
- CoC Planning. \$269,478

The CoC's funding request this year is over \$9,407,514, which is very exciting!

This year there were two applications related to domestic violence which the Allocation Committee unanimously determined did not pass the threshold of what HUD requires.

See Presentation Slides #14-18 for the Ranking Process Requirements, Reallocation Requirements and the Renewal and Bonus Projects details:

Rank	Organization	Project	Project Type	Grant Request
1	MC Coalition for the Homeless	Keys First	PSH	\$948,996
2	Housing Opportunities Commission	McKinney XIV	PSH	\$771,485
3	MC Coalition for the Homeless	Hope Housing	PSH	\$597,332
4	Pathways to Housing DC	Project Home	PSH	\$538,250
5	Catholic Charities	Rapid Rehousing	RRH	\$545,396
6	MC Coalition for the Homeless	Cordell	PSH	\$145,242
7	MC Coalition for the Homeless	Seneca	PSH	\$394,510
8	Interfaith Works	Interfaith Homes	PSH	\$345,441
9	MC Coalition for the Homeless	Home First 2	PSH	\$334,336
10	Housing Opportunities Commission	McKinney X	PSH	\$3,586,636
11	MC Coalition for the Homeless	Home First 1	PSH	\$168,285
12	National Center for Children and Families	Rapid Rehousing I and II	RRH	\$606,580
13	Stepping Stones	Rapid Rehousing	RRH	\$424,904

*Highlighted Projects are in Tier 2 | **NCCF Rapid Rehousing straddles Tier 1 and Tier 2 with \$99,918 in Tier 1

The majority of what we recommended is Permanent Supportive Housing but have had discussion around the gap in rapid rehousing program. That is why we want to have continued discussion around the efficiencies and effectiveness of the existing programs in case there is a way to appropriately reallocate money so we can move into program areas where there are gaps.

The short timeframe prevents engaging with applicants to clean up application and increase score.

The Allocation Committee discussed training for the applicants to improve the technical writing and the requirements. Plan to conduct a general debrief to project applicants to identify areas of strength and provide feedback on how to improve. There was also discussion about implementing mid-year performance evaluation. The Allocation Committee invites the providers to send suggestions or feedback to the Chief's office.

ACTION: The ICH unanimously voted to approve the ranking as presented by the Allocation Committee. Organizations with Commissioners that submitted applications recused themselves from the vote were Amanda Chesney, Susie Sinclair-Smith and Shane Rock.

Update on the ICH Restructure: Amanda Harris

Implementation Plan:

1. Operationalized the new Code of Conduct, including distributing and collecting Annual Conflict of Interest forms
2. Working with Council to update the statutory language related to the ICH (Evan Glass shared that the process is underway and he is working with Council staff and attorneys)
3. Revamp existing committees to update committee descriptions, review and select officers and members, and update workplans, as applicable (ensuring there is a chair, co-chair and a secretary)
4. Operationalize the new People’s Committee and the Funding and Partnership Committee (made up of people with lived experience).
5. Create standard tools for the ICH and Committee meetings to assist in meeting planning and documentation

Refer to Presentation Slides #22-25 for detail on the ICH restructure.

Changes in the statute are largely related to membership and creating more flexibility to have the opportunity to bring in other partners depending on our primary initiative. For members who will no longer have a standing place on the commission, the changes will be mapped out and they will be slowly rotated.

Update on the Strategy and Planning Committee: Fred Swan

The Committee started the process of creating the new Strategic Plan back in January. Fred thanked all who participated on the Committee and subcommittees. The Committee has made progress and has developed the vision, mission, bold goals, values, strategies and action plan. (Refer to PowerPoint Slides #26-33 for details). At the next ICH meeting the Committee will seek ICH approval of the new Strategic Plan to End Homelessness. A Committee-wide meeting will be held in December where the Committee will share and launch the new Strategic Plan.

Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) Report on Rental Subsidy in Montgomery County: Aron Trombka and Tori Hall

The County Council asked the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) to prepare a report on the rent subsidy programs in Montgomery County and the populations served by these programs. This report inventories 29 rent subsidy programs administered in the County that provide rent subsidies (known as “housing assistance payments”) on behalf of households (individuals or families) who would be otherwise unable to obtain or retain permanent housing due to low income and/or a disabling condition. The inventory excludes short-term and emergency housing assistance programs, shelters, transitional housing, group homes, residential treatment programs, and affordable housing programs that do not provide housing assistance payments.

To view the complete report click on the link below:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2019%20Reports/Inventory-Rent-Subsidy-Programs.pdf>

Rental Assistance Program (RAP): Amanda Harris and Ilana Branda

Rental shallow subsidy program’s goal is to enable highly vulnerable residents to maintain housing. The RAP demographics are 47% Senior-led households and 96% of the RAP recipients receive the maximum benefit of \$200 per month.

Current program requires individuals and households to meet program eligibility criteria, such as age, income, disability, need and other requirements. The Eligible customers can receive \$50 to \$200 per month towards their rental costs.

Proposed changes are:

- Must be homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness, and meet one of the following conditions:
 - Senior (currently 62+) in household
 - At least one member of the household has a documented disability
- Program will be referral based through Coordinated Entry and Housing Stabilization
- Benefit increases from \$200 maximum to 25% of the average two-bedroom rent as published by DHCA (currently \$1,714 resulting in a benefit cap of \$428.50)
- Lowering income cap to 40% of AMI (currently only 8% of beneficiaries have income between 41-50% of AMI)

Immigration Executive Order: Raymond Crowel

On July 22, the County Executive issued an Executive Order referred to as Promoting Community Trust to address concerns from the immigration community and advocates about the County's participation and cooperation with immigration services to identify, detain, turn over and deport individuals. The County Executive's position is clear that aside from circumstances where we must comply with the law and turn over someone who has been charged with a criminal offense, we will not transfer any information to ICE.

There is community anxiety and confusion because many of our programs require collecting status information. The collection of information does not mean that the County will be using this to report individuals to ICE but the information is required to meet programs' eligibility criteria. The problem is arising that residents are choosing not to answer the status questions and putting their and their families eligibility for benefits and services at risk. The Department is meeting with the Executive and his staff to discuss this issue and is exploring ways to communicate that the community can trust our programs and answer the status questions without fear. In addition, looking at when and where status questions are being asked and eliminating the programs where the information is unnecessary.

Population-specific target for ending homelessness among all residents of Montgomery County: Chapman Todd and Nili Soni

Update on @HomeTogether (Families) Initiative (Goal: Reducing the length of time homeless):

Family homelessness is measured by length of time homeless. Goal: On average, most families should exit homelessness to permanent housing in less than 30 days. No family should experience homelessness for more than 120. As of July 31, 70 families were identified as homeless with 41% (29) being assigned and matched to a housing provider and awaiting lease up.

From August 2018-July 2019, 72% (354) number of families have been diverted from homelessness. The number of people in households experiencing homelessness for the first time is decreasing (see Slide #45).

For more details of the discussion See Presentation Slides 39-47.

Update on Inside (Not Outside) (Chronic) Initiative (Goal: Reducing the number of chronically homeless):

The County is in the sustaining mode when it comes to housing chronically homeless people and veterans. From total chronically homeless client housed, only 5% returned to the system, meaning 95% have not returned which is a success.

Update on Veteran Initiative (Goal: Maintaining a system to quickly place Veterans into permanent housing)

Number of permanent housing placements for Veterans from January 2016 to August 2019 is 156.

The Communication Committee will be exploring ways for the CoC to celebrate and measure the successes that the County has achieved in meeting our population-specific targets to end homelessness.

Adjournment