

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



Notes from the Meeting of the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH)

Date and Time: February 14, 2008; Noon – 1:30 pm
Location: Miriam's Kitchen, 2401 Virginia Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20037

Number of attendees: 90 (approximately)

Welcome and Introductions

Dan Tangherlini, City Administrator and ICH Chair, welcomed everyone and opened the meeting to public comments.

Public Comment

- Mary Ann Luby expressed concern about emergency shelter space in Columbia Heights.
- A speaker said that DC law, Federal law, and the Secret Service make it difficult to sleep on the street, near an embassy, or in a park.
- A speaker advocated for cleaning up the shelters because they are "filthy." The speaker continued by asserting that Franklin just got hot water and that half of the New York Avenue shelter does not have heat. The speaker said that people are selling drugs outside the shelters, and asked, "Where is the policing?" The speaker said that affordable housing is needed.
 - Mr. Tangherlini said the key aspect here is affordable housing. He also noted that the police department is at this meeting to address any issues involving crime in or near the shelters.
- Another speaker said that shelters are not addressing problems faced specifically by people with medical problems and by elderly people. Accessibility for people with disabilities needs to be addressed as well.
- A speaker said that there has been a rumor that the men living at Franklin are going to be moved into permanent housing. The speaker wondered why they are renovating the shelter if residents will be moved out.
- A citizen was angry about being prevented from entering a City Council meeting and about problems at Franklin shelter. He wanted to know who controls the staff at Franklin.
- A client from Families Forward on Park Road brought up the concern of childcare. To get a voucher for childcare so that she can work, she needs four pay stubs, but she cannot work to get the four pay stubs without childcare.
- A speaker said that there is no way to make telephone calls in the morning to talk to MPD. If you are homeless, there are no phones and no way to call.
- A speaker said that Catholic Charities has bug issues, there are no bars on shelter windows, and blankets and sheets are not given out. Additionally, there are no shower shoes, and residents are put out in the street at 7:30 a.m. the speaker continued by asserting that case managers are only putting people on waiting lists and that there are no jobs posted on employment boards. The speaker concluded by stating that case managers and the director should be "kicked out."

ICH Committee Reports

Steering Committee, reported by Scott McNeilly, Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless (WLCH)

- The steering committee deals with meetings, the agenda, and membership.
- The next ICH meetings will be on 4/10 and 6/12.
- We are working on launching a website for the ICH.
- There is a group developing regulations for the HSRA. Upcoming meetings will be on 2/26 and 3/25 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. at Catholic Charities on G Street NW.
- Regarding the ICH membership process, we have application packets available, if needed.

Operations and Logistics Committee, reported by Chapman Todd, Catholic Charities

- The ICH is required to have public hearings, and the plan this year is to have them quarterly. One hearing was held on December 17, 2007. Seventy (70) people attended the session that was led by DHS Director Clarence Carter. The transcript and summary will be circulated. Lack of housing, facility issues, and complaints about staff at shelters were the main issues.
- The first hearing of 2008 will be in April. It will include a recap of hypothermia. The location and date are to be determined.
- Regarding hypothermia, there is real time data on the Community Partnership website on shelter utilization.
- This committee will look at the discharge planning process. It is anticipated that mental health and corrections will be among the agencies involved.

Strategic Planning Committee and PSH¹ Work Group, reported by Clarence Carter, DHS Director and Fred Swan, Administrator of the Family Services Administration (DHS)

- The committee is still working on development of the strategic plan, and we hope to be able to share it in the near future.
- We have not made any decisions on how to approach the Franklin shelter. The Franklin shelter is not a long-term solution. We will have a town hall meeting at Franklin to discuss options. Mayor Fenty is committed to having a shelter in the downtown area.
- There are 2,500 units of permanent supportive housing called for in the *Homeless No More (HNM)* plan. It has been challenging to formulate a plan with a committee of 30 people. We had to reengineer the planning process, and we are now working to develop a production plan with a smaller group.
- Mr. Swan reported on a number of facilities matters:
 - The property at 37th Street, SE will be utilized as transitional housing for thirteen families. Operation there will begin in two weeks.
 - Properties at 12th Street, SE and Mississippi Avenue, SE will be permanent supportive housing for families.
 - A property on Sheriff Road with 28 units in two buildings will no longer be available due to stalled negotiations with the owner. We are working aggressively to find replacement sites for temporary housing for families.
 - The Virginia Williams Family Resource Center is moving to 920 Rhode Island Avenue, NE by February 28.
- Director Carter said that this is the last season that DC General will be used as a hypothermia shelter. After hypothermia season², the women there will be moving from Harriet Tubman into Building 9.
- Scott McNeilly, WLCH, inquired about the accessibility of the new facilities, and Fred Swan responded that 12th Street and Mississippi Avenue are being rehabilitated to ensure accessibility. The 37th Street property is not accessible, but we are looking at ways to change this. We are focusing on accessibility as we evaluate new sites for purchase.
- In response to a question about a time frame for availability of the 2,500 *HNM* units, Director Carter said that here will be a draft production plan and that the Strategic Planning Committee will present it when available.

Implementation of the Winter Plan, reported by Fred Swan, Administrator of the Family Services Administration (DHS)

- There have been 43 hypothermia alerts so far this season.
- Shelters for women and families were utilized at just below capacity while shelters for men were just above capacity. We added more capacity for men at DC General Building 9.
- There have been some transportation issues this season, but we are resolving them. We are looking for ways to restructure the process for next year.
- There have been some issues with heat in certain shelters, and we are resolving these problems as they arise.

¹ Permanent Supportive Housing

² Ends on March 31, 2008.

Updates from The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness (TCP), reported by Sue Marshall, Executive Director

- Ms. Marshall distributed a handout that included a link to hypothermia dashboard data, information about the Point in Time homeless count³, data about shelter usage, information about funding availability, and a table showing the reports that are available through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
- The Point in Time results will be released in the spring. This year's count generated a good response with all public agencies and 95% of the private agencies reporting. Preliminary results show that there are 5,775 literally homeless in the District (street or shelter) and 2,500 formerly homeless (in permanent supportive housing). In 2007, homelessness decreased while the number of residents in permanent housing increased.
- Ms. Marshall distributed and explained a map showing catchment areas for outreach providers.
- Increases have been seen in the use of shelters during hypothermia by single adults as compared to last year, in the number of customers from outside the district (based on a sample of self-reported information), and in customers coming from institutions. The 30% increase in the number of those coming from institutions is significant, and it demonstrates that we need to get back on track with discharge planning. DC General utilization is up also.
- Ms. Marshall distributed and discussed the TCP E-Newsletter for January 2008 in which the Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was covered.
- Ms. Marshall discussed the Super Notice of Funding Availability (SuperNOFA) process by which HUD funds the continuum of care (CoC). Funds may be used for capital projects, programs, and services. The District received \$18.3 million in 2007 with the majority of funds for project renewals. Section 202 (elderly) and Section 811 (disability) projects are opportunities for additional funding. She distributed a handout titled "District of Columbia CoC 2007 Funding Award."
- Steve Baron, DMH Director, asked if a nonprofit could apply for 811 funds directly, and Ms. Marshall responded that it could.

Discussion by Agency of Continuum of Care Items in the FY 2009 Budget

- Laura Zeilinger started this discussion by stating that the budget is still under development. HSRA requires that agencies report to the ICH by February 1st. Agencies that reported in this part of the agenda noted where they are using resources to serve homeless populations.
- Dan Tangherlini noted that we are requiring agencies to report on things that are in the mayor's FY 2009 budget that has not yet been released, so amendments and changes are possible.
- **DHS** – Director Carter advised us to look at the handout that was distributed, and Fred Swan reviewed the budget items that included: shelter operations, case management, other shelter services, outreach for homeless services, funding for the hotline and transportation, emergency assistance, HMIS management, and facility maintenance. DHS costs also include personnel, security, leases, and utilities. The total of DHS projected budget expenditures for FY 2009 was \$40.6 million.
- **Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)** – Budget items include the Rapid Housing Program, emergency rental assistance, and long term rental support assistance. CFSA receives \$700,000 through DHS.
- **DC Housing Authority (DCHA)** – This agency will make available 612 units of housing to non-profits.
- **Metropolitan Police Department (MPD)** – Costs associated with activities serving those who are homeless are not currently identified, but MPD works with hypothermia outreach, DHS, and DMH to train officers to work with people with mental illness. A 32 hour block of training is dedicated to this effort. In FY 2009, MPD will partner with DMH to audit training to ensure that best practices for crisis intervention are being used. Each recruit receives 16 hours of initial training with a second block of 16 hours consisting of in-service instruction. The training enables officers to provide effective policing while still being able to deal with crisis situations effectively. Every officer is trained to deal with it mental health situations.

³ Conducted on January 24, 2008.

- **Department of Mental Health (DMH)** – Director Steve Baron said that he wants to establish mobile crisis teams. In cooperation with DHS, DMH will be recruiting for a project director for this initiative that will be housed in CPEP. Homeless outreach staff will work with the crisis team. DMH has started a mental health program at Franklin Shelter, and they are about to select a vendor to run urgent care at the courts. They have 650 housing bridge loans and 20 shelter plus care sites available. DMH has created a dual-response project with MPD.
- **Office of Property Management (OPM)** – Currently, this agency is working with DHS on its shelter program, and it is responsible for shelter upkeep, maintenance, and security. Projected capital improvement costs are \$10.5 million, and another \$5.6 million are projected in fixed costs. OPM has hired Stacey Norris to work with DHS and the providers on shelter and other matters related to the CoC.
- **DC Public Schools (DCPS)** – This agency is not currently separating funds used for homeless services. Many CoC services have been transferred to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE).
- **OSSE** – This agency provides supplies, uniforms, transportation, tutorials, and support services to needy students at a reported cost of \$214,000.
- **Department of Employment Services (DOES)** – This agency offers One Stop Centers, transitional employment programs, and youth programs, but it reports that costs are not identified for services to those who are homeless.
- **Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)** – Director Leila Finucane Edmonds said that a budget of \$821,000 is available for emergency shelter grants, and funds in the amount of \$3.6 million are available for shelter plus care grants.
- **Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA)** – This agency does not currently track money used for homeless services. It provides immediate support for homeless services out of its general fund.
- **Department of Health (DOH)** – This agency does not currently separate out funds for homeless services, but in the future they will try to distinguish these expenditures. Many DOH programs benefit the homeless such as the locally funded DC Healthcare Alliance, some programs within Medicaid, grants to community-based organizations, WIC, and maternal and child health workers who go into shelters. An example of a grant that benefits those who are homeless is the \$100,000 given to SOME for a dental clinic.
- **HIV/AIDS Administration** – This agency does not currently separate out funds for homeless services. It has \$6 to 7 million for housing for people with AIDS, and it offers case management and mental health services under the Ryan White Act. Additionally, it has a free HIV medications program and testing for tuberculosis. It has issued a Request for Application (RFA) for needle exchange, and it does outreach to homeless service providers.
- **Department of Corrections (DOC)** – This agency does not have a separate budget for homeless services, but several programs receive funding. Unity Health Care receives funds so that medical care may be continued after release. DOC works with the Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration (APRA) so that substance abuse treatment may continue upon release. DOES is a presence in the jail. DOC keeps data on individuals who are homeless when they come into the system. The City Administrator has established a performance measure for DOC related to re-entry and discharge plans.

Overview of Miriam’s Kitchen- Scott Schenkelberg, Executive Director and Staff

- The mission of Miriam’s Kitchen is to serve individuals who are homeless. It is in its 25th year of service, and it moved to its present location in 1994. There are now four programs offered, and in the fall they will open a dinner program.
- The program provides breakfast Monday through Friday, and during breakfast, guests may take advantage of case management and receive referrals. Adam Rocap is a case manager here.
- After breakfast, there is an art and writing program.
- Miriam’s has a four person transitional house for men who are homeless.

Public Comment

- A client from Families Forward expressed concern over finding employment.

- A speaker said that he attended the MLK Library hearing. He said that George Shepard sent him an application to join the ICH as requested during the hearing. He thanked Laura Zeilinger, George Shepard, and Dallas Williams for being responsive and for giving him hope. He expressed concerns about the Emery Shelter, stating that staff persons there have been threatening him. He said that he filled out a grievance form, but that he received a “ridiculous” response. He said that the staff members need to be investigated.
- A speaker who attended the MLK Library hearing wanted to know how issues that were discussed there are being addressed.
- Shelter staff has a retaliatory mentality according to one speaker. Another stated that transfers are being used to remove unwanted people from shelter.
 - Dan Tangherlini said that the Operations and Logistics committee will look into these issues. Mr. Tangherlini said that he will make a request for a report from the shelter monitoring team on these issues, namely, pests, staff problems, and grievances.
- A speaker expressed concern over being on the housing list since 2002.
 - Dan Tangherlini said that these issues will be addressed. The waiting list is being updated now.
- Several concerns were voiced about the move of the family resource center. Mr. Carter said that it will have the same telephone number as in the past. He also stated that there would be signage giving the new location. We will work on the availability of transportation for families from 25 M Street to the new site during business hours.

Adjournment

- After the public comment period, Mr. Tangherlini adjourned the meeting.

This concludes the notes from the session.

The invaluable assistance of Lindsay Barnett, Case Manager and MSW Intern from N Street Village, is gratefully acknowledged.

The next scheduled 2008 meetings of the ICH will be on:

- *Thursday, April 10 from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at So Others Might Eat (SOME), 71 O Street, NW.*
- *Thursday, June 12 from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at the Community for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV), 425 Second Street, NW.*
- *Thursday, September 11 from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at the Reeves Center, 2000 14th Street, NW, hosted by Martha’s Table.*
- *Thursday, November 13, 2008 from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at a location to be announced.*

Date of this document: April 2, 2008