

Ozarks Alliance to End Homelessness



Springfield/Greene, Christian and Webster Counties Continuum of Care

**Community Partnership of the Ozarks
OAEH Executive Board Meeting**

August 11, 2021

11:00 a.m. – noon

Zoom

Attendees

Voting Members

Sabrina Aronson
Bob Atchley
Elisa Coonrod
Kelly Harris
Missy Hayward
Holly Hunt
Jim O’Neal

Sgt R Russel (Proxy for Sgt Lucas)
Alyssa Spradlin
John Walker

Support Staff

Adam Bodendieck
Stephanie Cartwright
Amanda Stadler

Interested Parties

Meleah Spencer

Welcome & Introductions – Kelly Harris

Kelly Harris called the meeting to order at 11:02 am and asked everyone to introduced themselves.

Old Business

Approval of July Minutes (Action Required) – Kelly Harris, Chair

Kelly asked for any questions, additions, or corrections to the July minutes that were provided to the group prior to the meeting.

- **ACTION:** John Walker made a motion to accept the July minutes. Jim O’Neal seconded the motion. A Zoom voting poll was done to approve the minutes. Motion carried unanimously. The minutes are approved.

Approval of Emergency Shelter Written Standards (Action Required) – Kelly Harris

Kelly shared that they Systems & Services group discussed the Emergency Shelter Written Standards in detail and came up with one change they would like to recommend. Under Case Management criteria on page 4, number 7, we are rewording so that it is more clearly stated that the case management is optional for clients. The Systems & Services group voted and approved the standards, pending the language change. These standards are for emergency shelters funded through ESG.

Kelly asked for a motion and a second to vote on this verbiage change.

- **ACTION: Bob Atchley** made a motion to approve the suggested amendments from the Systems & Services committee meeting that met earlier this morning. **Sabrina Aronson** seconded the motion. A Zoom voting poll was done to approve the suggested amendments. Motion carried with the small language change.

New Business

Strategic Plan Listening Sessions – Amanda Stadler

Amanda shared that the OAEH is in the process of updating its Strategic Plan. The first listening session for that update was at the Alliance General Membership meeting in July. Those participants were mostly our service providers, our HUD-funded agencies, and folks that are directly offering homeless services within our community.

Additional listening sessions will occur over the next two months with other system level partners such as City and County leadership, faith-based partners, mental health, physical health, legal and law enforcement. Because so many of these sectors are represented on the OAEH Executive Board, Amanda and Adam would like to engage this group in scheduling, facilitating, and coordinating the listening sessions. If you work with one of those sectors, please expect an ask from Adam or Amanda. If anyone in the group has ideas or specifically wants to offer support, please let Amanda know.

Amanda thanked the OAEH Executive Board and the Systems & Services Committee. A few years ago, the CoC had HUD technical assistance to restructure the OAEH at its governance level and out of that, the Executive Board was expanded to have all those system partners at the table.

Bob Atchley added that the timing on this Strategic Plan is very good. The City of Springfield will be receiving American Rescue Plan Act funds. They are referred to as HOME-ARPA funds. The City won't receive federal guidance on that funding source until October or November, but the City will need to work in conjunction with the OAEH. Additionally, if we have a Strategic Plan that is potentially guiding us, it may make it a lot easier as we move forward making funding decisions, which will likely be in early 2022 calendar year.

Awards for Homeless Advocacy – Kelly Harris

Kelly reminded the group about the annual Awards for Homeless Advocacy. It is time again to submit those nominations. Usually, there are three groups submitting nominations for the awards: the OAEH Executive Board, the Hope Connection group, and Systems & Services Committee. A link to the nomination form was added the Zoom chat and an email with that nomination form will be sent out to everyone to fill out after the meeting. We're looking at folks and agencies that don't provide homeless services for a living that partner with the Ozarks Alliance to End Homelessness to address gaps (ie not any of our funded agencies). Last year we recognized Cross Lines because they stepped in a big way during COVID-19, as well as Springfield Public Schools and Jordan Valley.

We're looking for those folks who went above and beyond being great advocates for the homeless community. Kelly mentioned that we are not going to have an in-person recognition event unless COVID-19 situation in our community dramatically improves.

Federal Funding Updates

CDBG CV – DED – Bob Atchley

Bob shared The City of Springfield plans to apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding that was provided to the Missouri Department of Economic Development (DED), which is CARES Act funding provided to the Missouri DED. The City came before City Council on Monday evening and City Council gave the staff approval to move forward with an application. Bob thanked Amanda Stadler, Kelly Harris, and Meleah Spencer for speaking in support of the City's application. Right now, the City has put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an emergency shelter facility and/or public services that will assist the homeless. The City has made decision to apply specifically for those items that will assist the homeless. We can apply for up to \$2 million, which is the most that can be

awarded. This is a competitive application process across the state so we're not 100% certain that our application will be approved, but we do plan to apply. We are hopeful to get our application submitted by the end of this month or, possibly early next month. The Missouri DED is approving applications on a rolling basis. We're hopeful they'll move quickly but not certain how quickly we will even hear. Hopefully we'll have an update within the next few months for this group.

Kelly thanked Bob for all his work behind the scenes that goes into helping us find funding sources.

Kelly welcomed Alyssa Spradlin, our new Webster County representative on the OAEH Executive Board.

Committee Updates

Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) – Adam Bodendieck

Adam updated the group on the EHVs. These are vouchers that were granted to the local Public Housing Authorities (HAS and OACAC). Along with that came a mandate that referrals for those vouchers come from the Coordinated Entry System (CES), and that the Public Housing Authorities and CoC work together on targeting, prioritizing, and distributing these vouchers. These are a little more flexible than typical mainstream housing choice vouchers, so we are very excited about this amazing opportunity!

Adam and Amanda worked with HAS and OACAC on an MOU for this process, which outlined all parties' responsibilities. Preferred Family Healthcare will also be a partner in offering housing navigation services with HAS and OACAC for each referral.

An EHV Work Group has been meeting regularly, including this afternoon, to review the final draft of policies and procedures as well as some step-by-step processes. Once the process is complete, Adam thinks we are very close to the point where we will be able to start making referrals for these vouchers. Based on current community need federal guidance, the Work Group decided to prioritize these vouchers for individuals who are literally homeless (Category 1). We've also worked with some of our local victim service providers such as Harmony House and Night Light International. We've talked about setting aside a percentage of vouchers specifically for our victim service providers to be able to make referrals (Category 4).

When it comes to targeting, we want to make sure we have updated assessments on file for our single individuals, our couples, and our households that could not or would not typically be served under Rapid Re-housing programs. Our standard Rapid Re-housing programs typically serve families with children or those who would not necessarily qualify for a PSH program but do need extended housing assistance. There will be more coming out once we officially start the process, once we're able to say, "okay, referrals are being made" but at this point just know that anybody who has done a CES assessment will be considered and prioritized for these vouchers as well as other housing programs.

Adam is working with ICA on a small update to the front door assessment. Since we're working with OACAC (the Public Housing Authority for outside of Springfield [Greene, Christian, and Webster Counties]), we want to make sure we're capturing anybody who is interested in relocating because we do have access to vouchers in those counties. We are going to make some changes to the assessment to make sure we are fully capturing that so we can take advantage and be able to access those vouchers. If anybody is going to relocate to another one of our counties, we want to be sure we are taking that into consideration.

Elisa asked if the vouchers could be used for domestic violence victims who would like to relocate to a different part of the state.

Adam replied that there is portability. There are processes and procedures in place for that, particularly under VAWA, which involves working with whoever the appropriate Continuum is that serves whatever county that might be where they want to go. We cannot necessarily directly refer to a different county outside of our Continuum since each CoC have their own policies and procedures, but we do make those connections as needed.

Amanda expressed her gratitude to HAS and OACAC for their partnership and collaboration. Not every area in the state administers these vouchers. Even if Public Housing Authorities are willing to administer the vouchers, they don't necessarily have a great working relationship with their Continuum of Care. Fortunately, for us this process was fairly smooth to facilitate because of the collaborative nature of our community and because we have all stakeholders at the table.

Kelly asked if the process plan has been shared at the Case Conferencing meetings. Adam replied that the plan has been talked about with the Case Conferencing group as progress and new milestones have been reached.

Systems & Services Committee (S&SC) – Kelly Harris

Kelly shared that we had some good discussions around the Emergency Shelter Written Standards. There were some good ideas and discussion regarding landlord engagement and maybe trying to find some funding for the Risk Mitigation issues that we have.

Amanda added that all our HUD CoC funded agencies submit quarterly monitoring reports. We have a committee overseen by the Executive Board that looks at those reports every month. It looks at spending performance, how the agency is interacting with CES, and then their system performance. Another factor that the committee is looking at is the length of time people are experiencing homelessness, and how they maintain their housing once they get placed. Increases in income is another one of those Federal pieces that the committee reviews as well as the impacts of the funding that our community gets through that CoC funding.

Through the last few reviews of those reports, we had noticed that across the board, agencies were really struggling with that income increase piece, so Adam and Amanda did a little brainstorming. They wanted to start with a refresher training for staff that do those updates in HMIS for income increases. They think it might just be a reporting issue, not necessarily an issue of folks not getting connected with other supportive services. ICA will be offering a training in two weeks on that updating piece to offer some extra education with all the nuances that go into reporting in HMIS. The training will also be recorded for future reference for staff.

Adam added that for those people that don't use HMIS, it is not super intuitive. There is a bit of a learning curve so we want to make sure everybody fully understands how the information is captured, when it's captured, what it means, what it looks like, and what can cause an upward trend. It is the fact that an increase of a dollar in your annual income benefits those system performance measures so let's make sure that we're not missing any opportunity to capture important information and provide necessary assistance.

Crisis Cold Weather Shelter Planning – Amanda Stadler

Amanda shared that we are brainstorming all kinds of out-of-the-box ideas, partners, solutions for our Crisis Cold Weather Shelter system for this year. Last month we shared that we were really hoping to find a way to offer shelter seven nights a week in the winter, to move away from that temperature perimeter, which we've historically used. Amanda shared that this is something we knew we needed, even before COVID-19, and we're really hoping to involve extra partners to make that possible because our current partners are operating at 200% and really can't take on that extra piece of adding the nightly shelter. We have made asks of partners and just weren't able to find extra support to offer that. COVID-19 brought on a lot of fatigue to people, especially homeless service providers. It has been a complicated last 15 months, so it just wasn't something we were able to find support for. Now we are really working to making sure that basic framework in place to offer the minimum of what we offered last year as a system. It looks like we will have the same capacity to provide shelter that we did last year. We still have asks out

to different partners specifically for overnight shelter space and for pickup sites so those are conversations that are still happening. A couple of pieces to consider:

- 1) A space was identified that could host a pickup site, which is a piece that is critical to this shelter system. Last year, with additional shelter sites in place to accommodate COVID social distancing requirements, having central transportation hub just proved critical. We have a site that's interested in doing that, but they do need financial support so that is another piece of conversation that we're having.
- 2) There are some partners that don't have volunteers or space but can offer funds so we're exploring those options. If you know somebody that would like to contribute funds that is a great way to support all our cold weather shelter system.
- 3) Within the next two weeks, we'll be starting a marketing push for the whole cold weather shelter system overall, recruiting volunteers for all those sites: overnight volunteers, volunteers to transport pets, and volunteers to do laundry runs in the morning. There's a big variety of opportunities even for folks that don't want to stay overnight or are not comfortable with having direct contact with people. Unless something changes, it looks like we'll be back at that 32-degree perimeter for the shelters so we will need a lot of overnight volunteers again.

Amanda shared that one of the partners she communicated with had doubts if our community will have a need for the crisis cold weather sheltering because of the federal COVID funding. Amanda emphasized that crisis sheltering is still a critical need in our community.

If anyone has crisis sheltering ideas, please let Amanda know. We're exploring all our avenues to ensure we can offer the best that our community has the capacity to offer for overnight shelters this winter.

Announcements/Discussion

Housing Study Presentation at September Meeting

There will be a presentation on the Housing Study at the September 8th meeting.

Meleah Spencer asked if the Housing Study provides the amount of current affordable housing that we have, and how much more we need in our community, and if that is even possible to determine. Meleah shared that The Kitchen has 222 rooms of affordable housing. That's not counting The Kitchen, Inc.'s federally funded housing assistance programs, but what's available for anyone to rent who is low income and needing affordable housing.

Kelly responded that that's a good question because when you drive around Springfield all you see are new apartment complexes being built, but we know none of low-income folks can afford renting these apartments.

Meleah added that we have wonderful developments happening in our community but are we basing it on what developers want or are we basing it on what our community actually needs. There are some beautiful senior housing developments being built in our community, but they come with a beautiful monthly price tag. We are seeing an increase of people 55+ needing affordable housing. How are we going to meet that need in our City if we don't know how much we currently have and how much we need?

Amanda will reach out to the professor that developed the Housing Study to see if that's something that he can speak to at the presentation and at least give him a heads-up that that's what we're going to have questions about.

Kelly added that this is a rare opportunity to have this done so hopefully it will have the data that we really need.

Board Member Terms

Amanda shared there are a few Board members whose term ends in September. She will be reaching out to our Nominations Committee soon. There are three positions so have that on your radar for next month.

Respite Bed Reimbursement

Amanda shared that there have been on-going conversations with all the OAEH partners about creating more respite beds for folks that are experiencing homelessness and are discharged from the hospital and needing an isolation or quarantine space due to COVID-19. We are having multiple meetings a week with different partners at the local and State level to get a system in place using FEMA reimbursement funding for support. There's nothing more official to share, but please know that conversations are happening.

Eden Village – Jim O'Neil

Jim provided an update on the status of Eden Village 1 and 2. They have run into a bit of a snag on Eden Village 2 as the COVID-19 situation has really impacted their progress including having a hard time keeping carpenters on site.

According to a report that was prepared ten days ago, there are eight houses occupied and six that we blocked and tied down. They've been using the housing for homeless individuals who are being quarantined for COVID-19. The hospitals and CPO have been reimbursing Eden Village for using their beds to quarantine COVID positive homeless individuals. There is a plan to finish and open Eden Village 2 and have a grand opening by the end of September. It may be too optimistic, but we hope for the best.

Adam asked for a reminder on how many units there are ultimately going to be there at Eden Village 2. Eden Village 1 has 32 units and Eden Village 2 has approximately 30 units.

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. Elisa Coonrod seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:51 a.m.

Upcoming Meetings

Next Meeting is September 8, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm via Zoom