

Interagency Council Meeting Summary

September 13, 2010

IAC Members Present: Karen Bergsvik (City of Renton) Doreen Cato (First Place) Deborah Doyle (DSHS) Charissa Fotinos (Public Health) Manuela Ginnett (SKCCH) Bill Hallerman (AHA) Mike Heinisch (KYFS) Bill Hobson (DESC) Colleen Kelly (City of Redmond) Paul Lambros (PHG) Barbara Langdon (EDVP)		IAC Members Absent: Michael Brown (Seattle Foundation) Dennis Brown (WA State Dept of VA) Michael Hursh (City of Auburn) Rick Hooper (Seattle Office Hsg) Lynnette Hynden (City of Federal Way) Kate Joncas (DSA) Mark Okazaki (Neighborhood House) Nancy Sherman (CAC) Jim Theofelis (Mockingbird) Tom Tierney (SHA)
Community Members Present: Bill Block (CEHKC) Kristine Gullin (CEHKC) Gretchen Bruce (CEHKC) Bill Kirlin-Hackett (ITFH) Janice Tufte (ITFH) Janet Salm (KC DCHS) Katy Miller (KC DCHS) Sara Levin (Seattle HSD) Mona Tschurwald (YWCA – LLP) Chris West (DSHS – Belltown CSO) Linda Maser (Solid Ground) Greg Taylor (City of Renton)	Emily Leslie (City of Bellevue) Jackie MacLean (KC DCHS) Marilyn Mason-Plunkett (Hopelink) Stephen Norman (KCHA) David Okimoto (UWKC) Faith Richie (Valley Cities) Michael Ramos (Church Council) Marlena Sessions (WDC) Sue Sherbrooke (YWCA) Dannette Smith (Seattle HSD) Kathleen Southwick (Crisis Clinic)	Alefesh Takse (ReWA) Carole Antoncich (Plymouth Hsg Group) Meghan Altimore (Hopelink) Donald Lachman (WDVA) Harry Hoffman (HDC) Terry Pottmeyer (Friends of Youth) Nicole Macri (DESC) Willie Gregory (Valley Cities) Stacey Devenney (Valley Cities) Dan McDougall-Treacy (Valley Cities) Andrea Akita (City of Seattle HSD)

Welcome, Introductions and Consent Agenda

Stephen Norman and Sue Sherbrook, Interagency Council (IAC) co-chairs opened the meeting. The August 2010 IAC meeting summary were reviewed. Colleen Kelly (City of Redmond) noted she did attend the August meeting. Some members felt the portion regarding structure of the CEH and role of the IAC didn't adequately reflect the discussion of this topic. It was agreed this issue warrants an in-depth discussion and will be an agenda item at the October IAC meeting; a small task force comprised of Bill Hallerman, Manuela Ginnett, Doreen Cato, Marilyn Mason-Plunkett, Barbara Langdon, Colleen Kelly and Jackie MacLean will meet ahead of time to help frame this discussion ahead of the October meeting. The August meeting summary was approved with these changes.

Nomination of Dannette Smith and Rick Hooper to the Interagency Council

The IAC approved the nomination of Dannette Smith, director of City of Seattle Human Services Department, and Rick Hooper, Acting Director of City of Seattle Office of Housing to the IAC. Welcome Dannette and Rick!

Consent Agenda / Feedback from Consumer Advisory Council, Governing Board and Funders Group

- Bill Block and Jackie MacLean reported on the recent McKinney award. King County's overall score was 86, well above the cut-off threshold and comfortably above the national average, making our continuum eligible for funding for two bonus projects. We have heard, however, that next year's rating factors will put greater emphasis on HMIS Reporting and so we will need to improve our score even more to remain competitive. The Continuum of Care planning team is attending a conference in Denver to learn more about the future of McKinney and HMIS reporting and will provide information upon their return.
- Meeting summaries for the July Governing Board and August Funders Group were included in the IAC Packet. Bill noted that visitors from Washington DC (HUD and HHS) would be attending the September 14th Funders Group meeting to learn more about how our local community is coordinating resources in support of ending homelessness.

Immigrant and Refugee Homelessness

Someireh Amirfaiz, Executive Director of Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA) delivered a presentation on the experiences of immigrants and refugees. She noted that most of her presentation would focus on the refugee experience and their increased risk of homelessness, as immigrants typically arrive by choice and with some level of resources, while refugees have typically left their homeland under duress.

Someireh provided background information on the number of refugees in the United States, Washington State and King County. She reported that many people mistakenly believe that the U.S. is the top destination for refugees; in fact in 2009 the U.S. ranked 27th in the world for accepting refugees. Among refugees arriving in the State of Washington, just over half (54%), settle in the King County region. They typically receive assistance from Voluntary Agencies for their first

eight months, during which time they are eligible for Federal resettlement assistance and public assistance (TANF, food stamps, etc.) through the state. The benefit period used to be 18 months.

Someireh shared that many (if not most) refugees will experience a range of behavioral and emotional issues that create barriers to resettlement in the U.S., including:

- Limited English skills
- Lack of transferrable work and survival skills
- Trauma
- Large families and associated stereotypes
- Unfamiliarity with U.S. culture and systems
- Lack of formal education, as recognized by American institutions

Barriers to finding and keeping housing include:

- Lack of adequate income
- Source of income (often undocumented/cash)
- Lack of affordable housing
- Mental health needs
- Lack of cultural/system knowledge
- Discrimination
- Lifestyle stereotypes
- Large families

The downturn in the economy has had a significant impact on immigrants and refugees due to:

- Number of low wage has declined
- Increased competition for existing jobs
- Limits on assistance and increased pressure to apply sanctions

Someireh shared her thoughts on how the human services system is not responsive to the needs of refugees and why refugees can't or won't access traditional human services

- Lack of representation of refugees at the level of policy making
- Lack of resources dedicated to refugee issues
- Lack of data on the number of refugees in the system so they remain a hidden population
- Political climate is against refugees and immigrants
- Refugees are hesitant to seek services (especially shelter) due to:
 - Lack of education of how the system works
 - Fear of splitting up families
 - Services are not culturally relevant (Someireh specifically recommended strategies to increase access to 2-1-1)

Finally, Someireh provided recommendations for strengthening the human services network so it is more accessible / appropriate for refugees

- Ensure there is refugee representation at the table when making policy
- Ensure that processes are geared towards building community, are inclusive, and can accommodate a grass roots empowerment model with decentralized administration
- Expand the language options of 2-1-1
- Provide rent subsidies to limited income households
- Develop appropriate shelter models (accommodate larger families, allow adolescent boys to remain with their families, etc.)
- Provide staff training to ensure services are culturally competent
- Track data and disaggregate data to better understand the trends within and across refugee populations
- Expand outreach and engagement to invisible refugee communities
- Be open to course correction

Landlord Liaison Project – First Year Evaluation

Janet Salm and Katy Miller, with KC DCHS, provided a recap of a recently completed interim evaluation of the first 10 months of the Landlord Liaison Project, conducted by Janet Salm, a PM III Evaluator with DCHS. Janet shared highlights from the report. Overall, the evaluation team has found the Landlord Liaison Project (managed by the YWCA) to be immensely successful in its first 10 months (March-December 2009). Highlights include:

- *Increased access to existing rental units.* Seventy-three landlords/property management companies signed on as partners with LLP by the end of 2009. This allows access to 159 rental properties in the community, ranging from large, multi-unit apartment complexes to single family homes. Landlords are very happy with the program, with 71 percent of the responding landlords reporting that they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the LLP. 85 percent (62 landlords) report that they would not have rented to this population without the LLP.
- *Individuals and families successfully placed in private market housing.* Between March and December 2009, the Landlord Liaison Project placed 147 households in permanent housing. Participants housed by LLP have serious

barriers to obtaining private market rental housing. About half of the households (48%) have a criminal background. Another 25 percent have very poor rental histories and the remaining households report other barriers to renting such as poor credit or drug or alcohol problems.

- *Successful retention of housing.* 96 percent of LLP households retained housing six months after moving in.
- *Voucher Use.* Sixty-eight percent of participants have a rental subsidy and 32% have no subsidy. Of those with subsidies, Section 8 is the most common source.
- *Client Population.* The project is serving significantly more chronically homeless individuals than originally anticipated. Fully 71% of individuals placed are long-term or chronically homeless.
- *Program Changes.* In its first year, the program reduced the case management required from two to one year. This change allowed more agencies to participate as many programs couldn't commit to two years' after care.
- *Provider Response.* Providers are enthusiastic supporters of the program. Shelter + Care reports they are able to house significantly more participants with the assistance of LLP than through the housing search supports they traditionally employed.

Members discussed these findings and their agencies' experience with the LLP.

- LLP is currently funded through HHSF/matching dollars. Funders are seeking a long-term funding mechanism.
- Some participants face a service cliff when case management services are discontinued after the required one year. LLP will be available by phone and for short-term intervention as needed for these participants. If the program observes that participants need more case management than can be absorbed by the limited staffing of the LLP project, they will communicate with funders in order to seek a solution.
- The two greatest needs observed by LLP staff, partner agencies and participants are the need for short term /stop gap vouchers while participants wait to become eligible for Section 8 vouchers; and the need for flexible, short-term case management when their one year of required case management ends.
- Landlords are eager to partner with LLP during periods of high vacancy. It's good to be building positive relationships now, so that when the economy improves, LLP will have a solid track record.
- Members noted that when the project was originally developed, it was anticipated that participants would have "light touch" case management needs. In reality, the majority of participants have greater needs because those are a) the ones who have a minimum of one year of case management (e.g. Mental Health case management); and b) they have been prioritized to receive vouchers through the last several NOFA rounds.
- Questions for which members would like more information include:
 - Are there any differences by region – types of participants, landlords, satisfaction, etc.?
 - Do we know where participants come from as much as we know where they ended up leasing
 - What types of units are available by region

Ten-Year Plan Mid-Plan Review

Bill Block reported that a workgroup with membership from the Governing Board, IAC, CAC and Funders Group met September 8th and will meet again September 21st to develop of the Scope of Work for the Mid-Plan Review. CEH staff are working with United Way to develop a Request for Qualifications for a consultant to oversee the research, analysis, stakeholder meetings and report writing of the Mid Plan Review. The goal is to release the RFQ by the end of the week, in order to have a consultant on board by mid-October, in order to have a product by spring 2011.

Public Comment

Bill Kirlin Hackett invited everyone to attend the Tenth Annual Political Will to End Homelessness conference, to be held September 15th at St. Mark's. He also encouraged that the Mid Plan Review take into account the number of housing units lost in the last five years.

Janice Tufte noted that recent news reports are of a significant increase in the number of people living in poverty. She noted that Tent Cities are seeing an increasing number of people who were, until recently, employed in "middle class" jobs. She shared her thinking that these individuals would be good to interview as part of the Mid Plan Review on how the economy has affected homelessness.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 pm. Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Bruce, CEH Staff.