



INTERAGENCY COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS

Housing for all = A Stronger Montgomery

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/homelessness

HousingForAll@montgomerycountymd.gov

Virtual Zoom Webinar Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 6, 2022 | 3-5p

Present or represented

Bohorquez, Margarita (representing
Ruschelle Reuben)

Carranza, Valeria (representing Evan Glass)

Crowel, Raymond

Dickersin-Prokopp, Christopher

Goldman, Jeff (Chair)

Habte, Asmara

Hall, Courtney

Harris, Amanda

Hegel, Connor

Hidalgo, Manny

Hill, Terence

Johnson, Ebony (Vice Chair)

Kelly, Kathryn

Lewis, Robin

London, Sharan

Nigam, Aseem

Schiller, Jennifer (representing
Susie Sinclair-Smith)

Seidel, Stan

Sheth, Karishma

Tally, Angela

WELCOME | INTRODUCTIONS | REMARKS – Jeff Goldman, Chair

Jeff Goldman convened the meeting with introductions.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 2, 2022, MEETING NOTES – Ebony Johnson, Vice-chair

Stan Seidel motioned to approve the February 2nd minutes. *Karishma Sheth* seconded the motion. *Jennifer Schiller* abstained. Minutes were approved as written.

STATUS REPORT FROM THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AD HOC GROUP – Jasmine Moore, Streetwise Partner

Streetwise Partners is dedicated to dismantling structural inequality, building workforce equity, and closing the opportunity gap in today’s workforce through mentorship. Streetwise pares volunteers with mentees who are experiencing unemployment or under employment to provide mentees with skills, resources, access to networks that help to secure and maintain employment.

Facts about Streetwise Partners

- Founded in 1997 in New York City
- Serves three regions (New York City, Washington DC/Maryland/Virginia, and Michigan)
- Has a \$2 million budget
- Annually serve 650 mentees across all regions
- Has 2,000 volunteers broken into small teams
- Works with corporate partners

What Streetwise provides, who they serve and the impact:

- Mentees receive a 13-week soft skill training program followed by 9-months access to all the workshops, networking opportunities, staff, and mentors.
- Streetwise provides resources:
 - Transportation to the programs
 - Professional attire for mentees to go on interviews
 - Low cost and discount computers
- Streetwise serve adults (18 and older) who are actively seeking employment or an internship opportunity
- Participants must be proficient in English, eligible to work in the U.S., and have a high school diploma or equivalent.

- Impact of the Streetwise Program:
 - 85% of mentees graduate the program
 - 70% of mentees are employed within the first year with many doubling their income
 - Other mentees go on to pursue advanced training programs
 - Establish professional contacts and connections
 - Personal development and launching their career trajectory

Referrals can be made by reaching out to Jazmine Moore who is currently cultivating an interest list for the for the fall cycle. Jazmine’s email: jazmine@streetwisepartners.org.

Ebony Johnson enumerated the strategies of the ICH Workforce Development Ad-Hoc Committee:

- First step is to survey the homeless providers to gather information on employment needs
- Survey the clients to hear about employment needs from their perspective
- Build a resource list of agencies that can provide employment
- Reached out to:
 - Organizations like Streetwise Partners and Easter Seals to provide an overview of their services.
 - Agencies like the County Work Source Montgomery agency; and,
 - County Leadership regarding funding
- ICH members and provider were invited to join the Workforce Committee to provide input and assistance

Stan Seidel expressed that there are many resources to we are not taking advantage of for our clients. There are about 550 employment service providers that we could assess. Stan stated, “People don’t become homeless because they want to; but there are a lot of barriers that caused homelessness. We need to address the barriers, in particular employment.”

REVIEW OF HUD CONTINUUM OF CARE AWARDS AND THE FY23 COUNTY EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDED BUDGET – Amanda Harris, Chief, Services to End and Prevent Homelessness

HUD announced the CoC competition is complete, and Montgomery County received an increase in HUD funding of \$1.4 million which includes renewal projects and rapid rehousing projects. We are excited to have been awarded two bonus projects:

- *Interfaith Works* was awarded with a 10-bed permanent supportive housing project to serve men with significant somatic and behavioral health needs. One of the locations of the project will be next to our new Medical Respite Program.
- A Domestic Violence bonus was awarded to *National Center for Children and Families* to provide rapid rehousing for survivors of domestic violence

FY23 County Executives Recommended budget provides SEPH local funding from two sources:

1. County’s General Funds for FY23 over **\$41 million** which is a significant increase from the FY22 Budget (FY22 \$31 million) which will fund increases in rapid rehousing, rental assistance, and emergency shelter.
2. The Department of Housing and Community Affairs funding from the Montgomery Housing Initiative which amount to over **\$19 million**.

Total County funding to end and prevent homelessness is **\$61.4 million** which does not include any federal, state, or private grants. This is a **34% increase from FY22** and a **98% increase over the last 5 years**. The funding of local dollars shows the commitment that our community has in recognizing the importance of investing in housing and homeless services.

New Funding Highlights of the CE Recommendations:

SEPH Program Enhancements

\$700K for Centralized Intake and Diversion for Adult-only households
\$180K for Homeless Street Outreach
\$600K for Psych and Medical Services for Shelter
\$2M for Rapid Rehousing
\$3M for Rental Assistance Program

Other HHS Program Enhancement

\$2.6 for Service Consolidation HUBS
\$4M Food Insecurity
\$4.4M Assistance to Newcomers
\$950K for additional Adult Protective Services staff

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS YOUTH HOMELESSNESS – Amanda Harris

Amanda shared that the presentation will be divided into three sections:

1. Discussion of Data from HMIS
 - Note that data is not all encompassing but gives a limited picture of youths who have connected with the continuum
 - Many more youths are unstably housed, or couch surfing and their numbers are unknown.
 - Hopeful the new drop-in center will give more robust data on youths experiencing homelessness when the center is fully operational.
2. The Collaboration Council and National Center for Children and Youths will give an update on what is currently being done to serve youths experiencing homelessness
3. Discussion of a funding opportunities

Highlights of Data:

- The annual numbers of youths reporting to the homeless emergency services, street outreach and transitional housing have not had significant change
- Parenting youths between 2019 and 2021 have decreased slightly
- Race and ethnicity have not changed with 69% identifying as black or African American; 25% identifying as white
- The data trends show more females with children than men
- Many youths identifying as transgendered and non-binary.

Prior living situations of youth experiencing homelessness (top 4 living situations):

- 25.5% homeless situation—emergency shelter, hotel, or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher
- 18.1% staying or living with family members
- 17.1% staying with friends
- 13% living in places not meant for habitation (perhaps streets)
- Encouraging to note that:
 - Only 1.9% of youths experiencing homelessness come to the continuum from jail, prison, or juvenile detention facilities
 - Less than 4% of youths leaving foster care come into the continuum as homeless because of good solid partnerships in the County.

MoCo Reconnect Update – Shane Tate, Collaboration Council

Shane reported that the Youth Drop-in Center is officially open at 11319 Elkins Street, Wheaton. Programs are transitioning from virtual to in-person with hybrid options. The Center hours are Monday-Friday from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. (this summer will expand to extended hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays).

The center provides access to showers, laundry, food support, hot lunches, and dinners available at 12p and 4p, technology access as well as a space to feel safe and to associate. Some of the services provided are case

management, intake, positive youth development, and employment support. Additional enrichment services will be added including GED and internship programs.

Center staff receive extensive training on cultural and social identities to insure a welcoming and affirming environment for youths who join the center. Training assistance has come from our partners including SMYAL.

Highlights:

- Four property owners have committed to work with the County to house young people experiencing homelessness. Efforts to engaged other property owners to become part of the rehousing, emergency, or transitional solutions are ongoing.
- Outreach efforts are being made to encourage partners to refer young people to the center and services.
- Encouraging young people to join the Youth Action Board (YAB) and other committees to add their voice and perspective.
- Access to mental, behavioral, and cognitive health services will be available.
- Currently, HIV and STI medical services are being offered. Looking to build referral partnership for additional medical services
- Referrals are accepted through MoCo ReConnect website: www.mocoreconnect.org. Response within 24 hours

Shane encouraged ICH members and homeless providers to fill out the Youth Outreach Partnership Survey to assist the Collaboration Council gather data on youths experiencing homelessness:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdBg5RXRe9JXW3qefmnkynurnD9b1Kc_cm9v8JrwWqezn_GQ/viewform

National Center for Children and Families (NCCF) – O. Okhomina

NCCF partners with the Collaboration Council on the Youth Drop-in Center. NCCF provides:

- Dedicated team of professionals to the Drop-in Center including the case management teams
- Maintain a Youth Action Board (YAB) of 10 youth leaders. The youth group has led 15 community facing outreach events and disseminated 800 palm cards engaging 400 community youths.
- NCCF advises on design, policies, processes, and management
- NCCF collaborates with the DHHS and University of Maryland School of Social Work to participate in the Maryland Youth County to provide a qualitative and quantitative data on the number of youths experiencing homelessness in Montgomery County.
- Future Bound Traditional Housing Program (FTHP) has provided housing and supportive services to unaccompanied homeless and immigrant youth. To date, the FTHP has served 85 youths with an average length of stay of 1 year.

Funding Opportunity | HUD Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program – Amanda Harris

HUD has announced another round of the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program. There is \$72 million available for 25 communities. The purpose of the demonstration program is to develop a Coordinated Community Plan (CCP) to end and prevent youth homelessness. The minimum award is \$1 million and maximum award is \$15 million. There is an application process with a formular for scoring. HUD is currently looking at the percentage of youth in poverty and the fair market rent.

Montgomery County applied for the previous round, but we were not selected (scoring 73.97). The highest score was 97, lowest score 48 and median was 83.67. Our collaboration scores brought our score down.

- HUD was looking for applicants to speak clearly about their network and partnerships (juvenile justice systems, foster care, etc.). We need to strengthen those partnerships.
- In addition, we need to have clear strategies with hospitals, residential and rehab programs ensuring that they are not discharging youths into homelessness.

- HUD has a Youth Board and from their perspective our application needed more depth in description and clarity as to what is being done regarding youth homelessness.

Questions to the ICH - Should we apply for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program again? How should we further strengthen our application?

Courtney Hall asked is whether there is time to strengthen the collaboration with the hospitals and the juvenile justice system before the next application is due? *Amanda* stated that the application is due on June 28 which would give us time to sit down with our partners and compile what we have been doing. Very few youths experiencing homelessness are coming from the juvenile justice or foster care systems. There is positive work being done informally we need to formalize the work so it can be described in the application.

MOTION: *Sharan London* motioned that CoC apply again for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program. *Jennifer Schiller* seconded the motion. *Ebony Johnson* voted of descent. No abstentions.

DISCUSSION ON THE FUTURE OF EVICTION PREVENTION AND RENTAL ASSISTANCE – Ilana Branda, Deputy Chief, SEPH

Pre-pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally Funded Budget: \$4 million • Maximum Benefit per household \$3,250 Average Benefit per household \$2,200-2,500 • Engaged households with court summons, put-out notices <i>before</i> judgements or scheduled evictions • Short-term prevention case management (30-90 days) • Arrears only no prospective rent
During Pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally Funded Budget: \$4 million PLUS Federal and State Grants of \$130 million • Maximum Benefit per household \$12,000 Average Benefit per household \$10,500 (For households with income above 30% AMI) • Only engaged households with judgments or scheduled evictions • No prevention case management • Arrears and prospective rent (12 months arrears and up to 3 months prospective)

Questions to consider: When we return to the locally funded \$4 million budget, how do we handle the number of residents facing evictions and are at risk of homelessness? How does prevention fit into our goal of ending homelessness for all populations? How do we prioritize households for financial assistance based on limited resources?

- *Raymond Crowel* applauded the work of SEPH the last two years. SEPH has managed millions of dollars from the Department of Treasury and helped hundreds of households remain in their homes.
- *Courtney Hall* commented on the need to stress to elected officials that providing emergency shelter is significantly more expensive than rent relief. The average cost of a shelter bed is \$20,000 per person whereas the rent relief and prospective rent averaged \$10,000 per persons.
- *Jeff Goldman* suggested forming a workgroup to consider recommendations and to research the data.
- *Amanda Harris* commented that the County formed an Eviction Prevention Recovery Group that has looked at revitalization and recovery. The group consists of non-profits partners and landlords. ICH members joining this group would be helpful to share the perspective of the homeless continuum.
- *Amanda* also shared that only 8% of households receiving rent relief service have returned for housing stabilization services (a 92% success rate).
- *Aseem Nigam* commented that he learned from elected officials that the County has received the maximum amount in assistance in Federal and State dollars for rental assistance. It is important to consider what we can bring to the table to assist youths and others at risk or experiencing homelessness.

The following commissioners volunteered to join a workgroup to discuss the future of rental assistance: Courtney Hall, Jeff Goldman, Christopher Dickersin-Prokopp, and Terence Hill. Ilana will follow up with a meeting schedule.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- *Ilana Branda* announced that legislation sponsored by Senator Susan C. Lee and Delegate Vaughn Stewart passed that closed the loophole requiring only a cashier's check or money order to be presented to prevent an eviction. Members of the ICH, CoC and community testified in favor the legislation and the legislation passed as an emergency bill and is effective immediately.
- *Ralph Belk* Chair of the Racial Equity Workgroup is partnering with the Way Finding Partners to launch our first racial equity training. Racial Equity is one of the priorities in the ICH Strategic Plan. The first 4-hour training will start in May and is called "Let's talk about race." All were encouraged to register for the training.
- *Manny Hidalgo* announced that the Progress Place Neighborhood Group will be holding a Maryland Governor's Candidate Forum on May 24. Fourteen of the 15 candidates have confirmed. The topic will be mental health and how it affects vulnerable people in Maryland.
- *Amanda Harris* shared that the CoC is seeking applicates to join the Coordinated Entry (CE) Subcommittee. The CE system is how we prioritize people for placement and housing intervention. The deadline for applying has been extended to April 30 and Amanda encouraged folks to pass on the information to people with lived experience and front-line staff who work directly with people we serve.
- *Sharan London* reported that the Strategic Planning Committee has not met. Jeff and Sharan will meet to strategize on next steps and how to move forward post COVID. *Jeff Goldman* commented that an effective strategic plan needs to be revisited annually to adapt the plan to environmental changes and to also ensure the objectives being planned for and achieved
- *Amanda Harris* reemphasized that CoC coordinator position is vacant, so, the *extensive and robust* calendar and committee work will have to wait until that position is filled.

Adjournment and Next meeting: ICH Full Commission meeting Wednesday, June 1, at 3-5p on Zoom Webinar platform.