

Interagency Council Retreat Summary

May 3, 2010

IAC Members Present:		Governing Board Members Present:
Alison Eisinger/Manuela Ginnett (SKCCH)	Blue McKeon (CAC)	David Bley (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)
Karen Bergsvik (City of Renton)	Stephen Norman (KCHA)	Dan Brettler (CarToys)
Deborah Doyle (DSHS)	David Okimoto (UWKC)	Jon Fine (UWKC)
Bill Hallerman (AHA)	Debbie Thiele (Seattle Office Hsg)	Mike Lowry (Community)
Mike Heinisch (KYFS)	Michael Ramos (Church Council)	IAC Members Absent
Lynnette Hynden (City of Federal Way)	Faith Richie (Valley Cities)	Michael Brown (Seattle Foundation)
Kate Joncas (DSA)	Marlena Sessions (WDC)	Dennis Brown (WA State Dept of VA)
Colleen Kelly (City of Redmond)	Sue Sherbrooke (YWCA)	Doreen Cato (First Place)
Paul Lambros (PHG)	Nancy Sherman (CAC)	Lynn Davison (Common Ground)
Barbara Langdon (EDVP)	Kathleen Southwick (Crisis Clinic)	Charissa Fotinos (Public Health)
Emily Leslie (City of Bellevue)	Judy Summerfield (City of Seattle)	Bill Hobson (DESC)
Jackie MacLean (KC DCHS)	Jim Theofelis (Mockingbird)	Michael Hursh (City of Auburn)
Marilyn Mason-Plunkett (Hopelink)	Tom Tierney (SHA)	Mark Okazaki (Neighborhood House)
Community Members Present:		
Bill Block (CEHKC)	Katy Miller (KC DCHS)	Arthur Sullivan (
Karen Williams (HDC)	Debbi Knowles (KC DCHS)	Casey Trupin (Columbia Legal Services)
Cheryl Markham (KC DCHS)	Linda Peterson (KC DCHS)	Bob Ness (Consultant)
Alan Painter (KC Executive's Office)	Andrea Akita (City of Seattle HSD)	Melinda Dryer (OSPI)
Kristine Gullin (CEHKC)	Amnon Shoenfeld (KC MHCADSD)	Denise Revels Robinson (DSHS)
Gretchen Bruce (CEHKC)	Kristin Winkel (KCHA)	Toni Johnson (DSHS)
Sola Plumacher (Seattle/Safe Harbors)		

Welcome, Introductions and Consent Agenda

Stephen Norman and Sue Sherbrook, Interagency Council (IAC) co-chairs opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda and purpose of today's retreat.

Nomination of Colleen Kelly to the Interagency Council

Colleen Kelly was nominated to the Interagency Council by the Suburban Cities Association, to fill the membership position vacated by Dave Ramsay upon his retirement. Colleen was unanimously approved for membership on the Interagency Council. Welcome Colleen!

Review / Discussion on Progress Points Under the Ten-Year Plan

Bill Block reviewed progress within the last year, and cumulatively since the plan was launched

- Housing production – we have brought online 3,123 units of housing, with 998 more in the pipeline, for a total of 4,111 units of homeless housing. By population, this brings us to 73% of our goal for chronically homeless; 23% of our goal for Single Adults; 55% for Families, and 40% for Young Adults. Funders are monitoring the production pipeline to identify a sustainable level of production in consideration of the operating and service needs that come into play when capital units come online – especially high needs units.
- The Landlord Liaison Project has had a solid launch year, enrolling nearly 100 landlords as partners, 50 agencies and placing over 250 individuals in private market housing. Bill suggested that next steps for the project be to evaluate whether it can assist people who don't need case management but who, all the same, have significant barriers to housing due to poor credit, previous evictions, criminal history etc.
- Coordinated Entry for vulnerable single adults is proceeding well, and was instrumental in the rent up of McDermott Place and several other projects since the fall of 2009.
- Coordinated Entry for families will be launched in 2009 and there is strong support for this new model. Bill noted it will require significant changes in how we do business, including the use of a placement list and use of a common assessment tool.
- Safe Harbors / HMIS cover over 85% of all emergency shelter and transitional housing beds in the system. It now includes the HPRP Rapid Rehousing and Prevention programs and some permanent supporting housing projects. Information on participants at program entrance is getting better. Exit data needs to improve.

Moving forward, we can build on the strengths of the Coordinated NOFA process, which is recognized nationally as a best practice for how to work in partnership, and strengthening mainstream connections. Challenges to our work include the recession and resulting economic pressures on families and individuals, and a general "no new taxes" atmosphere that threatens funding stability for the Ten-Year Plan.

IAC members shared some of the accomplishments / issues that they saw on the horizon. Comments included:

- We can be proud of the innovative partnerships and projects we have accomplished, and many members hear from colleagues around the country that Seattle is looked to as a leader for ending homelessness. We have done an especially good job of creating partnerships across jurisdictions, though it was noted that some of these partnerships rely on personal relationships between leaders. If/when these individuals transition out of their position the partnership is weakened, and we need to institutionalize these relationships.
- Notwithstanding the accomplishments, there remain vocal critics of the plan and some overall skepticism that we can “end homelessness.” What can we do to address these individual’s concern and/or respond to their criticism so as not to derail continued progress.

Discussion with the Governing Board on progress, future challenges, priorities, vision for CEH

Dan Brettler, David Bley, Jon Fine and Mike Lowry attended the morning portion of the IAC Retreat to share thoughts on the past accomplishments and future goals of the Ten-Year Plan and how the Governing Board and IAC can work together to support those efforts. Dan Brettler stated that the Ten-Year Plan brought together all the right people for strong leadership.

- Consumer Advisory Council = the customers
- Interagency Council = the heroes and those who are doing the work
- The Funders Group = the institutional leaders who can direct resources towards most effective use
- The Governing Board = provides visibility and is well positioned to advocate for systems change

He asked IAC members their sense of how these bodies are working together and how to ensure effective communication between and among the bodies. Members responded that in general, formal communication between the bodies seems to be working, but there could be better access for more varied viewpoints.

Governor Lowry shared that data and benchmarks are critical in sustaining support for the Plan. He often advocates for the Ten-Year Plan and other initiatives down in Olympia, and is most successful when he can share quality data that supports the premise that dollars invested in ending homelessness are well spent.

John Fine stated that while we recognize the economy is vastly different than anticipated at the launch of the plan, and we may need to recalibrate the steps, we still need to stay true to our goal of ending homelessness.

Finally, David Bley noted that Seattle is looked to as a leader among the national Ten-Year Plans. As such, we are often ahead of the curve, and there aren’t “how-to” guides to help chart our next steps. It is his sense, however, that the emerging efforts to strengthen mainstream connections is on the right track.

IAC members shared that the Governing Board serves a highly visible and influential body and is often most helpful on advocacy issues where appropriate. One upcoming issue is the Tax Credits bonus points. There is word that the next round of tax credits will award bonus points for workforce housing instead of homeless housing, and Governing Board advocating that the bonus points be retained for homeless housing would be helpful. Others noted that the Governing Board is well placed to help us retool our message and data points as we enter year six, recognizing that the stage is very different than from when we crafted the Ten-Year plan. Next, members agreed that we’ve done a fairly good job of getting funding partners and new systems to work together. Perhaps it’s time to engage the community at a more personal level (individuals and congregations) to help people identify how they can personally support the effort, and the Governing Board could help carry that message.

The group further discussed if/how to recalibrate the vision and goals as we enter year six. In general, members agreed that previously stated goals inspire people, but worry that they may be unattainable – especially within a ten-year timeline. Governor Lowry noted that the Ten Year timeline is a national timeline, mandated by HUD. The National Alliance to End Homelessness would be a good body to discuss the implications of this timeline and whether it needs to be amended.

Funding Expirations -- Background and Breakout Sessions

Cheryl Markham reviewed a summary document of expiring funds and contracts in the coming years. The upshot is that the 2010 NOFA will have available approximately \$10 million total for five year awards through the Combined Operating, Rental Assistance and Services (Combined ORS) funds – Homeless Act Document Recording Fees, Veterans & Human Services Levy, MIDD, United Way and Gates Foundation, plus the value of up to 120 Seattle Housing Authority vouchers (an additional \$4.3 million for five year awards.) Anticipated requests from capital projects coming

online in 2011, plus the value of the Combined ORS funded contracts that will be eligible to re-apply this round, would leave no funds available for any new projects that are not part of the capital pipeline. If we look in addition at all contracts known to be expiring at the end of 2010 or mid 2011 (that will likely seek commitments in 2010) the total gap is significantly more, perhaps as much as \$17 to \$22 million, if all such contracts were assured five year funding awards. The renewal of the Veterans and Human Services Levy (or other comparable funding) will be critical if we are to sustain our current progress under the plan.

The capital production pipeline, which has prioritized units and services for high service needs populations requires substantial resources to sustain, and Cheryl shared some historical perspective on this type of unit production. In 2004, prior to the 10 year plan, two projects out of 11 funded with King County Housing and Community Development administered capital funds were mixed low-income projects with a portion of homeless units for moderate to low service need homeless households, where now a significant percentage is going towards homeless housing (30% in 2005; 45% 2006; 100% in 2007, and approximately 60% since 2007. As a result of this capital funding we have brought online award winning projects that have demonstrated significant costs offsets in emergency services (jail, hospitals, detox, etc.) It has come at a relatively high cost to the housing and homeless services system, however, as this population requires intensive on-site supportive services and additional operating costs.

Today's retreat is an opportunity for the IAC to weigh in on several policy and funding issues as it relates to this year's NOFA and balancing priorities. Members attended two breakout sessions, followed by a report out on the group's discussion. Breakout sessions included:

- Role of performance and evaluation in contracting/NOFA
- System Priorities: How do we direct funding, including consideration of Gates Family Homelessness Plan, YYA model, and shelter
- Implications of funding situation for high needs vs. moderate needs programs
- Funder Responsibilities: Benefits and challenges of increasing funding flexibility across contracts

Themes heard during the report back session include:

Role of performance and evaluation in contracting/NOFA

- General support for using performance evaluation in application review. The data / evaluation points need to be clear and based on qualified research, recognizing that some things are beyond the project's control. It may be hard to establish consistent expectations across fund sources.
- Strong support for using data from Safe Harbors, recognizing that it is (or needs to be) the one system that connects individuals to programs, programs to the homeless system, and the homeless system to mainstream systems and will give us longitudinal understanding of performance. However, the "opt-in" clause means we are missing data on a significant number of people, and data may be skewed due to who chooses to participate. Advocate with the state (Dept of Commerce, formerly CTED) to change regulations on participation from opt-in to opt-out.
- Strong support for moving to an outcomes-based contracting framework. Use research to set performance expectations and tie them to the populations served. Outcomes based contracting, if used correctly, can assure that projects enroll who they are supposed to enroll, though this may also require centralized intake and placement. Providers would welcome outcome alignment across contracts, though recognize that different fund sources/regulations may still require different measurements. Explore whether the self sufficiency matrix tools in use across the country could serve as a unified model across contracts.
- Measured support for a capitated rate. One provider, experienced with the Mental Health tiering system, states that it provides stable, predictable funding that allows them to plan for long-term care and staffing, and a more conscious/equitable matching of resources to effort. However, it takes a lot of work (years!) and trust between funders and providers to create such a system. The mental health system has decades of experience with diagnostic tools (DSM IV) and tends to deal with one domain of the person's life. Homelessness has multiple slices (DV, MH, CD, disabilities, etc.) and it may be harder to develop a reflective structure. It may, however, be possible to establish an appropriate cost range that allows for fair cost setting and contract negotiation.

System Priorities: How do we direct funding, including consideration of Gates Family Homelessness Plan, YYA model, and shelter

- Strong support for rewarding / strengthening partnerships. Small agencies should focus on what they do best and not feel the need to expand unnecessarily. Rather, help them to piggy back on the infrastructure of larger agencies /

consortium partnerships. This may also be a way to better serve populations that are disproportionately affected by homelessness, recognizing we need to reinvigorate our efforts around addressing disproportionality.

- Strong support for flexible funding. Funding requests and funding awards need to be flexible and evaluated for consistency across contracts, services, populations, regions. Recognize that client needs can change upon housing placement, they may need more or less than originally anticipated, and funding needs to respond to that as well.
- Strong support for flexible program models. Housing first doesn't always need to mean on-site supportive services. Some populations can (and should) access community supports. This also supports a graduation / recovery model.
- Strong support to consider the ripple effect of discontinuing funding for existing projects. Don't destabilize existing projects just to bring on new projects. Recognize that some capital projects have contractual and staffing requirements for services. Work with them to create a transition plan.
- Measured support for more shelter beds. This is an area where churches can participate and could create more "political wins". It can also be a relatively cost-effective way to get people in off the streets.
- General support to the concept that we shift our focus (and funding) from bringing online new high needs projects except in consideration that there may still be needs for these types of projects in the subregions.

Implications of funding situation for high needs vs. moderate needs programs

- Strong support for establishing a sustainable pipeline of projects. Recognize the ripple effect and that some capital projects have contractual requirements for services, so need to be mindful of bringing on new projects that create even more competition among performing projects.
- Strong support for evaluating whether projects funded as high service levels should continue to be funded at this same level, or whether they can incorporate a graduation focus / rely more on community based supports. Explore if agencies with large portfolios can be funded more flexibly instead of on a project by project basis.
- Strong support for balancing multiple considerations, including population, region, ability to compete for tax credit bonus points; cost effectiveness; ability to make appropriate use of vouchers / shallow subsidies; funding for service needs among those who can't access mainstream services (e.g. they don't make the cut for tiered services)
- Strong support for exploring shallow subsidies and better utilization of vouchers. This may be particularly effective in helping us reach other populations / subregions.

Funder Responsibilities: Benefits and challenges of increasing funding flexibility across contracts

- Strong support for creating a more flexible funding model for services. We've tended to fund services in the same way we've funded capital, resulting in silos across projects. Agencies can do more responsive and cost effective services if given more flexibility with their services funding.
- Strong support for aligning contractual requirements. Administrative burden of tracking contracts has grown significantly over the years. Reduce administrative costs and align data collection requirements across contracts and funders to create efficiencies / decrease staffing costs to administer contracts (at the expense of providing services.)

Mainstream Connections -- Education (K-12), DSHS and Veterans

Education / K-12 Schools

Melinda Dryer (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction – OSPI) and Casey Trupin (Columbia Legal Services - CLS) provided information on homeless children within the school system. OSPI reports there are approximately 20,000 homeless children enrolled in Washington state public schools, though this is known to be an undercount; families often try to hide the fact that they are homeless and schools are ill-equipped to identify and support students who are homeless.

McKinney Vento requires that schools provide transportation and other supports to homeless students, and that each district identify a homeless liaison to coordinate these supports. Some schools have highly performing staff who take this on with gusto while others have a liaison in name only. Melinda noted that many school districts feel ill equipped to take on this work, and McKinney Vento does not provide enough funding to cover the costs – it only approximately \$680,000 per year for the entire state, which OSP awards to schools through competitive grants.

Liaisons would benefit tremendously with additional supports and partnerships with the homeless system – many of them don't come with a background in homelessness and don't have time to build their knowledge base of what's available and how to refer people to services. In previous years, a couple school districts had Liaison to the Liaisons, with a highly

knowledgeable central person who can help break down barriers to services, and these positions were tremendously useful. Unfortunately, funding for these positions has ended.

Casey noted that now is a good time to strengthen partnerships between schools and the homeless system. HUD has recently issued new regulations require better identification and support of homeless students, and will issue 6,000 vouchers for education/school-focused projects. The IAC can help in the following ways:

1. Provide training and technical assistance to schools and liaisons; help them learn to better identify homeless students (eg, red flags such as students with multiple enrollments each school year)
2. Build bridges to liaisons. Invite liaisons to homeless provider meetings to strengthen relationships / smooth the referral process so families can access homeless services. Help schools recreate the Liaisons to Liaisons model.
3. Recognize that schools are the central system that every kid touches – it's a great starting point to flag families and children at risk and intervene early in the cycle before the negative consequences of homelessness kick in.
4. Encourage homeless families to seek assistance from their school. Help them understand that their children cannot be taken away from them simply because they are homeless, and that by voicing their needs and situation they can help inform and strengthen the school supports.
5. Advocate for flexible funding that can support the range of services needed by homeless school-aged children.

DSHS

Denise Revels Robinson and Toni Johnson (both with DSHS) attended the retreat to discuss how DSHS and the CEH could better coordinate efforts. Denise shared that there are five areas easily identifiable areas where DSHS and housing concerns intersect:

1. Families at risk for abuse and neglect, compounded by housing instability
2. Families seeking reunification, but without a physical home that allow them to be together
3. Supporting relatives who can care for children removed from their home of origin. Relatives are often the preferred placement, but they may be facing their own housing stability issues which make placement difficult
4. Youth aging out of foster care without housing supports in place
5. Appropriate referrals by shelter case managers. Sometimes case managers don't make a referral when needed as they fear that the children will be removed from the home based on the family's housing status

Denise shared relevant statistics about the number of families/children involved in the child welfare system -- 41% of King County families in the child welfare system have experienced homelessness in the prior 12 months. The group discussed if/how case managers overlap between the two systems and how they might coordinate for greater efficiencies. DSHS will soon put out an RFP for wrap around services, and one idea could be to target Sound Families transitional family units for families involved in child welfare services.

Denise also reported that there is a great need for stable housing for youth aging out of foster care. Research tells us that one-third of the 500 youth who age out of foster care each year in Washington State will become homeless in the next few years. The greatest need is stable housing and a caring adult to help shepherd these youth through the ages 18-21. In recognition of this, the Federal government will provide additional funding supports through age 21 in the next few years, but it will only be available to states that put up matching funds. Homeless housing and service providers could be helpful in ensuring that housing issues are addressed as part of their discharge / graduation planning and advocating that the state allocate matching funds to secure the new federal dollars.

Goals for the Coming Year

The group discussed priorities for the upcoming year in light of today's conversations and what we can anticipate on the horizon. Stephen Norman framed it in the context, "Imagine it is twelve months from now and we're coming back together for our annual retreat. What would make for a successful year? What direction shall we set, and what measures shall we track to assess whether it's been a successful year?" Suggestions included:

- **Answer the question, "What will we have achieved in ten years, and what does that say about our goal of ending homelessness"**, with a specific suggestion to devote a fall IAC meeting to answering this question and the messaging to the community. Suggestions around this:
 - Communicate a stronger message around what we *have* done. How to describe and widely communicate:
 - > Systems change and ways in which we are operating more efficiently / cost effectively
 - > Effectiveness of systems changes from the client's perspective (eg, shortened periods of homelessness)
 - > Positive results and data from projects like 1811 Eastlake, FACT/PACT/SHIFTS, etc.

- > Increased funds / political will & community support generated for homeless response
- o Invite our biggest critics / homeless constituents to share their understanding / concerns with the Ten-Year Plan. Use this feedback to modify our strategies as appropriate and/or reflect how to message our strengths.
- o Communicate that it's extremely difficult to end homelessness (people will always face crises / lose housing) so we need to create message about what *is* realistic. Define (redefine) what it means to be successful.
- o There was also discussion about explicitly changing expectations, including recalibrating (either up or down) the number of units of housing we expect to create under the plan, the number of years it will take to build/sustain 9,500 (or another number of) units or the amount of funding it will take (including checking back in on the figure of \$700 million in new resources estimated at the beginning of the plan as the funding need for the 10YP).
- o Review data from Safe Harbors to analyze what it will take, and how long, to get the job done.

- **Follow up on coordinating with mainstream systems.** Several members stated they were energized by the conversations with Casey Trupin, Melinda Dyer, Denise Revels Robinson and Toni Johnson and the IAC should follow up on strengthening partnerships with these systems:

Education / K-12 Follow Up

- o Provide joint training and technical assistance to OSPI Homeless Liaisons to help them better understand the homeless systems / how to access homeless supports
- o Invite homeless liaison workers into our meetings
- o Be poised to partner with school districts in leveraging some of the 6,000 vouchers that will be released at the federal level for homeless families in 2011. (it is unclear at this point what the NOFA will require in terms of engagement with school systems)
- o Consider creating a "liaison to the liaisons"
- o Advocate for real homeless liaisons in school districts that have merely a nominal liaison.
- o Gather the baseline data from local districts regarding the number of homeless children they are reporting.

DSHS Follow Up

- o Partner with DSHS to use Sound Families transitional housing units for families involved with the child welfare system that need stabilization or reunification, with the transitional housing system providing the units, the Housing Authorities providing rental support through project based vouchers and DSHS providing funding support for services.
- o Follow up on issues related to youth aging out of foster care:
 - > Ensure housing providers are part of the discharge conversation that DSHS holds with kids (and suggest holding the discharge conversation at age 16 instead of 17½)
 - > Advocate for state matching funds to secure federal dollars to extend foster supports to age 19, 20 or 21
 - > Track the RFP that will be released by DSHS to provide wrap around supports

Veterans Plan to End Homelessness

- o Track the Veterans Five-Year Plan to End Homelessness and weigh in as appropriate
- o Be poised to leverage some of the veterans vouchers that will be released at the federal level in support of the Veterans Five Year Plans
- o Push the VA to refocus housing efforts on permanent as opposed to transitional housing

- **Continue to build Political Will for the Ten-Year Plan**

- o Support (re-energize?) sub-regional plans under the Ten-Year Plan.
 - > Several suburban cities had significant turnover in the last election. Need to win over new electeds
 - > North King County requests assistance in creating stronger infrastructure for affordable and homeless housing (eg, EHAC, South King County Forum)
 - > Sustain the Housing Trust Fund, and advocate for retention of bonus points for homeless housing

- **Community Engagement:** Increase the involvement of organizations and the average citizens in ending homelessness

- > Homesharing opportunities, especially youth aging out of foster care
- > Congregations / Service Groups

- **Preserve (increase?) Revenue where possible:** Ensure renewal of the Veterans and Human Services Levy or otherwise secure appropriate funding for projects under the Ten-Year Plan; support tax credit extension and housing trust fund. Involve the Governing Board more effectively in lobbying for new and renewed funding at the State and Federal level.

- **Set benchmarks for existing workplans** Assuming the current set of Funders Group workplans remain in place, set new benchmarks achievements in the next 12 months. Possibilities:
 - Capital production. Establish framework / understanding of a sustainable capital pipeline in consideration of resulting operating and service needs and available resources. If priorities for capital development are shifting, be transparent about that process and decision. Specific number of new units coming on line?
 - Rental Subsidies. Be poised to leverage upcoming voucher opportunities (McKinney Vento homeless children, youth aging out of foster care, veterans). Specific number of new rent subsidies projected for year?
 - Coordinated Entry/ vulnerable singles. Continue with coordinated entry for vulnerable single adults. By next year:
 - > Roll out vulnerability index tool
 - > Roll out coordinated database
 - Coordinated Entry/Families. Track and support implementation of Families Initiative, beginning with Coordinated Entry. By next year:
 - > Infrastructure in place for Coordinated Entry, with an aim to be fully operational by May, 2011
 - > Better understanding of service needs among families thru use of common assessment tool
 - > Increase agency capacity through assessments of what types of families they can most appropriately serve, as well as training / technical assistance to help them adopt new approaches
 - HMIS Implementation. Use data to drive policies, strategic plans, convey the effectiveness of the 10YP
 - > Track implementation of the Safe Harbors annual workplan (soon to be available on the web) holding both Safe Harbors and agencies accountable for increasing the quality and quantity of data, with an aim to have HMIS producing complete, reliable, useful data by May 2011
 - > Advocate at the state level to make client participation in Safe Harbors Opt-Out instead of Opt-In to improve data quality

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm. Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Bruce, CEH Staff.