

MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
CONTINUUM OF CARE PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
November 7, 2011

Members Attending	Others Present
Theresa James, City of Tempe, Chair	Commander Jeff Alexander, Phoenix Police Transit Bureau
*Donna Bleyle, Arizona Department of Economic Security	Markus Coleman, City of Phoenix Public Transit
Greg Boone, Labor's Community Service Agency	JoAnn Del Colle, City of Phoenix
Robert Duvall, Community Information & Referral	Alma Hernandez, The office of Councilman Tom Simplot
Gail Loose for Richard Geasland, Tumbleweed	Jeff Jamison, City of Phoenix
*Connie Phillips, Sojourner Center	Karl Matzinger, City of Phoenix
*Nick Margiotta, Phoenix Police Department	Lisa Miller, UMOM New Day Centers
Linda Mushkatel, Maricopa County	Megan Schmitz, The office of Councilman Tom Simplot
Darlene Newsom, UMOM New Day Center	Ted Williams, Arizona Behavioral Health Corporation
+Amy Schwabendlender, Valley of the Sun United Way	Rachel Brito, MAG
*Joan Serviss, Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness	Brandee Mead, MAG
Laura Skotnicki for Jacki Taylor, Save the Family	
John Wall, Arizona Housing, Inc.	
* Diana Yazzie Devine, Native American Connections	

*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 2:05 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 August 22, 2011 Meeting Minutes
Chair James called for a motion to approve the August 22, 2011, meeting minutes. Robert Duvall, Community Information and Referral, made a motion to approve the minutes. Greg Boone, Labor's Community Service Agency, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
4. HUD Family Options Study Update

Chair James welcomed Matt White, Abt Associates, to provide an update on the HUD Family Options Study. Mr. White provided an overview of the study indicating that family enrollment in the study has been taking place with participating providers over the past year. The study is currently winding down as there are not openings in two of the four intervention types and our referral goals have been met.

Mr. White said that the enrollment portion of the study will conclude at the end of November. When enrollment ends, the longitudinal portion of the study will continue for a period of 18 months. Families enrolled in the study will be contacted every three months via an in person interview or through a survey. Each time a family participates in a follow up they will receive a \$10 dollar voucher for their participation. Abt Associates will be conducting an analysis to determine which intervention types work best for families. Mr. White indicated that this information can benefit communities as it can help to plan for how to best align resources with the needs of families. Mr. White said that the study results can be expected in two-in-a-half to three years. However, he added, our community can already use information learned from the enrollment process which acted as a mini centralized intake.

Mr. White congratulated the participating providers because of the eleven communities who participated in the study; our Continuum is the first to complete the enrollment portion of the study. He said that speaks to the coordination and collaboration done at the local level. He added that although there were challenges along the way, our community did a great job working through them for the benefit of the study and the families. Mr. White said that he will complete another site visit in January in which he will conduct program interviews and host a study winding down meeting with participating providers.

Chair James thanked Mr. White for his presentation and also thanked the participating providers who have been enrolling families over the past year.

5. Public Transit Update

Chair James welcomed Karl Matzinger, City of Phoenix, and Markus Coleman, City of Phoenix Public Transit, to provide an update on the reduced fare bus pass program. Karl Matzinger provided an overview on the homeless provider program. He said the purpose of the program is to provide assistance to homeless persons for transportation to and from activities such as employment interviews, work, child care facilities, grocery stores, school, training, and medical appointments.

Mr. Matzinger provided an overview on the background of the program. The program was established at the City of Phoenix in 1993 but was transitioned to the Regional Public Transit Authority (RPTA) and adopted by the region in 2002. RPTA was responsible for the program until last week when the program was transitioned back to the City of Phoenix. He stated that there are 195 service providers currently enrolled in the program. Mr. Matzinger reviewed the qualifications of those agencies eligible to participate in the program and on who is considered homeless for the program.

Mr. Matzinger explained that they were asked to provide a presentation about the program due to providers concerns about recent changes in the program. He explained the concerns from the cities perspective in the following way:

- Compliance with program rules
 - Review of agencies eligibility
 - Auditing of distributed fare media
- Appropriate program use
 - Clients using fare media for non-qualifying trips
 - Fare utilized by persons not classified as “homeless”
- Behavior of some clients participating in the program
 - Need for additional services

Mr. Matzinger explained that city staff met with several Phoenix service providers in May 2011. He continued that during the meeting, ideas were generated by service providers including:

- Placing agency name and number on media
- Time limited or one way passes
- Homeless outreach teams coordinate with Metro and Police
- Share photos of those who are not following the intended rules for the program

The presentation continued with information on program oversight:

- Distribution log to track all fare media provided to clients (existing requirement)
 - Ensure fare media is being used for program intent
- Marking fare media with organizations name and contact number
 - Identify client, notify provider, modify behavior
- Audit agencies to ensure compliance and eligibility
 - Ineligible providers found utilizing the program
- METRO will handle fare enforcement and inspection

Mr. Matzinger concluded his presentation and asked for questions from members. Darlene Newsom, UMOM New Day Centers, asked how they are dealing with domestic violence providers. He responded that concerns have been raised about the safety and security of for clients of domestic violence programs. He mentioned the possibility of domestic violence providers using and account number rather than the contact information for the shelter.

Ms. Newsom followed up asking how big of a problem this is. She asked if the city knew how many people were abusing the reduced fare program privileges. Mr. Matzinger said that he did not have a number but that it was enough of an issue that the city felt the need to address it. He added that the City of Phoenix is seeking to find a better way to manage the problem. He said that the 50% discount needs to be used correctly as the city puts \$2.2 million into this program.

Amy Schwabenlender, Valley of the Sun United Way, said that she participated in the initial meeting that was held in May. She added that the suggestions that Mr. Matzinger presented were accurate based on the discussion but she thought the meeting was a brainstorming session. She said that she was under the impression that there would be a second meeting to vet the ideas that were presented.

Linda Mushkatel, Maricopa County, commented that she felt “stamping” the tickets with the homeless provider’s information would be stigmatizing to the individuals using the half priced bus tickets. Mr. Matzinger indicated that other reduced fare ticket holders, like students, have to present a valid identification card when they use their tickets.

Laura Skotnicki, Save the Family Foundation, suggested that a symbol could be used rather than using all the contact information for each shelter. She also asked how they were planning to enforce the rules. Commander Jeff Alexander, City of Phoenix Police Transit Bureau, responded that follow up will be done with providers if a person on the bus is using the pass for unintended purposes.

Ms. Newsom asked if the officials follow the same enforcement policies with other people using reduced fare bus tickets, like students. Commander Alexander responded that they will follow the same enforcement policies for others if tickets are misused.

Ted Williams, Arizona Behavioral Health Corporation, suggested convening another meeting to further discuss the issues and resolutions. Megan Schmitz, Councilmember Tom Simplot’s office, said that another meeting is planned for November 16, 2011, and that everyone in attendance today will receive an invitation to attend the meeting on the 16th.

Chair James thanked the representatives from the City of Phoenix for attending and for their openness for feedback.

6. 2012 Homeless Street Count

Chair James informed the Subcommittee that the next Homeless Street Count is planned for January 24, 2012. She asked Brande Mead, MAG Human Services, to provide a report on the plans for the 2012 count. Ms. Mead thanked members of the Planning Subcommittee for their work on previous counts.

Ms. Mead said that there are plans in place to improve the quality and messaging of the street count. She suggested the following as ways to improve:

Training:

- Spend more time training volunteers on how to determine if someone is homeless, including what questions to ask to make the determination.
- Invite a provider to attend the Street Count Coordinator training to speak to the importance of the count from their perspective.

Count:

- Coordinate with outreach staff to identify potential locations to count homeless families and unaccompanied youth.

Media Release:

- Discuss the results of the homeless street count with the Planning Subcommittee members before releasing them publicly. Gather feedback on the potential reasons

for changes in the count. Get input from the Subcommittee on potential press release headlines and themes.

Ms. Mead asked for feedback from members on these or other improvements to consider. There was discussion about the timing of the count. One member indicated that it is very hard to confidently identify someone as homeless during the hours of 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. because there are generally still a lot of people out during that time of night. A suggestion was made to conduct the count during the late night or early morning hours such as 3:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m., like Project H3.

Darlene Newsom commented that she believes the street count is flawed and that it has little value in understanding homelessness among families or unaccompanied youth. A member suggested doing the homeless street count bi-annually since it is only required to be done every-other year. Another suggestion was to conduct the count bi-annually, once during the winter and once during the summer and include a more detailed survey to gather additional information. Chair James said that time could be spent this year to develop a new methodology encompassing the suggestions made. Ms. Mead asked the representatives from the cities and towns if there would be a negative impact from not conducting the count on a yearly basis. JoAnn Del Colle from the City of Phoenix said that she would discuss this with Phoenix staff and see if there would be any concerns.

Discussion ensued on reaching out to family provider and with the AZ Department of Education State Homeless Coordinator to discuss a better way for counting homeless families.

Ms. Mead thanked the Subcommittee members for their suggestions and said that the Homeless Street Count will be an action item on the November 21, 2011, Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness meeting. She said she would pass on the recommendations to the Continuum of Care Committee for action.

7. Implementation of the CoC Technical Assistance Action Plan

Chair James referred members of the Subcommittee to the Continuum of Care Technical Assistance Action Plan and asked Brande Mead to lead the discussion on this item. Ms. Mead said that HUD has not responded to the technical assistance request but they did ask for budget information from Piper Ehlen.

Ms. Mead referenced the Planning Subcommittee meeting from August where the Subcommittee discussed prioritizing the goals and action steps in the plan. The Subcommittee recommended shifting their focus to the following strategy, “clarify the role of transitional housing in the CoC, and develop a plan for strengthening the performance, and perceived performance, of transitional housing programs.” Ms. Mead suggested that the Subcommittee focus on developing and implementing a program evaluation methodology. Chair James agreed and added that the focus should be on assessing performance, evaluating performance, and incentivizing those who are performing well.

Ms. Mead discussed the Columbus, OH evaluation process and suggested that the Subcommittee consider modeling our evaluation process after theirs. Discussion ensued about the Columbus model and the importance of using a best practices approach. Members agreed to review the Columbus evaluation materials and come prepared to the next Subcommittee meeting to discuss the process and materials in detail.

8. 2012 Meeting Schedule

Chair James referred members to a draft meeting schedule for 2012. She said that she recommends that the Subcommittee meet monthly rather than bi-monthly because of all the work the Subcommittee is tasked with in 2012. Linda Mushkatel, Maricopa County, made a motion to approve the monthly meeting schedule as presented. Robert Duvall, Community Information and Referral seconded the motion. The 2012 meeting schedule passed unanimously.

9. Request for Future Agenda Items

Chair James asked for additional items to be considered for future agendas. There were no requests for future agenda items.

10. Comments from the Subcommittee

Chair James asked for comments from Subcommittee members. There were no comments.

11. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m. Chair James thanked David Bridge at the Human Services Campus for hosting the meeting in their building.