

Coordinated Entry Workgroup

9830 Patuxent Woods Drive Columbia, MD 21046

**Minutes of the August 1, 2018 Meeting**

9830 Patuxent Woods Drive, Room 346, Columbia, MD 21046

**Attendance:**

Department of Community Resources and Services Staff: Cara Baumgartner, Jennifer Corcoran, Charles Smith

Attendees: Jennifer Broderick, Shanika Cooper, Ayesha Holmes, Sara Smoley, Linda Zumbrun

**Meeting called to order** by Jennifer Corcoran at 2:05 pm

**Client Issue**

Though this committee no longer fills the role of the former Review Panel, client issues related to system placement will be addressed here.

Staff at Grassroots are advocating for an alternate placement for a client in The Residences at Leola Dorsey. This individual is having difficulty maintaining sobriety in his current setting, as alcohol use by other residents is triggering for him. He has a co-occurring mental health diagnosis; when he begins alcohol use he discontinues his psychotropic medication and can develop suicidal ideation. The Mobile Crisis Team has been called for him in the past six months. The client has made repeated attempts at being sober and has succeeded when not in an environment where other people were drinking. His history demonstrates that when he stays on his medication he is capable of functioning in his own apartment and attending college.

This individual cannot be transferred to the McKinney projects because the only openings require the household to meet the definition of chronic homelessness and he did not meet this definition prior to moving into Leola Dorsey. The Committee is being asked to consider allowing him to move to HSSP, but because this would set a system precedent, to also develop criteria for managing these requests in the future. A grievance procedure for appealing any denial of request to move would also be needed.

The Committee discussed various scenarios in which a household might want to move, such as addressing a behavioral health concern or other disability, a change in family size, or the fear of violence. The Committee decided any moves should be based on a need related to a disability, should require referral by a CSHS Case Manager, should be preceded by an attempt to stabilize the current placement through completion of a case conference with the relevant providers. Once the policy is in place, the individual currently being discussed can be transferred between projects.

**System Assessments**

CE requirements for the Assessment stage of the Coordinated Entry System focus on standardized processes and tools. Characteristics of a good tool are that it be valid, comprehensive, person centered, sensitive to client’s life experiences, Housing First, and user friendly for both client and assessor. The Committee has previously agreed on the use of the VI-SPDAT for households experiencing literal homelessness, but there is not currently a tool in place for households who are imminently homeless.

Research has shown that a targeting tool, while still imperfect, is better than individual worker judgment at predicting which households are most likely to lose housing. DCRS staff has reviewed research by Greer and by Shinn in New York City, and though demographically different, are proposing the use of the risk factors they identified as a basis for a tool to use in Howard County. The Committee began review of the risk factors and discussed the relative weighting of topics such as family composition and community reentry after an institutional stay as well as the absence of domestic violence as a factor. The Committee also discussed how some terms were defined or could be operationalized, and whether questions about involvement in the Child Welfare System are too invasive and/or would discourage households from seeking assistance or giving accurate information. Committee members will continue to review the proposed tool and it will be discussed further at the next meeting.

**Diversion**

While research has shown that traditional eviction prevention does not impact the overall incidence of homelessness in a jurisdiction, diversion can have a significant impact. While prevention serves households who are still in their own housing, diversion serves those who are presenting at shelter because they believe they do not have any other options. With time, the Committee will need to develop a picture of what diversion needs to look like in Howard County.

**Meeting adjourned** by Jennifer Corcoran at 3:35 pm.

Minutes submitted by Cara Baumgartner