

Interagency Council Meeting Summary

September 14, 2009

IAC Members Present: Humberto Alvarez (SKCCH/Solid Ground) Karen Bergsvik (City of Renton) Tom Carr (City Attorneys Office) Doreen Gato (First Place) Mark Dalton (DSHS – Belltown CSO) Bill Hallerman (AHA) Mike Heinisch (KYFS) Kate Joncas (DSA) Barbara Langdon (EDVP) Emily Leslie (City of Bellevue) Marilyn Mason-Plunkett (Hopelink) Mark Okazaki (Neighborhood House) David Okimoto (UWKC)		Alan Painter (City of Seattle HSD) Adrienne Quinn (Seattle Office Hsg) Michael Ramos (Church Council) Faith Richie (Valley Cities) Marlena Sessions (WDC) Sue Sherbrooke (YWCA) Nancy Sherman (CAC) Kathleen Southwick (Crisis Clinic) Jim Theofelis (Mockingbird) Tom Tierney (SHA) Christine VanderWerf (CAC) Katherine Van Olst (DAJD)	IAC members absent: Rhonda Berry (City of Tukwila) Dennis Brown (WA State Dept of VA) Michael Brown (Seattle Foundation) Lynn Davison (Common Ground) Charissa Fotinos (Public Health) Bill Hobson (DESC) Clark Kimerer (Seattle Police Dept.) Lynette Hynden (City of Federal Way) Paul Lambros (PHG) Stephen Norman (KCHA) Jackie MacLean (King County DCHS) Dave Ramsay (City of Kirkland)
Community Members Present: Joseph Adriano (City of Bellevue) Andrea Akita (Seattle HSD) Meghan Altimore (Hopelink) Sharon Anderson (City of Kirkland) Bill Block (CEHKC) Lorri Cox (S/KC Public Health) Gary Fuller (Renton Housing Authority) Kristine Gullin (CEHKC) Laird Heia (CEHKC)			

Welcome, Introductions and Consent Agenda

Sue Sherbrooke, Interagency Council (IAC) co-chair opened the meeting. The April and June meeting summaries were accepted as presented. Nancy Sherman and Lynette Hynden were unanimously approved for membership.

CAC June and July Meeting Highlights

The June and July Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) meeting summaries are attached. Highlights from the meetings, presented by Christine VanderWerf are as follows:

June:

- Nancy Sherman was voted as the CAC's recommendation for nomination to the IAC.
- One of the CAC members brought up an additional challenge for youth. Once a youth has achieved success by finding housing, they feel the loss of their support systems.
- There is the ongoing challenge of not being able to receive benefits BEFORE you land on the street.
- Peace on the Streets for Kids on the Streets (PSKS) had two deaths in June.

July:

- Members of the CAC held a focus group with immigrants and refugees hosted at ReWA. A full report will be available next month.

Christine VanderWerf resigns her position on the IAC and is grateful for the opportunity she has had to serve.

Governing Board (GB) June Highlights:

The June GB meeting summary is attached. Bill highlighted that the GB was given a presentation on the current McKinney funding challenges. The Governing Board then encouraged the Funders Group (FG) to make the difficult decisions on funding. There was a discussion around the role of the GB. In the area of Advocacy and endorsement, the group concluded that on local issues the more appropriate role is to "advocate for ending homelessness" and not formally advocate on local issues. The next question to put before the board is: "At what point of client progress does the homeless systems top its work?"

Action: Bill encouraged members of the IAC to call Bill directly if they would like to put forth challenging issues for discussion by the Board.

IAC June Retreat

Sue pointed the Council members to the one page summary of priorities recommended by the IAC at the June Retreat.

Action: Email Sue your recommendations on how to weight the priorities. The compilation of this information will then go to the GB.

McKinney-Vento Funding

The changes in McKinney scoring, and the “housing emphasis” will not affect us this year but will next and subsequent years. Based on what has been communicated thus far derived from the HEARTH Act of 2009 updates, HMIS performance data will receive greater emphasis each year.

As you know, based on the June IAC retreat discussion and others, several potential solutions were developed and reviewed in anticipation of the upcoming 2009 NOFA that included reallocation of funds, funding new projects by replacing McKinney funding in projects with other local fund sources e.g. MIDD Funding, and funding new projects by releasing/reallocating dollars from existing McKinney grants. After this project analysis was completed, HUD released early information about the upcoming NOFA that removed reallocation as an option for the 2009 competition. HUD reserved the option to allow reallocation in future competitions, so the work done in 2009 will be useful in future application cycles.

Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009

Some highlights:

- There's been an expansion in the definition of chronic homelessness to include all families with children and to allow some services to populations defined as homeless under definitions used by other federal statutes.
- There will be expanded performance measures and the HEARTH Act identifies specific performance expectations such as:
 - Reductions in the length of time persons are homeless
 - Repeat episodes of homelessness
 - Thoroughness in reaching homeless persons
 - Reductions in the number of homeless persons
 - Jobs and income growth

Discussion:

Q: What is the process for reviewing federal re-authorization?

A: The McKinney team would like to develop focus groups to review and evaluate the HUD regulations when they are released to brainstorm and analyze the best approach for submittal of a successful application.

However, we need to be sure that we don't have McKinney policy directing what we fund; but use our own criteria as well.

Action: The Seattle/King County McKinney team asks if IAC members would be interested in being part of focus groups to review and evaluate the HUD regulations as they'd like to pull the teams together in the November/December time frame.

Q: What is our target?

A: Because the requirements change from year to year, we are not entirely sure of our target, but anticipate achieving 52% of our funding allocation in housing.

Q: How is performance included in the evaluation process?

A: Performance is used throughout the process.

Q: How is the Funders Group part of the decision making process?

A: The Funders Group will be making the difficult funding decisions. It is anticipated that the process, though difficult, will be easier as a group, rather than as individuals, as the goals and priorities will be the same across funders.

HMIS:

Sara Levin, City of Seattle, outlined the purpose and scope of the HMIS report: 1) Review of the high level of data from the 2008 report (the final 2008 report will be out by the end of October); 2) Where we are in the implementation process; 3) Current challenges; 4) Q&A

Sola Plumacher reviewed the following:

2008 Report Data Highlights:

- In 2007 7,500 records were in the HMIS. In 2008, 12,963 unduplicated client records were pulled from over 23,000 records.
- 98% of original "Safe Harbors I" agencies are now entering data into the new system. Twenty-nine agencies and 132 programs are currently entering data into the new system, out of an expected 71 agencies and 315 programs.
- A large discrepancy to note that is currently being analyzed: in 2007, 1,575 individuals were listed as chronic, whereas the 2008 report counts 4,755.
- 44 of 48 programs from Data Integration agencies are linked in.
- The HMIS system is fully compliant for federal Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing program (HPRP) data collection and reporting requirements allowing the system to track the over \$7 million in stimulus funding to be spent over the next three years in King County to support those that are homeless or at risk of homelessness as a result of the recession.

Challenges:

Reporting:

- Agencies are struggling with the amount of time and energy needed to get trained and proficient in data entry. Safe Harbors staff provides ongoing support, but with agency staff turnover and other staff priorities, this continues to be a challenge.
- Training on how to download reports has not yet occurred for most agencies, so this key element of the system is currently not being used by most providers. Safe Harbors staff prioritized basic user training, and is now in the process of implementing training on available and ad hoc reports.
- Users have expressed frustration about various elements of the data entry process. Safe Harbors staff continually works to resolve data entry problems and system errors with the vendor, and are asking for agency feedback to address problems as quickly as possible.
- Data entry in HMIS is not the main business of agencies, yet it is taking a great deal of time for staff to comply with data collection requirements. Safe Harbors will continue to track this issue in an effort to ensure a user-friendly system. Funders will need to address this issue in future funding rounds as to allow for staffing costs related to data collection and reporting requirements.

McKinney Application:

- In order to improve the McKinney score regarding HMIS, consistent records need to be input throughout the year. HMIS experienced a significant drop-off of data input in May – once the system was switched to Safe Harbors II. It is imperative that data input remain consistent.
- It is expected that by October 2009 Safe Harbors will have at least 81% of shelter coverage, 73% of transitional coverage and 26% of permanent supportive housing coverage. Safe Harbors will submit 2008-2009 shelter data for the federal Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR). AHAR participation is worth two bonus points in the overall application.

Data Quality:

- Full and complete data is another area of concern. Safe Harbors understands the challenges to providers and agencies around the additional time required to use the system, but for HMIS to be an effective tool and provide accurate data, programs must emphasize the need to collect and enter data, not just on who was served but also what services were given and the outcomes of those services.

Coordinated entry/Data Integration:

- How this community can use Safe Harbors for coordinated entry continues to be a challenge and may require a potential shift in policy around data collection and management. It is critical that all potential avenues for data integration be explored if we are to create a strong and unified system for client screening and intake into housing programs.

Discussion:

Q: The data entry burden is widely significant. What about an electronic interface? Can this be looked at down the road?

A: There isn't an easy answer when you include our need for Data Integration and the HUD requirements but the discussion is always on the table in addition to the multitude of systems and competing reporting needs.

Q: What we are hearing is that Data Integration is going to be very challenging if not impossible. So, if that is the case, how are we to use Safe Harbors? What about reversing the system – to start with Safe Harbors and then move to one's own system. If Safe Harbors is just a data warehouse for McKinney, that's a different conversation.

Q: Will grant dollars be available to assist agencies with computer needs to satisfy the reporting requirements?

A: That will be determined on a case by case basis.

C: We need the reporting feature ASAP and recommend a priority be made to train people up. If it's not going to happen this year, please communicate that.

Q: With the new Safe Harbors, how do we track rental assistance completed so we're not overpaying?

A: There are no answers yet.

Action: The HMIS team is still creating/developing reports as the needs are so varied but SOLA will provide a timeline to the IAC on when the training plan will begin.

Funders Group Work Plan Reports:

Report highlights for each Funders Group Workplan report will be noted below. Full reports can be found in the Funders Group Work Plan Reports in the IAC packet of materials provided at the meeting or contact Laird.Heia@kingcounty.gov.

1. Homeless Housing Production and Funding Coordination

- The Production goal for this group is for approximately 300 development units to come on-line in 2009. The actual number of new production units by year end will be 344.
- The other production goal is to fund 150-200 additional development units for homeless individuals and families. The clear expectation is that through the fall NOFA that number will be achieved by December of 2009.

Discussion:

Regarding the systems change goals, the operating dollars (MIDD, document recording fees etc.) are coming up to their 5 year expiration. In light of this funding expiration, we need to evaluate the next steps.

2. Increase the number of existing units added to the homeless system

- Production Goal 1) Place 150 individuals through the Landlord Liaison Project (LLP). There have been 58 households placed in housing and 150 are expected to move in by the end of the year. In addition, to date, there are 61 landlords enrolled in the LLP, representing 92 properties. 24 service agency partners are enrolled. LLP recently reduced the two-year case management requirement from 2 years to one year.
- Production Goal 2) Add 250 new subsidies, including 100 with services supporting higher needs households. We anticipate funding at least 694 dedicated subsidies in 2009.

3. Coordinated Entry via Client Care Coordination for Chronically Homeless Adult Individuals

- Chronic homeless individuals will be moving into permanent supportive housing with coordinated entry via Client Care Coordination starting with LIHI's 75 unit McDermott Place and for chronic alcoholics transitioning into vacant units at AHA's 92 unit Wintonia.
- Work is continuing to develop the assessment tool with LIHI as the first test case.

4. Coordinated Entry for Families

- The goal is to implement a common method for families to access homeless services and for providers to quickly link families to the resources they need. In order to achieve this, the plan is to:
 - Define points of entry into the system, perhaps using regional hubs linked to the places at-risk and homeless families seeking help regularly go for assistance.
 - Develop and use a standardized, strengths-based, culturally appropriate screening and assessment protocols and tools by designated staff specifically trained in the intake process.
 - Provide consistent coordination among providers and systems for services and referrals.
 - Use the HMIS as the database for coordinated entry, piloting an open data system that allows multiple agencies to share data related to families; and an integrated system that provides intake workers with access to data from multiple sources, including DSHS, SKIES and DOE.

The planning process for coordinated entry for families will be completed later this year, providing for the realignment of policies, practices and resources for the family homelessness and housing system.

Comments: There is some frustration with the lack of inclusion of youth and young adult needs in these workplans.

Fund Expirations:

In light of the potential funding decisions the CEH Funders Group will need to make over the next few years related to funding expirations and renewals on cyclical funding, the discussion has begun around the need for developing a systematic process for establishing funding decision priorities. With this in mind, Bill Block reviewed the criteria of the rating tool used for prioritization of MIDD strategies to provide context for the discussion.

Cheryl Markham, HCD Program Manager, has been tasked with identifying expiring and time-limited fund sources, including state and federal projects, local time-limited funds and any other clearly time-limited grants. With that, she reviewed the capital project data gathered thus far which included State HGAP funding, Vets and Human Services Levy, HPRP ARRA and State 2060 buy-down projects. 2011 is the key turning point when many of these projects expire.

Discussion:

Q: Who is the decision maker?

A: The Funders Group will make recommendations to themselves, similar in process to the Combined NOFA. The fact that the IAC and FG have worked well as a team over time will significantly aid the process of making these difficult decisions.

- Sexual Assault and DV don't fit with the MIDD rating tool but we can benefit from the process they are going through. The MIDD process challenge was dollar distribution and implementation.
- IAC members would like to hear more about the debrief on the MIDD process.

Action: Bill will check in with the MIDD prioritization team and provide an update at the next IAC meeting.

Legislative Advocacy

The Legislative Breakfast will be held on Tuesday, October 6. CEH and the Governing Board are hosts of the breakfast however, we have increased sponsors of the breakfast to demonstrate the broader base of support and collaboration.

Sponsors this year are: Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness, Church Council of Greater Seattle, Washington State Coalition for the Homeless, Housing Development Consortium, and Building Changes.

In light of this broad collaboration, the sponsors developed an umbrella agenda that includes key focus areas that then allows the sponsors to spread their wings beneath it. Umbrella agenda items include: increasing the available stock of affordable and supported housing, coordinate and maintain housing and services, and prevention. CEH state legislative agenda items are: increase the housing trust fund, WFF/Housing Stability Fund, Prevention/Discharge/foster care, use existing funds more efficiently and provide local governments with the revenue tools they need. Details of each of these agendas plus the supporting one-page documents on each agenda item will soon be located on the CEH website. (www.cehkc.org). The agenda item that was taken off the table this year was a request for new rental subsidies.

The legislative agendas were adopted by the IAC.

Public Comment:

- Harry Hoffman encouraged people to vote for Proposition 1, the renewal of the Seattle Housing Levy. It is proving to be a very difficult campaign and everyone needs to get the word out that it is a RENEWAL of an existing levy and that it is a critical piece to preserving homeless housing. For the average homeowner, the cost would be an additional \$65/year. For more information go to <http://www.yesforhomes.org/>
- James Wlos has ongoing concerns about our homeless individuals. He is particularly worried about parking tickets given to people living in their motor homes.
- Melinda Giovigno applauds Sola Plumacher, City of Seattle, HMIS Program Manager, for the work that she has done. There are 180 new faces at ORION (which serves youth aged 16-22) and she expressed concern that the legislative agenda doesn't include the new youth.
- Bill Kirlin-Hackett asked for information about the commitment the IAC made in November '08 to look at shelter care. He also agreed that building political will is important and we should look towards the faith community for help.
- Jason Johnson, City of Kent, mentioned there will be a South County flood preparedness training on various dates and times to accommodate as many schedules as possible. For details, please Jason at jajohnson@ci.kent.wa.us. He also stated that the Hansen Dam has a 60% chance of flooding and it will take 3-4 years to fix. Public Health and Healthcare for the Homeless are providing the planning.
- Youth should be added to the IAC and Funders Group priorities.
- Karen Williams, HDC, encouraged people to attend the Candidates Forum on October 8 from 12 – 2pm. Contact Karen for more information, karen@housingconsortium.org

The meeting was adjourned at 4pm.

Laird Heia, CEH Staff