



Interagency Council Meeting Summary

November 2, 2009

IAC Members Present:		IAC members absent:
Dennis Brown (WA State Dept of VA)	Marilyn Mason-Plunkett (Hopelink)	Humberto Alvarez (SKCCH/Solid Ground)
Tom Carr (City Attorneys Office)	David Okimoto (UWKC)	Karen Bergsvik (City of Renton)
Doreen Cato (First Place)	Alan Painter (City of Seattle HSD)	Rhonda Berry (City of Tukwila)
Bill Hallerman (AHA)	Adrienne Quinn (Seattle Office Hsg)	Michael Brown (Seattle Foundation)
Mike Heinisch (KYFS)	Michael Ramos (Church Council)	Lynn Davison (Common Ground)
Lynnette Hynden (City of Federal Way)	Marlena Sessions (WDC)	Charissa Fotinos (Public Health)
Barbara Langdon (EDVP)	Sue Sherbrooke (YWCA)	Bill Hobson (DESC)
Emily Leslie (City of Bellevue)	Nancy Sherman (CAC)	Kate Joncas (DSA)
Jackie MacLean (King County DCHS)	Tom Tierney (SHA)	Clark Kimerer (Seattle Police Dept.)
		Paul Lambros (PHG)
		Stephen Norman (KCHA)
		Mark Okazaki (Neighborhood House)
		Dave Ramsay (City of Kirkland)
		Faith Richie (Valley Cities)
		Kathleen Southwick (Crisis Clinic)
		Jim Theofelis (Mockingbird)
		Katherine Van Olst (DAJD)

Community Members Present:		
Joseph Adriano (City of Bellevue)	Melinda Giovengo (YouthCare)	Karen Williams (HDC)
Meghan Altimore (Hopelink)	Kristine Gullin (CEHKC)	Julie McFarland (Friends of Youth)
Someireh Amirfaiz (ReWA)	Laird Heia (CEHKC)	Rebekah McPhee (Victoria B.C.)
Sharon Anderson (City of Kirkland)	Harry Hoffman (HDC)	Katy Miller (KC DCHS)
Carole Antoncich (KC/DCHS)	Colleen Kelly (City of Redmond)	Sola Plumacher (Seattle / Safe Harbors)
Bill Block (CEHKC)	Sally Kinney (ITFH/LCTFH)	Cheryl Markham (KC DCHS)
Sinan Demirel (Roots)	Bill Kirlin-Hackett (ITFH)	
Deborah Doyle ((DSHS)	Debbi Knowles(KC/DCHS)	
John Gilvar (KC Mobile Medical Program)	Natalie Lente (Public Health – HCHN)	
	Dan McDougall-Treacy (Valley Cities)	

Welcome, and Introductions

Sue Sherbrooke, Interagency Council (IAC) co-chair opened the meeting. The September 14, 2009, meeting summary was accepted as presented.

Review of Governing Board, Consumer Advisory Council and Funders Group Meetings

CAC September Meeting Highlights

The September Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) meeting summary is attached. Nancy Sherman, CAC representative to the IAC shared that the CAC will host a Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Queer homeless population focus group in December. The Council agreed that the focus groups will be a mix of youth and adults to be held in a safe zone (Seattle University has graciously offered their space), and will be scheduled in the first two weeks of December.

Governing Board and Funders Group meeting details can be found in the attached meeting summaries provided in the IAC packet as well as on our website at www.cehkc.org.

Consent Agenda

Homeless Housing and Services Fund (HHSF), HB2163 and HB1359 Document Recording Fees

Katy Miller, KC Department of Community and Human Services, provided a review of the HHSF 2009 Progress Report that was recently presented to the King County Council and was distributed at the meeting. For those interested in additional hard copies of the report, please contact Kelli Larsen, kelli.larsen@kingcounty.gov. You are also able to view it online: www.kingcounty.gov/housing.

Highlights:

- Funds from HB2331, approved in 2009, will be added to the HHSF funds beginning in 2010.
- HHSF dollars leverage millions of other state, local and federal dollars to fund permanent housing with services.
- Through 2008, King County implemented contracts in the amount of \$12.2 million with 20 agencies for 29 programs.
- These funds have created 665 units of permanent housing for homeless households, coordinated and leveraged 178 Section 8 subsidies from the Seattle Housing Authority and King County Housing Authority, and enabled nonprofit service providers to place 754 households in permanent housing, with 92 percent of those households maintaining housing for at least one year.

Hansen Dam

Bill Block relayed information about the Hansen Dam Flood planning, specifically around sustaining people who are homeless in the Kent Valley. Bill, as part of the team overseeing the work in this area, conveyed his concern that it's been difficult to impress upon the Emergency Preparedness planners the importance of communicating to this population early and often about where staging areas will be. This population needs more than a day or two's warning that there is an impending flood. National reports that debrief our most recent natural disasters, concur with this need. When possible, please raise the alert to those involved in emergency management in your areas to provide information on staging areas now.

King County Family Homelessness Project (Gates Funded Initiative)

Debbi Knowles, KC DCHS and Meghan Altimore, Hopelink, presented information and answered questions on the King County Family Homelessness Project. The King County Family Homelessness Project work group includes: Humberto Alvarez, Solid Ground; Jason Johnson, City of Kent; Meghan Altimore, Hopelink; Andrea Akita, City of Seattle; Debbie Thiele, City of Seattle; Terri Yaffe, Childcare Resources; Ranita Jain, Building Changes; Nathan Buck, Neighborhood House; Bill Block, CEH; Janet Salm, Debbi Knowles and Rebekka Goldsmith, King County/DCHS.

To begin, Debbi explained that the Housing Stabilization model has been vetted through the CEH committees and others. They are currently vetting the plan to focus groups, with one planned this afternoon on the eastside.

The first stage of the King County Family Homelessness project is the landscape assessment, currently 100 pages long, which will be synthesized and widely distributed once it is complete. All the work is building on the Ten-Year plan strategies, drawing on current systems that are in place. They are now developing the strategic plan that identifies specific strategies for filling the gaps and enhancing the systems identified in the first phase. Once the Plan is approved by the Gates Foundation, additional resources will be made available to help pay for the costs associated with bringing about the improved system changes identified in the Plan.

Review of the Housing Stabilization Model

System Entry:

To begin, families enter the system through a common point of entry and assessment or through an array of community members as a result of outreach/prevention efforts. Stabilization services would be provided whether families come in through the common point of entry or through outreach/prevention efforts – before they are homeless.

Coordinated Common Point of Entry:

The plan is to use knowledgeable, well trained, culturally competent intake specialists to assess each family's housing and service needs to determine the level of housing crisis they are experiencing. Those who are determined to be at a low risk of homelessness are linked to the appropriate community and mainstream services for assistance and do not enter the housing stabilization system. Those who are

deemed at a high-risk of homelessness or are already homeless are quickly connected to an appropriate agency within the housing stabilization system for help.

The Funders Group Coordinated Entry for Families workgroup, which works closely with and shares workgroup members from the King County Family Homelessness workgroup, meets on a weekly basis and is pulling together the process flow and assessment tool for coordinated entry. The coordinated entry system will build on an existing infrastructure, like 211, where the initial intake assessment would occur. If enough “red flags” are raised in the initial 211 assessment, families will be set up with an appointment at a regionally considerate HUB, co-located in an existing agency, where another trained intake specialist will work with them through the next level of intake assessment.

Several Rapid-Re-housing demonstration projects funded by HPRP Stimulus funds from the County and City of Seattle and currently underway will use the newly developed assessment tool. Lessons learned from the use of the assessment tool with these projects will then be built into the final assessment tool for the King County Family Homelessness project.

The Funders Group Coordinated Entry for Families workgroup will provide a proposed final plan by the end of the year.

Housing Search and Stabilization Services Process:

All families, regardless of how they are assessed, are connected with a “housing stability” case manager working at one of the participating service agencies. This case manager works with the family to develop a plan for housing stabilization. Families that are at-risk of homelessness are provided with the appropriate level of assistance to remain housed or assisted to find a more stable housing situation. Families who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless are assisted to access non-time limited stable housing.

In these situations, “housing search” specialists may work with the case manager and family to perform housing search and other related duties – with the ultimate goal, regardless of magnitude of intervention, to help families stabilize their housing. Stable housing includes: subsidized housing with or without services, non-subsidized housing with or without services, and permanent supportive housing. Interim housing is also an option if it fits the specific needs of the family. Again, the goal is to have a flexible system that provides the support and services that are needed to stabilize a family.

Housing stability case management is responsive to each family’s needs and ebbs and flows during times of challenge and stability. It also connects families to additional community and mainstream support services that help them to maintain housing stability. Stable families that are seeking increased economic self-sufficiency are supported to connect with mainstream economic self-sufficiency services systems.

Service Provider Connection to the King County Family Homelessness Project

Meghan Altimore, Hopelink, and King County Family Homelessness Workgroup member, discussed her appreciation of the process, and the desire of the team to work with and build upon what systems and strategies work - not throw everything out and start anew. The coordinated entry piece of the puzzle is incredibly important, plus including the linkages between housing first, housing stability and economic stability. There are also challenges: for example, how to include these linkages for all populations and not just families; and how do we tie the funding requirements to the model.

Discussion

- Many families are currently staying housed by doubling up with families and friends. Once this plan is implemented, and the outreach efforts begin, will we have enough resources to support them?

Q: How does this system look at disproportionality?

A: The benefit of coordinated entry and having a unified placement list is that it allows you to designate where you want to live which allows people to stay in their communities.

Q: Have you come up with a definition of “family”?

A: At this point the family unit has a very broad definition to include partners and child/ren, parent(s) and child/ren, grandparent/other family member/children and more.

Q: What happens if we don't have the funding to provide the services? How does the model change with less funding?

A: We are developing a sequencing of prioritization of funding that looks at many possible funding scenarios/levels and prioritizes the need based on funding level.

HMIS

Alan and Sola gave a compliance review of “Selected Data Collected by Program” report; an update on where HMIS data is against the needs of McKinney; and suggested that agencies consider designating a Data Quality Manager in their agencies.

Compliance Status based on “Selected Data Collected by Program” report based on data input from January to September 24, 2009:

- 84% of Emergency Shelter
- 100% Safe Havens
- 84% Transitional Housing
- 60% of Permanent Supportive Housing data has been collected.

This is an enormous improvement over the last report.

In addition, the most recent partners meeting had 100 participants which show the continued commitment to the system. At this meeting, awards were presented to Solid Ground for “Best Data Improvement; Wellspring Family Services for “Best Data Quality” and the Compass Center for “The Best Problem Solver.” The “Percent of Selected Data Collected by Program” report is generated monthly and sent to agencies to review and validate. Agencies can now run this report themselves. Note that it includes demographic data only and there are some challenges around the Data Integration agency numbers that are currently being worked.

The 2008 Safe Harbors report is in its final review and will be available later this month.

McKinney/Data Quality Update

Reporting based upon data serves a number of useful purposes, all of which are dependent on the quality of the data included in the reporting database. As an example, the data noted on attachment #9 in the IAC packet includes information regarding homeless populations and Emergency Shelter services.

From this data which is based on information currently in the system, one can see there is a disconnect.

We believe that the number of Family households in Emergency Shelter should be higher than are being reported (14 households/48 clients). For those Families receiving Emergency Shelter, the data shows that the average stay is very high (Average = 288 days). This either means that Clients and Families are not being exited once they are no longer receiving Emergency Shelter services or, Families are staying in Emergency Shelter much longer than they should. In the latter case, it is important to understand what circumstances are causing such long stays in Emergency Shelter.

Though the percent of data collected is significantly improving, there is still a great deal of work to be done in the area of data quality.

Agency Data Quality Manager Request

Alan and Sola impressed upon the group the idea to designate a Data Quality Manager in their agencies and clearly define that person's role. The argument that agencies have little time and no money is real and felt; but the data quality problem is valid and needs to be managed. There are data entry problems that can be easily corrected with the right attention to detail and assessment of data entry progress. This is in part the role of Safe Harbors, but there is a strong need for agencies to own the level of oversight associated with HMIS data entry.

When entering data, often agencies are not attributing services applied so they don't show up. Entering services takes more time than entering demographic data.

Safe Harbors will be submitting data for the 2008-2009 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) report which is worth 2 bonus points towards the McKinney application. This report is a continuum wide assessment of data quality and will further identify data quality challenges.

Our data input volume is improving and there has been a steep increase in input – but we are not seeing our data quality improving across the board. We need to exit people out of the program. Safe Harbors will be working with agencies to make these improvements and agencies are encouraged to ask for assistance where needed.

Planning for Funding Expirations

Bill Block framed the discussion of process/priorities and decision making around funding expirations. Cheryl Markham, King County, Housing and Community Development reviewed the draft funding expiration table which highlights the complexity of the data gathering process – even to simply determine which fund sources should be included and which should not. The challenge is great and we will need to use all the time we have (approximately one year until the first set of funding decisions based on expirations/renewals, will be in front of us) with great efficiency in order to be appropriately prepared.

Discussion

Q: Who would do what?

A: The Funders Group would make the funding decisions.

- We need to take a much broader look at the impact of the funding decisions overall and how the dollars interrelate: section 8 vs. 2060 buy down vs. document recording fee. The MIDD process shows us how difficult this process is.
- Highlight the benefits to homeless veterans fed by the Veterans and Human Services Levy dollars.

The group determined that a timeline based on the seven steps Bill outlined needs to be developed, as well as a clear, complete picture of:

1. The range of services and types of housing we're talking about to get a complete picture of what is at risk
2. How various proposed strategies might affect those housing and services.

The seven steps outlined in "Potential Criteria for Funding Expiration/Renewals document:

1. Identify the relevant criteria for evaluating the desirability of continuing a strategy or project.
2. Create weighting decisions for the criteria.
3. Design a means for ensuring that people who understand the strategies and projects are involved in evaluating them.
4. "Test Drive" the evaluation process.
5. Revise as needed to address issues identified in the "test drive".
6. Apply the evaluation process.

7. Review results for anomalies and address.

Next Steps: Provide input to Bill Block.

Legislative Advocacy

The legislative breakfast was again, a great success. Attendees included 11 legislators: Jarrett, Kline, Chopp, Hunter, Kagi, Maxwell, Nelson, Orwall, Pederson, Springer and White; 4 mayors: Black Diamond, Snoqualmie, Medina, Mercer Island; 12 Governing Board members, 21 IAC members and 5 CAC members. The strong showing of legislators and our Board and Council members shows that even in these difficult economic times, people are invested in ending homelessness. Follow-up letters have been sent to all of the legislators and Governing Board members. Mike Heinisch suggested following up with the Mayors as well.

All concurred that the new Mayor and new Exec should be offered membership to the Governing Board.

The CEH Legislative Advocacy committee is interested in new members. If you are interested, let Laird Heia know. (laird.heia@kingcounty.gov, 206-263-9085).

January's Agenda:

We will have a youth provider panel discussion at January's IAC meeting.

Public Comment

- Someireh Amirfaiz, Refugee Women's Alliance stated that 29% of homeless individuals are not English speaking and wants to know how we are addressing this question. This homeless percentage is very high but the data is aggregate which makes it very difficult to understand.
- John Gilvar, Public Health, who manages the mobile medical program, supported Bill's earlier comments about the difficulty in communicating the need to inform the homeless population in the flood zone as early as possible. Next Tuesday there is a meeting with the King County emergency preparedness people to discuss these issues.
- Bill Kirilin-Hackett, Interfaith Task Force, said Senator Ed Murray has agreed to be a homeless advocate in the state legislature. He also raised the question of how to fund grass roots campaigns and also encouraged the IAC to revisit the discussion that started about a year ago, to look at the need for more shelters.
- Melinda Giovengo, YouthCare, raised awareness of the increase in youth homelessness across the nation by highlighting the 30% increase in youth homelessness statistic that was quoted in the *New York Times* article on Runaways.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45pm. Laird Heia, CEH Staff