

Ozarks Alliance to End Homelessness



Springfield/Greene, Christian and Webster Counties Continuum of Care

Community Partnership of the Ozarks
OAEH Executive Board Meeting

May 12, 2021

11:00 a.m. – noon via Zoom

Attendees

Voting Members

Sabrina Aronson
Bob Atchley
Elisa Coonrod
Kelly Harris
Missy Hayward
Holly Hunt
Tim Knapp

Mike Lucas
Theresa Oglesby
Jim O'Neal
Maura Taylor
John Walker

Interested Parties

R Meleah Spencer

Support Staff

Adam Bodendieck
Dandy Myles
Rebecca Sisk
Amanda Stadler

Welcome & Introductions – Kelly Harris

Kelly Harris called the meeting to order at 11:00 am and ask everyone to introduced themselves through the Zoom Chat, with their name and organization.

Old Business

Approval of April Minutes (Vote Required) – Kelly Harris, Chair

Kelly asked for any discussion, additions or corrections to the April minutes that were updated and provided to the group prior to the meeting.

ACTION: Jim O'Neal made a motion to accept the April minutes updated with the requested revision. Elisa Coonrod seconded the motion. A Zoom voting poll was done. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

2021 Point in Time (PIT) Count Presentation (Vote Required) – Dandy Myles

The data is preliminary because it is currently being entered into HDX, so it has not technically been submitted. The data looks at Emergency Shelter (ES), Transitional Housing (TH) and Safe Haven (SH) utilization for the night of January 27, 2021.

Notes are below. See Addendum for full presentation.

- Total number of persons 501; total number of HH 306
- Persons by Project Type 2021 vs 2020 % change: ES +12%; TH 0%; SH (0); total +11%
- HH by Project Type 2021 vs. 2020 % change: ES -14%; TH +4%; total -13%

- Number of persons in chronic HH 2021 vs 2020 % change: ES +20%; SH (0); total +20%
- Number of veterans 2021 vs 2020 % change: ES +131%; SH (0); total +131%
- Number of persons in youth HH 2021 vs. 2020 % change: ES -84%; TH +60%; SH (0); total -67%
- Number of parenting youth 2021 vs 2020 % change: ES -13%; TH (4); total +13%

Comments/Questions:

- The age range for parenting youth is based on HUD guidelines. 18-24 is parenting youth; 25+ is adult.
- The ES numbers include Crisis Cold Weather Shelter numbers.
- The Transitional Housing programs are Catholic Charities LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home and The Salvation Army Family Enrichment Center.
- There are no SH. The HUD definition is: A Safe Haven is a 24-hour/7-days-a-week community-based early recovery model of supportive housing that serves hard-to-reach, hard-to-engage homeless individuals with severe mental illness and substance use disorders, and it can be found at:
https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/SafeHavenFactSheet_CoCProgram.pdf
- The unaccompanied children would be entered in at some level via a program like Great Circle or Isabel's House.

Kelly asked for a vote to approve the 2021 PIT/HIC data for submission to US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

ACTION: A Zoom voting poll was done. Submission vote was unanimous.

Webster County Representative (Vote Required) – Kelly Harris

Dallas Knight with the Webster Co. Sheriff's Office has been the Webster Co. representative for a long time. He has stepped down and recommended Alyssa Spradlin as his replacement. Alyssa was unable to join today but attended part of the OAEH Executive Board meeting in April and said she would be happy to join the group. She lives in Webster Co., and is a pastor at Central Christian Church, so she will be a good fit for the group.

Kelly asked for a motion to approve adding Alyssa Spradlin to the OAEH Executive Board to be the Webster Co. representative.

ACTION: Maura Taylor made a motion to accept Alyssa Spradlin as the OAEH Executive Board Webster Co. representative. Bob Atchley seconded the motion. A Zoom voting poll was done. Motion carried unanimously.

Committee Updates

Systems & Services Committee (S&SC) – Maura Taylor

There was discussion about the Strategic Plan and how to engage clients in the process through surveys, Customer Satisfaction Surveys, or focus groups. This information will be brought to this group later for review and discussion.

Emergency Shelter Work Group – Amanda Stadler

They had been meeting about ways to bring more ES beds into the community. They had been exploring funding options they thought would be a great fit, but it turns out the funding source was not applicable for what they were trying to do. At this point the group is on hold and not meeting on a regular basis. They are hoping that the additional funding coming into the city through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) will be an option to add additional ES beds. The City is still waiting on guidance from HUD about the parameters and uses for the funding.

Christian County Homeless Alliance (CCHA) – Amanda Stadler

John Walker was unable to attend the CCHA meeting yesterday, so Amanda is giving the update. They are continuing the discussion on host homes as ES or housing placement for Christian Co. youth. They know that Great

Circle is an option, but often kids do not want to go to Springfield when their community, jobs, friends, etc. are in Christian Co. Amanda thanked Holly Hunt for attending the meeting and sharing expertise on the host homes model since it is something that Great Circle has investigated.

Maura Taylor shared that for Christian and Webster counties, Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri, Consumer Credit Counseling and Ozarks Area Community Action Corporation (OACAC) are all providers under the SAFHR program to help people fill out the application and housing stability plan for the rent and utility assistance for arrears and up to 3 months forward for a total of 12 months.

HOPE Connection/Veterans Stand Down – Amanda Stadler

Last time the event was held was in 2019. The planning team had some preliminary discussions about the event. Many of the folks on the original planning team are no longer in the same positions from two years ago, so some institutional leadership has been lost. Plus, it is hard to imagine how you would plan an event this large in 8 months and to ensure that it could be facilitated in a way to protect safety for guests and volunteers. Because of those changes and challenges, the planning team decided to not hold the large event this year, but to continue with the “pop up” Hope Connection smaller targeted events at the O’Reilly Center for Hope (ORCH). They have hosted several since the ORCH opened last fall, like quarterly vision exam days, COVID vaccinations, and grocery giveaways. The model seems to work well, and they have been able to reach more people and be a little more flexible since they are not such a huge planning endeavor.

Federal Funding Update – Amanda Stadler

With the American Rescue Plan (ARP), the local Housing Authority’s that serve our CoC – which is the Housing Authority of Springfield (HAS) and OACAC with their Dallas Co. Public Housing Agency (PHA) - will be getting additional emergency housing vouchers. Bob Atchley and Amanda have been watching webinars and it will require a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the CoC and the Housing Authorities for the Coordinate Entry referral piece. Bob said the vouchers could actually be in use through 2030. It is his understanding that they are not transferable, however until after 2023, so it will be a one-time use after that time.

Announcements/Discussion

Federal Funding Q and A Session – Amanda Stadler

There is a lot of talk about federal funding in these meetings, and it’s not always presented in a way that makes it easy for attendees to ask questions. So, in preparation for our upcoming local CoC funding competition soon and since we have some new Board members, it was decided to take this opportunity for agencies to share what it means to them to receive and administer federal funding.

– Coordinate Entry System (CES) - Adam Bodendieck

Agencies and programs often get asked “Why can’t you house someone” and it really comes down to the different eligibility requirements for federal funding for supportive housing and there is a prioritization policy that must be followed. Agencies must take the referrals from the CES and from the Prioritization List. As an example, someone looking to access any of these programs, first presents to the CES, which is One Door or one of our population specific Front Doors with one of our partners. An example would be if you have youth who is experiencing homelessness, and somebody says, “You need to go check out Rare Breed”. So, they go and check out Rare Breed, but the last thing you want to see happen is someone at Rare Breed then telling them that they have to go over to the O’Reilly Center for Hope (ORCH) and meet with One Door to do this piece, and then you need to come back here. Rare Breed is enabled to do the intake assessment so people can get on the Prioritization List as quickly as possible.

In our last meeting we discussed that all our local Rapid Rehousing (RRH) programs target different populations, like families with children, youth, veterans, and survivors of domestic violence (DV). For RRH

first you must meet the eligibility criteria and then you must be prioritized accordingly through the intake assessment, VI-SPDAT, length of time homeless, and number of days spend on the Prioritization list to be prioritized for program openings.

Our Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs can serve individuals, couples, or families. It has the same eligibility criteria as RRH with the addition of chronicity. They target those who are chronically homeless, which includes length of time homeless – 1 year (12 consecutive months) or 4 or more instance of homelessness comprising 12 months over the past 3 years, plus a disabling condition defined by HUD as “a diagnosable substance abuse disorder, a serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions.”

All our agencies have been in a position where they would really like to see someone get referred to a program, but the reality is that they are not going to be prioritized and they are not going to be referred to one of those programs. In these cases, One Door is very honest with the individuals, and they look at what mainstream resources might be available like their personal support network or diversion, to come up with a comprehensive, holist plan to help them when it comes to housing. A lot of times it revolves around discussions around building income.

Within the CES, we have some processes in place to help make sure we are getting an accurate read on folks, since we’ve had some cases in the past where we have had individuals with sever and persistent mental health issues, or traumatic brain injuries and we know when they present for the in-take assessment that we are not getting the full, comprehensive picture. The process allows us to make adjustments so we can make sure that we have that safety net for those folks by working with case conferencing group and other CES partners to get an accurate assessment and accurate prioritization score.

– **Housing First – Maura Taylor**

Maura is going to discuss how agencies that do RRH work with One Door. There are certain populations that agencies who do RRH serve, and all agencies follow the Housing First model. What that means is that they try to reduce as many barriers as possible to get someone housed and offer case management. Some of the barriers are substance abuse, mental health, loss of employment, lack of job skills, etc. Studies have shown that housing first, is the most successful path to keeping people permanently housed long-term. There are challenges, as Adam mentioned. One is that One Door will send folks for housing with high vulnerability scores. There is RRH which is where they are put in apartments or homes and the agencies pay the rent and utilities for up to 24 months under most of their federal funding guidelines. Typically, the people that are supposed to be sent to RRH, have lower VI-SPDAT or vulnerability scores and are not supposed be 19-20’s they are supposed be in the 8-11 range, but due to the lack of PSH beds in our community, many agencies take higher scores, so they have a lot more barriers to keep and sustain their housing after the assistance ends. Some individuals will never be able to work, so they work with the client to get them on disability and other benefits. Those who just have barriers to employment, they work with them to get job training skills. The bottom line is that they must work to increase HH income, because at some point the program funding ends. That speaks to the need for PSH in the area, since many clients will have barriers that will take a long time to overcome, and many will never be able to sustain themselves without some assistance. That is also the importance of working with Section 8 housing, because even if clients are starting under a RRH program under HUD because they have high scores, the agency will work with Section 8 since that might be a better program for the client since part of or all their rent and utilities could be sustained for a longer time or perpetuity.

Agencies, under these grants, do not get covered for all their costs, and sometimes agencies must do matches. For the HUD CoC grants for RRH, each of our agencies must come up with at least a 25% match. Under the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) under homeless prevention services, they must come up a 100% match, which means that agencies must find or leverage dollars from other grants, or they must raise

the dollars through fundraising, donors, etc. Also, what is covered under some grants is very limited for what is considered eligible expenses.

- **Grant Matches and Documentation Challenges – Theresa Oglesby**

The HUD grants require a 25% match, and it must be non-federal monies, which means it must come from regular donation dollars or a private foundation. The tricky part is that you must track that revenue coming in and then you also must track, very specifically, how those monies were spent and that it met the eligible expense guidelines, which is sometimes a very narrow definition. You also must show which program participant those monies went to. So, while a “match” sound great, it is very technical to keep up with all the documentation required.

The HUD grants pay primarily for rent, so sometimes there is a nominal amount that will go to support services, which the The Kitchen Inc., has historically used to pay for case management wages. There is a small nominal amount that pays for admin managing the grant (writing the checks, etc.), but the key to clients having success is the case management team that works beside them to help them overcome the barriers and find the community resources and support systems to be successful. There is also documentation that is needed just for an agency’s day to day case management, plus recertification, case notes, etc., which takes time away from working with the families.

Rent reasonableness is also something that is required by the grant. What they are seeing right now is that rents are increasing. HUD puts out a dollar amount that is considered Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a 1-, 2- or 3-bedroom unit, but what they are seeing is that landlords are increasing rents, first because they can, and second, they have hundreds of applications for a single unit. Without HUD and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) providing waivers for agencies to pay more than the FMR, then agencies would not be able to house people right now. The scary part is that now agencies are putting clients into even higher rent housing, so the income must increase even more to be able to sustain the housing once the assistance ends. The cycle shows how great the need in the community is for affordable housing and landlords willing to take chances with our clients. They are seeing some instances where landlords are being extremely assertive and sometimes aggressive in asking agencies to pay for things that are not grant covered, which also makes it difficult.

- **Safe to Sleep – Kelly Harris**

Safe to Sleep is the emergency overnight shelter for women. They use ESG funding for ES, which mainly pays for the case manager. There are 4 forms that need to be completed for each client just to pass the audit, and Kelly spends hours of admin time on the requirements. They do not do any PSH or RRH or use HUD funds. Affordable housing is the challenge, and wait times use to be about 6 months a few years ago but is now close to a year due to the backlog. Some of the remodeling done after 417 Rentals purchases, also added to the wait time. Safe to Sleep has issues with getting their women into RRH or Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) because of the guidelines. Local community priorities, HUD, and programs focus on populations like veterans or intact families, and most Safe to Sleep women clients do not qualify under those guidelines. Victory Mission has the same issue. The community needs to understand that the government does not just send us \$1 million and say go fix homelessness; HUD determines what program types they are going to fund and guides who is going to be on the priority list. With RRH serving veterans, youth, families with children, and DV; Safe to Sleep women do not fall into any of those categories, so what Safe to Sleep ends up with is a 75-year-old woman with no options for a program to go into. Many do not have chronicity or high barriers. The age of their clients is going up from on average of 43 to 46.

- **The Kitchen Inc. – Meleah Spencer**

Meleah said she gets a lot of calls, especially when city council folks are running for office, who say “We’ve got all these great homes on the northside that are empty. Why don’t you put people in them?” Part of HUD is the Housing Quality Standard (HQS), so yes there are a lot of homes on the northside, but most of

them would not meet the HQS standards. While they are at a good price, the utilities for most are more than the rent because they are improperly insulated or have water leaks, etc.

Comments/Questions:

Elisa Coonrod noted in the chat that the people on this call might know all the challenges faced, but when will we do a community education campaign to help explain how the systems works? Jim O'Neal said he learned a lot more in the last 30 mins that in a long while, so perhaps the group could put together an educational forum for the public, with the information online, to combat the bogus opinions and ideas about homeless, and about how bureaucratic and expensive it is. John Walker agreed and said the most people do not really understand the work agencies are doing, so how can we better publicize and simplify what the OAEH does.

Amanda Stadler thanked everyone for their feedback and suggested adding marketing and communications to the June agenda.

Eden Village Update – Jim O'Neal

Eden Village II is nearly complete and is full. They will start the construction of Eden Village III at the beginning of 2022. The demand at the Revive 66 Campground is unbelievable and overflows every night. There are 22 more teardrop units under construction. The total capacity when it's fully expanded is somewhere in the 40's. He does not know the status of the acquisition of the hotel next door. Amanda Stadler added that while Eden Village is not a part of the federal funding piece that was discussed earlier, they are PSH beds for the high barrier clients that were discussed.

OAEH In-Person Meetings – John Walker

John Walker asked if there had been any discussions related to returning to in-person meetings. Amanda Stadler said that would be at the discretion of the group. Jim O'Neal said that if we knew vaccination rates within the group, that might help make the decision. It would not be against CPO's policies with masks and social distancing, if possible. Amanda Stadler will also add in-person meetings to the agenda for June.

Other – Amanda Stadler

Some CPO employees have had their emails hacked lately, so if you get an email about downloading a check to reconcile, do not open it because it is SPAM.

Motion to Adjourn – Kelly Harris, Chair

Kelly Harris asked for a motion to adjourn.

ACTION: Jim O'Neal made a motion to adjourn the meeting. John Walker seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm.

Addendum

2021 Point in Time (PIT) Count Presentation

Upcoming Meetings

Next Meeting is June 9, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm via Zoom