

MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
CONTINUUM OF CARE PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

June 20, 2011

Members Attending

Theresa James, City of Tempe, Chair
Greg Boone, Labor's Community Service Agency
Michelle Thomas for Robert Duvall, Community Information & Referral
*Richard Geasland, Tumbleweed
Connie Phillips for Katie Hobbs, Sojourner Center
*Nick Margiotta, Phoenix Police Department
*Linda Mushkatel, Maricopa County
Mattie Lord for Darlene Newsom, UMOM New Day Center
Lora Reid for Amy Schwabenlender, Valley of the Sun United Way
Laura Skotnicki, Save the Family
John Wall, Arizona Housing, Inc.
* Diana Yazzie Devine, Native American Connections

Others Present

Karen Brown, A New Leaf
Billie Cawley, Central Arizona Shelter Services
Dave Clitheroe, The Salvation Army
Tim Cole, City of Phoenix
Jenny Day, Basic Mission
Kathy DiNolfi, A New Leaf
Gary Hardy, Central Arizona Shelter Services
Marlena Pina, The Salvation Army
Vicki Rainey, Recovery Innovations
Amy Vogelson, Southwest Behavioral Health
Matt White, Abt Associates

Rachel Brito, MAG
Brandee Mead, MAG

*Those members neither present nor represented by proxy.
+Present by audio or videoconference.

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Theresa James, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m. Introductions ensued.

2. Call to the Audience

Audience members were given an opportunity to address the Planning Subcommittee. No comments were made.

3. Approval of April 25, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Chair James called for a motion to approve the April 25, 2011, meeting minutes. Greg Boone, Labor's Community Service Agency, made a motion to approve the minutes. Laura Skotnicki, Save the Family, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. HUD Family Options Study Update and Discussion

Chair James invited Matt White, Abt Associates, to provide an update on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Family Options Study. Mr. White referred the Subcommittee to the May 28, 2011 enrollment status report. He noted Maricopa County is one of 11 participants in the study.

Four different interventions are being studied at each site. Meetings held with agencies and providers have allowed Abt Associates to gather detailed information on staffing patterns and scope of service for the different intervention types. This information will allow HUD an opportunity to make adjustments in comparing interventions and will help inform policy. Enrollment in the study began November 2010. The status report gives a current snapshot of status to date.

With the emergency shelter programs, families must stay in shelter for a minimum of seven days. They are then offered an opportunity to participate in the study. After the family goes through the initial pre-screening, they are required to answer a series of questions to help determine their eligibility in the study. Although randomly assigned to one of the four interventions, families must qualify, or be eligible, to be enrolled in any one of the three interventions.

After completing the consent and screening protocol, families are entered into a database and randomly referred to an intervention. An overview of the "Referrals and Enrollment Status" report highlighted the number of families referred, contacted, enrolled and rejected. Mr. White noted families and programs both have the right to reject enrollment in the assigned program. The study is on target with 175 total referrals. The goal is to have 252 study referrals by October 2011. To date, 25 families have been enrolled in participating programs. Mr. White indicated that the tracking system for following families from the time of referral to program enrollment has been somewhat problematic. Mr. White advised a better tracking system is necessary to more quickly determine the status of these families once they are referred.

Mr. White advised the study design calls for long-term tracking of families. The package of services and intensity of services are geared towards client characteristics and barriers that could be better aligned. HUD believes the study will provide the data they are seeking to address these barriers. There is no analysis on which programs would be most successful or would emerge on top. However, it is a requirement for the study to collect information on eligibility criteria each program uses to make determination on which families fit their programs. Mr. White advised what has been found is that many programs funded by communities, are quite restrictive and difficult for families with high needs to get into. This raises questions, and might be helpful to inform discussion on how to help the families these programs are not serving.

Subcommittee members asked what procedures are used to follow up with participants placed in any of the four interventions. Mr. White advised families participate in an ongoing protocol/survey about their self-sufficiency. The survey is completed on an ongoing basis approximately every three months. An intensive amount of data is collected and families are given an incentive to continue participation.

Mr. White said that because of all of the restrictions programs have, all that will be learned (from the study) is what interventions work for the highest functioning families. There appears to be a gap in the families seen in emergency housing as few are able to get into the program because of the screening criteria. Therefore, the status of low functioning families

is unknown as they are not participating in any of the study interventions. Ms. Mead noted the study may create awareness about the restrictiveness of programs and help to inform future policy for service standards across the board.

Tim Cole, City of Phoenix, questioned whether or not providers are pre-determining the best candidates for the program before they are interviewed. He noted doing so would invalidate the study. Participating providers indicating that is not the case, they are not pre-determining what families are best to participate in the study. Mr. White advised the assignment process is random and a true experimental design. Ms. Skotnicki stated the study is exactly what providers set up as they did not want to be lenient in the eligibility process. Mr. Cole expressed concern that people are being screened out prior to going through the pre-screening process with Patricia. Providers in attendance indicated they are not filtering candidates prior to the pre-screening process.

Ms. Mead asked if there has been any community discussion at the other participating sites about the high level of self-sufficiency of participating families. Mr. White noted each community has a site lead and while it is helpful for them to inform discussion, at this point they are observers.

Ms. Mead referred to the study's rejection rate and asked if it is known if families are rejecting the programs or if the programs are rejecting families. Data was not currently available however, it was noted that the data is being tracked when either the program or the family rejects. Based on rejection rates, it may be determined the protocol is not doing its job in which case the screening protocol or eligibility questions may need to be reviewed. Ms. Mead asked providers to further review the data and provide feedback to identify any further changes.

Ms. Skotnicki mentioned the question in the eligibility criteria about citizenship and inquired whether other providers ask clients about their legal citizenship. Labor's Community Service Agency confirmed their clients have to be documented. Additionally, Ms. Skotnicki noted Save the Family does not require individuals to be employed. Discussion ensued.

Chair James asked the Subcommittee to share their perspective of the study. Input noted the process does not offer enough time for those clients staying in shelter awaiting Section 8 vouchers to earn enough money to get into Section 8, and funding is an issue.

Mattie Lord, UMOM, commented the study creates a lot of work and is a huge imposition on emergency shelters. She expressed her desire for the study to focus on the needs of families rather than adding more questions that would screen additional families out. LCSA also expressed frustration over few exit strategies from emergency shelter. Ms. Mead referred to a balancing act of serving families in need while trying to meet the HUD performance objectives; as a result, families are not receiving the services they need. Greg Boone, LCSA, noted unemployment is an underlying issue as it limits the ability to go into any program other than Section 8. Mr. White added the study begins to document individuals that cannot make it into any of the program. Connie Phillips, Sojourner Center, inquired if substance

abuse is included in pre-screening for the study as individuals dealing with substance abuse are screened out of most programs.

Ms. Mead asked for input on continuing to discuss both employment and substance abuse, or the need to discuss issues separately. Ms. Lord questioned whether discussion should be held among a smaller provider group. The group agreed to discuss further at a different time. Discussion ensued noting the need to maintain an operational budget and finding solutions to meet the needs of those families that no one else can serve. The Subcommittee agreed on the need for a full system that works.

Ms. Mead asked for examples or best practices from other communities that have balanced serving families in need and meeting HUD's outcomes. Mr. White advised other communities are beginning to research coordinated or centralized intake models. Ms. Mead noted the Subcommittee, in the past, has discussed moving to a centralized intake process. Staff is working with Piper Ehlen from Home Base on seeking technical assistance to further research this option, through the CoC checkup and assessment process.

Homeless Data Overview Discussion

Chair James recalled discussion at the May Continuum of Care Regional Committee meeting regarding the Homeless Street Count. She noted one of the major concerns being that the street count does not provide a comprehensive overview of homelessness in the region. Therefore, the Continuum of Care Regional Committee recommended that a Regional Homeless Data Overview be created. Since the Planning Subcommittee is the technical group, the creation of the Regional Data Overview would be done through this group and then recommended to the Continuum of Care for approval.

Chair James asked for input about what types of data should be considered for the data overview, and what process we should use to create the overview. She noted a recommendation was made to review what type of data should be collected. Ms. Mead provided a copy of the *MAG Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness Draft Homeless Street Count Statement, Approved May 16, 2011*. The draft includes a preliminary list of data sets to consider. The Planning Subcommittee members recommended the following additional resources:

- Hospitals or urgent care data as it relates to dehydration, substance abuse or other related instances.
- HMIS data from all three Continuums
- Child Protective Services (CPS) data. Subcommittee members questioned how many families are waiting to reunify based on housing studies.
- Data from the Housing Authorities related to the number of homeless families on their wait list.
- Data logs from the Tumbleweed drop-in centers.
- Data from halfway houses
- Department of Education data. Ms. Mead noted there is discussion about trying to unduplicate data currently received from the Department of Education.
- Behavioral Health data from Magellan

- CAP Agencies as data relates to families seeking eviction prevention or who are homeless.

It was noted wait list data is not tracked in the same manner and may be duplicated. Shelter providers are also researching methods for sharing wait list information. Additionally, halfway houses do not meet the HUD definition of homelessness. However, the Subcommittee determined the overview is for the community and can include additional resources.

Ms. Mead asked for input on what purpose, beyond the point in time, the overview would serve. Subcommittee members noted the following:

- Grants
- Public awareness
- Program development
- To have the truth

Mr. Boone recommended releasing another press release stating homelessness has increased. Ms. Mead advised the Continuum agreed to develop the Draft Homeless Street Count Statement rather than issuing another press release.

The Subcommittee discussed the process for developing the overview. Suggestions included working at the Planning Subcommittee level, or creating a working group that would meet more frequently as collecting data may be time intensive. A recommendation was made for an intern to work on the project with guidance from the Subcommittee. Chair James suggested the project be added as a standing item on the Planning Subcommittee's future meeting agendas. Ms. Mead noted MAG will have an intern beginning in the fall. This will allow agencies an opportunity to finalize their data for the fiscal year.

Ms. Mead suggested building a report card based on data currently available; scheduling an initial planning meeting in August for the working group to set parameters for the report card. She noted the Planning Subcommittee will not meet again until September. Volunteers for the working group include: John Wall, Laura Skotnicki and Marlena Pina. Ms. Lord suggested following the same format used for *Arizona Indicators*.

Ms. Skotnicki motioned to create a working group to address next steps for creating a homeless data overview, including the new indicators recommended by the Planning Subcommittee. The group will provide direction to an intern assigned to the project. The working group will meet in August. Mr. Boone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

5. Best practices Workshop for TH an PH Providers

Chair James said the Continuum of Care Regional Committee meeting in May included discussion about the Homeless Street Count. One of the major concerns is that the street count does not provide a comprehensive overview of homelessness in the region. Therefore, the Continuum of Care Regional Committee recommended creating a Regional Homeless Data Overview. Since the Planning Subcommittee is the technical group, the creation of the

Regional Data Overview would be done through the Subcommittee and then recommended to the Continuum of Care for approval.

Chair James asked for input on the types of data that should be considered for the overview, and what process should be used to create the overview. Ms. Mead advised, outcomes for transitional housing programs overall have been low. The Committee had agreed to hold workshops for Transitional Housing providers on moving clients successfully into Permanent Housing; and to workshop for Permanent Housing providers as well. Ms. Mead asked for other topic areas either for TH or PH to help provider better serve clients or for input on best practices the Subcommittee would like to hear more about. Recommendations included job creation and information on accessing mainstream resources. Mr. White recommended seeking technical assistance from HUD.

Ms. Skotnicki recommended reviewing provider applications and reaching out to those providers who are doing well with a request to share their process.

6. Request for Future Agenda Items

Chair James asked for input from Subcommittee members on items they would like to have considered for discussion at future meetings. Topics noted include jobs, an update on the HUD Family Options Study, Regional Plan Report Card, the impact of changes to the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), an update on Project H-3 and Housing First.

7. Comments from the Subcommittee

Chair James asked for updates from the Subcommittee.

Mr. McQuaid advised construction has begun on the North 17 Apartments. They will provide 72 units of supportive housing. Bidding is underway for construction of Commons Court. The project will be completed by April 2012 and will provide 80 studio units.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:33 p.m. Chair James thanked Labor's Community Service Agency for allowing use of their meeting space during the MAG office construction.