

MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
CONTINUUM OF CARE PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 25, 2008

MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Theresa James, Maricopa County, Chair  
Robert Duvall, Community Information &  
Referral  
\*Dick Geasland, Tumbleweed  
Katie Hobbs, Sojourner Center  
Deanna Jonovich, City of Phoenix  
\*John Landrum, The Salvation Army  
\*Nick Margiotta, Phoenix Police  
Department  
\*Ric Mason, Labor's Community Service  
Agency  
Elizabeth Morales, AZ Behavioral Health  
Corporation  
\*Darlene Newsom, United Methodist  
Outreach Ministries  
Amy Schwabenlender, Valley of the Sun  
United Way  
Laura Skotnicki, Save the Family  
Michelle Thomas, YWCA

\*John Wall, CASS  
\*Lisa Wilson, City of Mesa  
Margaret Cordova for Diana Yazzie Devine,  
Native American Connections

OTHERS PRESENT

Chris Anderson, St. Vincent de Paul  
Nancy Barkley, MAG  
Sheila Bates, House of Reguge  
Tonia Begay, Care Direction  
Mike Bell, St. Vincent de Paul  
Erin Benning, NATN  
Katherine Davis, RATN  
Marilyn Fall, Recovery Innovations  
Noemi Ghirghi, HUD  
Laura Hughes, NATN  
Brande Mead, MAG

\*Those members neither present nor represented by  
proxy.

+Present by audio or videoconference.

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair James, Maricopa County, called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m. and introductions ensued.

2. Approval of the October 22, 2007 Meeting Minutes

Chair James called for approval of the October 22, 2007 meeting minutes. Laura Guild, DES, motioned to approve the minutes. Katie Hobbs, Sojourner, second the motion. The passed unanimously.

3. Call to the Audience

Laura Skotnicki, Save the Family, commented on long term subsidies and the need to set aside specific funds for long term subsidies. She added dialogue on this issue is needed in order to end homelessness for individuals and families.

4. Tempe Project Homeless Connect

Chair James provided a report on the January 25, 2008 Tempe Project Homeless Connect. She stated Project Homeless Connect addresses the issues that are in the

community such as homelessness. It is a one day event where the community brings together as many entities to give immediate services to homeless individuals and families. The first Project Homeless Connect was held in January 2007. It is now a quarterly event with four being held so far. She said Project Homeless Connect is a rewarding experience and allows for an opportunity to hear individual stories and to put a face to homelessness. Over 75 volunteers came together to assist in guiding guests around to the various service providers. Volunteers are spreading the word to other community members, business members and organizations.

Chair James stated assistance is available if anyone is interested in coordinating an event like this in other communities. She said a data collection component was added to the intake processes. It was found the average length of time someone had experienced homelessness was 40 months, the majority were single men over the age of 30 years. Other agencies interested in providing services are the Salvation Army, the courts to help with legal issues and CASS with employment services. Senator Harry Mitchell's staff had also volunteered at this event. The next event will be on Friday, April 25, 2008.

#### 5. Continuum of Care Regional Plan Stakeholders Group Update

Chair James introduced Brande Mead, MAG who provided an update on the progress of the Continuum of Care Stakeholders Group. Ms. Mead said the Stakeholders Group met last Friday and took a look at developing a mission and principles for the plan. The group decided that the plan's areas of focus are: housing and supportive services, prevention, funding, community awareness, a coordinated response, transportation, leadership, education, training, employment, tracking results and evaluation. It was decided that the Stakeholders Group will have longer meetings, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. once a month in order to have the plan completed by June. Ms. Mead invited members to attend and added that lunch will be provided by the support of Mike McQuaid.

Ms. Mead stated discussion at the Stakeholders meeting included continuing the Appreciative Inquiry cascading interviews. The interviews will focus on clients, elected officials and the business community. The feedback gathered from the interviews will be used to develop principles and action steps.

#### 6 Identify Benefits and Elements of A Competitive Continuum of Care McKinney-Vento Funding Process

Chair James lead a discussion exploring the benefits and elements of a competitive Continuum of Care McKinney-Vento funding process. She stated this item has continually come up at committee meetings. Chair James emphasized that the Continuum needs to stay competitive and come up with the best way of ranking HUD applicants. She added that the housing emphasis score from HUD is very important and our community could do better in this area

Elizabeth Morales, Arizona Behavioral Health Corporation, stated there is a need to go through this process to get funded but it can be difficult unless you want to change programs and it may not make much of a difference as far as dollars are concerned. She said every year there has been discussion on this issue and she feels we are doing what

we can and would not recommend changing anything. Ms. Mead stated that there are other Continua that go through a competitive ranking and review process and are doing it well. Ms. Morales cautioned that if the process is more competitive, it may agencies in a difficult position.

Amy Schwabenlender, Valley of the Sun United Way, inquired if there were specific guidelines from HUD on how Continue should structure the rating and ranking procedure. Ms. Mead stated there were not but there is a structure HUD uses and we are meeting HUD's standards. Mr. Duvall commented to take a look at agencies that are ranking below HUD's national standard and to notify agencies of the possibility of losing their funding. Ms. Mead stated MAG has a consultant that is currently looking at the agencies that are below the national standards and has been working with them to improve in those areas. Ms. Morales noted that standards have not been consistent and giving agencies notice and assistance is needed first before pulling their funds. She added any changes in procedure should be widely known and discussed thoroughly. Ms. Schwabenlender inquired of the disadvantage of not having a local ranking and review committee. Ms. Mead stated that a third party committee is needed in order to review applications. Ms. Schwabenlender noted that she has received feedback from the ranking committee that they feel they are not being effective and that staffing the committee is difficult because of this concern. She said that they would like to focus their efforts on looking at performance.

Ms. Morales commented again that she is for leaving the rating and ranking process the way it is. It was suggested that the ranking committee volunteers are trained to better understand the process. Ms. Mead said that there is a training done each year with the ranking committee. Chair James suggested that staff look at other communities ranking and review process and report information gathered back to the Planning Subcommittee at the March meeting.

#### 7 2008 Homeless Street Count Update

Ms. Mead reported on the status of the 2008 Homeless Street Count in the region. She began by saying there was about an 18 percent decrease in the number for the entire county. She added that the total number of chronically homeless persons also went down. She stated that she couldn't give the final numbers because all of the numbers have not come in. However, she reported that the count was almost complete. She indicated that she has confirmed all of the numbers that have come in so far and will be presenting the information at the MAG Intergov meeting in March. She added that the numbers will be reported to the Continuum of Care Committee also in March and then a press release will be done. Mattie Lord, AZ Department of Economic Security added that the homeless shelter count numbers are being collected as well and that there are only eight more shelters left to report back. She noted that she would be in favor of issuing a joint press release with information on the homeless street count and the homeless shelter count.

Mr. Duvall stated that he was concerned that there was a decrease in the numbers. He asked if the wet weather and damp grounds affected the numbers reported. Ms. Mead said

there had been bad weather before yet the numbers had increased. Ms. Mead said that she would look into that issue more. It was asked if the region would consider more than one street count in a year. Chair James noted that Tempe had conducted a count twice in one year and that the numbers were surprisingly the same.

#### 8 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Presentation

Chair James introduced, Noemi Ghirghi, HUD Community Planning and Development, who presented on recent direction and communication received about homeless planning at the federal level. She stated the regional office and the SNAPS office would like to gather feedback on the local Continuum of Care process, the relationships among the Continuum, the providers and in hopes of sharing the information nationally. She would like to have feedback from the group on the proposals that are coming out of the Continuum and the impacts of them. She said she would also like to hear from the group on the electronic application system and how that could contribute to a smoother transition process. She said that she would like to look at how the Continuum handles renewals and other processes, what the strengths are in administering such programs, and other feedback the group would like to provide. She said that she would like to have these conversations during the Planning Subcommittee meetings.

Ms. Morales stated there are items for discussion with HUD that will affect our programs in regards to rules and regulations. Ms. Ghirghi stated there are positives and negatives to procedure and with great power comes great responsibility. Ms. Ghirghi stated that she is hoping the electronic process will simplify the process once the kinks get worked out. Ms. Ghirghi stated that she wants to emphasize that HUD is not monitoring MAG, but rather gathering feedback on processes within the Continuum

#### 9 Comments from the Subcommittee

Ms. Morales said Arizona Behavioral Health Corporation is chairing a committee on the issue of housing for people with behavioral health issues.

Ms. Mead provided information from the webcast on the 2008 HUD process. The process may be starting at a later date this year, it will be an electronic process, there has been no word about attachments but there will be some forms that will require signatures and will need to be scanned and attached. She said there will be some online training in April, on exhibit's one and two. Each applicant will need to go to [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov) to register, get their password and user name. The Continuum of Care will need to register beginning in May. She added that project sponsors will not have online access only applicants will have access to the online application. Ms. Ghirghi added that HUD will not accept anything in paper. Ms. Mead added that HUD is anticipating a quicker process with a faster turn around time.

Robert Duvall commented that Community Information and Referral is still in need of a Development Manager and encouraged colleagues to apply.

Jackie Taylor said that the Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness and LISC are joining together to do a key drive to raise awareness of possible cuts to the Housing Trust Fund.

All of the donors will be listed as supporters. She also said the coalition is having its third annual Spring Fling on Sunday, April 13, 2008 at 4:00 p.m.

10 Adjourn

The next Continuum of Care Planning Subcommittee meeting will be on April 28, 2008, from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. in the MAG Cholla Room. The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.