



# Coordinated Entry Workgroup

9830 Patuxent Woods Drive • Columbia, MD 21046

## Minutes of the July 9, 2019 Meeting

9830 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia, MD 21046

### **Attendance:**

Department of Community Resources and Services Staff: Cara Baumgartner, Jennifer Corcoran, Elizabeth Van Oeveren

Attendees: Donna Blackwell, Karen Booth, Jen Broderick, Tifnie Criner, Bitia Dayhoff

The meeting began at 10:35 am.

The May and June minutes were approved with one amendment – that the June minutes reflect that the resident discussed for possible PSH transfer could go to either HSSP or McKinney, not just HSSP.

### PSH Transfer Request

The Leola Dorsey Case Manager has made a request for a second client to potentially transfer to another PSH project. A Doodle poll will be sent to find a time the committee can meet and VOA staff can attend.

### PEH Year One Action Plan

Work on the Year One Action Plan of the new Plan to End Homelessness is beginning, and the Committee is being asked to review Action Steps related to Coordinated Entry to determine what should be addressed in the first year (Year One Action Plan would start FY21. FY20 would be for planning and attempting to acquire funding). The Committee will subsequently identify what tasks are involved in carrying out those Action Steps. Work related to diversion, prevention, street outreach, discharge coordination, and the By-Name List has been identified for Year One, but this is likely excessive, especially given that the Committee also needs to finalize the policies and procedures document and review data in the Spring. Staff recommend that diversion be prioritized and that discharge coordination be delayed. Background on the Action Steps currently identified for Year One is as follows:

**Diversion** - Though the National Alliance to End Homelessness has developed a working definition, that definition is not yet well understood in our system. While HUD has not issued any guidance on the definition, we anticipate that over time they will adopt NAEH's work, and eventually require HMIS to track diversion activities. Diversion activities in our system are currently being implemented in a limited manner and are not being tracked. We will need to identify the specifics of how diversion will be implemented in Howard County, and obtain formal training for staff providing those activities.

**Prevention** – Several providers in the system and broader community engage in prevention activities that generally focus on eviction prevention. Research in the field initially focused on the need to target prevention resources so that funds did not go to households who would not have become homeless even without the help, and is now beginning to look at broader programs

**Street Outreach** – The system has had limited street outreach up until this point; we are hoping funding from the State will allow for a full-time position.

**Discharge Coordination** – Few households enter the system from institutional settings, though it is possible people are being discharged from institutions into homelessness outside of our awareness. DCRS staff and multiple Coalition committees will be involved in efforts to engage the various institutions in the

community – hospital, detention center, foster care, mental health facilities - to understand discharge policies and develop processes that prevent discharges to homelessness.

Prioritization Workgroup and By-Name List – These efforts are already underway and will continue by virtue of staff responsibilities.

The Committee was interested in gathering information on each of the potential Action Steps before determining which should be areas of focus for the Year One Action Plan. To begin, they would like to identify all the potential partners who would be involved.

#### Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures document

Previously, the Committee had agreed it was reasonable to posit that those households who had been unsheltered for extended periods of time were the group least likely to access assistance without special outreach. However, experience with the Prioritization Workgroup has revealed that this population is already making it onto the By-Name List. There was renewed discussion of which groups in the County are most in need of outreach, and Committee members shared their experience that non- or limited-English speakers and those who are undocumented immigrants are difficult to reach with services. It is unclear whether this is due to limited need for assistance or limited awareness of resources; FIRN and school system liaisons would be likely partners in reaching these populations. Additionally, unaccompanied youth are a vulnerable population that tends, in general, to have limited contact with helping systems.

#### System eligibility

In discussing how to adequately explain eligibility criteria to the community, the Committee discussed the timeline required for a household to be considered a County resident. There was significant concern about vulnerable households who have not met the six-month requirement; this was identified as a topic around which the provider community could advocate with County officials.

The meeting ended at 11:54 am.