

ECHO 2015 OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes 3-1-12

Present: Co-Chair Bob Staples and members Helen Kutz, Ginny Corson, Jennifer Newell and Debra Krittenbrink. Substituting for April Doshier was Natalie Gardner. Also present were staff Linda Price and Lisa Krieg.

Excused: Co-Chair Doug Forsyth and members Ann Wey and Teresa Capps

The meeting was called to order by Bob Staples at 4:03 p.m.

PRESENTATION BY TRAVIS HUMPHREY

Mr. Humphrey was unable to attend the meeting.

DISCUSSION ABOUT CENTRAL INTAKE SYSTEM

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is mandating that every Continuum of Care create a central intake system for homeless activities. HUD intends to require each Continuum of Care to develop and implement a centralized or coordinated assessment system in its geographic area. Such a system must be designed locally in response to local needs and conditions. HUD also plans to require each Continuum of Care to develop a specific policy on how its particular system will address the needs of individuals and families who are fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, but who are seeking shelter or services from non-victim service providers.

To receive federal homeless funds, an agency must be a part of such a system. Food & Shelter (FS), East Main Place (EMP), the Women's Resource Center (WRC), Bridges, The Salvation Army (TSA), Central Oklahoma Community Action Agencies (COCAA), and Thunderbird Clubhouse (TC) are partner agencies in this new program that will be called Central System for Intake (CSI). The agencies are working in coordination with Lisa Krieg with the City of Norman and Renee O'Leary of United Way to develop the system. The structure is being set up using the framework that FS has been using for the Homeless prevention and Rapid Rehousing (HPRP) Program.

Food and Shelter will be the one number to call for rent and utilities. An intake form will be filled out and a determination made on which agency to send the applicant. There is a 3-tier system with FS, COCAA and TSA in tier one because they have the most resources available. Tier 2 includes the other agencies, and tier 3 is the faith based organizations.

A soft opening is being planned for around the first of May with a hard opening in July.

UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAMS

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT (ESG) [FORMERLY EMERGENCY SHELTER GRANT]

Interim rules were published in November with significant changes. Effective immediately is the change in the definition of homelessness. The new definition is as follows.

The categories are: (1) individuals and families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes a subset for an individual who resided in an emergency shelter or a place not meant for human habitation and who is exiting an institution where he or she temporarily resided; (2) individuals and families who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence; (3) unaccompanied youth and families with children and youth who are defined as homeless under other federal statutes who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition; and (4) individuals and families who are fleeing, or are attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member.

The Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC) previously announced that effective in January 2012 a second funding round of \$522,830 will occur under the new regulations. The key changes that reflect this new emphasis are the expansion of the homelessness prevention component of the program and the addition of a new rapid re-housing assistance component. The homelessness prevention component includes various housing relocation and stabilization services and short- and medium-term rental assistance to help people avoid becoming homeless. The rapid re-housing assistance component includes similar services and assistance to help people who are homeless move quickly into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing. The second funding round of 2011 ESG funds did not occur, and a planned training session scheduled in February was canceled and has not been rescheduled.

In general, the interim rule allows ESG funds to be used for five program components (street outreach, emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing assistance, and HMIS) and necessary administrative costs. However, in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act, some restrictions apply to the amounts that can be spent on street outreach, emergency shelter, and administrative costs.

A short review and discussion of the 2011 ESG applications noted that the applications were as follows: Bridges (\$50,000), Food & Shelter for Friends (\$50,000), East Main Place (\$50,000), Thunderbird Clubhouse (\$50,000), The Salvation Army (\$25,000), and the Women's Resource Center (\$25,000). COCAA also submitted an application separately due to programmatic requirements. In addition to the COCAA application, only one application submitted by the City of Norman was funded fully – East Main Place. Two were partially funded - \$25,000 for Thunderbird Clubhouse and \$25,000 for Women's Resource Center. Food & Shelter, Bridges, and The Salvation Army received no funding. The scoring results of the applications have been received from ODOC and are currently being analyzed by the agencies. FYE 2012 applications were expected to be due in February or March 2012, but it now looks as though it may be July before that occurs. It is known that the 2012 funds will have to be compliant with the HEARTH Act with 40% of funding for homeless prevention and rapid rehousing and 60% for operations. ODOC will receive approximately \$1.6 million to distribute to continuums outside of Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

Continuum of Care

The Continuum of Care application was submitted in October 2011. Part one was submitted with six applications. Those applications included: two Supportive Housing (SHP) renewals of \$51,337 for Food and Shelter and \$43,895 for East Main Place; two Shelter Plus Care renewals of \$37,596 for Progressive Independence and \$81,072 for HOPE; one new Shelter Plus Care application of \$69,240 for Thunderbird Clubhouse and a new Bonus SHP for Food and Shelter of \$25,315. The total of all applications was \$308,455.

All renewals were approved, but no word has been received on the new applications.

UPDATE ON STATUS OF STIMULUS FUNDING FOR THE HOMELESS PREVENTION AND RAPID REHOUSING PROGRAM (HPRP)

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 included funding for a one time stimulus program titled the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program. This is a three year program that will end in June 2012 or when the funding runs out. Only \$72,000 remains and an average of \$30,000 is expended each month. An average of 12 families per week is being assisted (48 each month). Most are families with young children. Most families receive both utility and rent assistance. ODOC monitored Norman's program, but no letter has been received from ODOC on the results of the visit.

JANUARY POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS COUNT

The January 2012 count occurred on January 26th. The City worked closely with a number of agencies including Norman Public Schools and the Department of Human Services. In addition to counting the homeless, agencies were asked to gather data relating to the past history of those persons that are sheltered that night.

Data has been received from all shelters, but the instructions for reporting have not been released by HUD, and will not be until April 2nd. The preliminary count is 615 with 93 in emergency shelters including 53 at Griffin; 120 in transitional housing; 269 students identified by schools in Moore, Norman, Noble and Little Axe; and 133 unsheltered (counted from waiting lists and FS outreach to street homeless). The count does not include 53 in permanent supportive housing that we previously counted.

Lisa Krieg is working with DHS on a data base to ask their clients if there are in a homeless shelter, in a location that is unfit, or sharing housing with a friend or relative because of economic conditions. DHS did a query this year that indicated 1,246 fit these categories from the Moore office, and 1,499 from the Norman office for a total of 2,745. Agency directors believe that at least 2,000 people in Cleveland County fit into these categories, and would be included in the count in the future once the data base is finalized.

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION

Co-Chair Bob Staples asked if City Council had been approached regarding the need for funding homeless activities and the need for increasing the public awareness of the homeless issue. City staff offered that Food and Shelter was asked by Council to submit a request for funding to keep their facility open at night during the winter. That request was made, and Council funded \$8,500 for the remainder of this winter. Food and Shelter indicated that the shelter has been operating at their maximum capacity of 35 every night. Also, a request for next fiscal year has been submitted for \$13,000 to cover next winter and the replacement of some cots and sleeping bags.

The next quarterly meeting will be at 4:00 p.m. on June 7, 2012.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.