Ohio | Development Services Agency

November 28, 2014

TO: FY 2015 Supportive Housing Program Advisory Committee Members

FROM: Michael A. Hiler, Deputy Chief, Office of Community Development

SUBJECT: FY 2015 Supportive Housing Program Advisory Meeting Minutes

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On October 15, 2014 the FY 2015 Supportive Housing Advisory Committee met at the Creekside Conference and Event Center in Gahanna from 9:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The following is a summary of the major topics discussed during the meeting.

Introduction

Scott Gary of the Office of Community Development (OCD) Supportive Housing Section Supervisor opened the meeting and welcomed members. The advisory community members and participants introduced themselves.

Program Updates

Supportive Housing Program

Samantha Makoski presented the FY2014 Supportive Housing Program (SHP) update. She reported that of the 55 applications received, totaling $13.4 million, 47 were recommended for funding. She further stated that the amount of funding available for FY2014 is $11 million.

Ms. Makoski identified some of the issues that caused applicants to lose points on the application, including but not limited to, Transitional Housing providers targeting low-barrier populations, low occupancy rates, and a lack of detail related to program design, exit strategy, and a community's strategy to prevent their participants from returning to homelessness. Low outcomes were also cited as a factor in applicants losing points.

A discussion ensued about the appropriateness of the use of Rapid Re-housing for clients in Transitional Housing. Some advisory committee members indicated that their local strategies don't allow their Transitional Housing providers to access Rapid Re-housing. While conceding that the State will not supersede an entitlement's decision to disallow Transitional Housing providers from accessing Rapid Re-housing, Scott Gary indicated that entitlements must state this in their applications. Mr. Gary ended indicating that OCD encourages Transitional Housing providers to draw upon Rapid Re-housing funds to the greatest extent allowable.

Housing Crisis Response Program

Patrick Hart presented the update on the 2014 Homeless Crisis Response Program (HCRP). He explained there are 2 components to HCRP: The Housing Stability Program (HSP), which consists of Rapid Re-housing and Homelessness Prevention and is allocation-based, and the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) program, which is 70% allocation-based with additional funds made available competitively.

Mr. Hart reported that while all HSP applications have been reviewed, there are cases where grant managers will be following up with grantees before awards are made He explained that in most cases the follow-up is needed to clarify a response or to request missing information. He provided examples of issues requiring follow-up, including breaking out direct versus supportive services costs, addressing the benefits regarding the use of Rapid Re-housing funding, and misunderstandings regarding the use of Rapid Re-housing funds.

Mr. Hart stressed that unlike the Housing Stability component, Emergency Shelter contains a competitive factor. He described the state's main focus on a project's performance/outcomes. He underscored the importance of maintaining good data quality stating that when the data is poor the State has a difficult time evaluating programs.

In response to a member's comment about the new OCEAN application process, it was noted that the State is sending out an electronic survey to elicit users' feedback on OCEAN.

COHHIO indicated that it would be helpful to know what data/reports the State requires of Balance-of-State grantees *before* next year's application are released so the BOS HMIS team can respond to data/report requests meaningfully. Mr. Hart indicated that next year, the state can discuss required data/reports with HMIS system administrators prior to the release of the application. Scott Gary asked for volunteers to participate in a work group. The work group will look at what data should be included in the application based on its value and significance. Work group volunteers included Genelle Denzin (COHHIO), Dorothy Crusoe (Community Housing of Miami, Darke and Shelby Counties), Ruth Gillet or representative (Cleveland/Cuyahoga Office of Homelessness), Lianna Barbu or representative (Community Shelter Board) and ODSA staff.

Mr. Hart further indicated that the State will look at the feasibility of posting the application questions to the website to benefit those who are not directly signed up in OCEAN but who are stakeholders, nonetheless.

Mr. Gary made a few comments about the State's preference regarding the use of HCRP funds. He indicated that the State would rather grantees use most of their funding for Rapid Re-housing funds rather than Homelessness Prevention. He further indicated that this preference is likely to be formalized in next year's application. Mr. Gary did note that this may be more difficult in the Balance-of-State. Representatives from the Balance-of-State discussed capping the amount they use for Housing Prevention as one way to meet the state's preference.

Mr. Gary then asked for comments on whether entitlements should be required to use *all* HSP funds for Rapid Re-housing. One entitlement member indicated that their community is currently using their Prevention funds for re-entry. Other entitlements talked about using their funds exclusively for Rapid Re-housing. Most members seemed to be using a sustainability test to determine one's eligibility. There was no consensus on whether entitlements should be restricted to Rapid Re-housing only.

Mr. Hart and Mr. Gary both talked about having legitimate Rapid Re-housing programs that address each client's needs directly as opposed to providing a fixed amount of assistance (e.g., 3 months and security deposit). Mr. Gary stated that while it is acceptable to have an average amount of assistance, the level of assistance should vary according to the needs of the client(s). In wrapping up, Mr. Hart encouraged people to use Rapid Re-housing funds to serve hard to assist clients.

Scott Gary asked members to report on how their regions are using HCRP funds - specifically the breakdown between services and direct assistance. Before taking comments, he added that the State is considering capping services. An entitlement member requested that the State refrain from placing a cap on these activities in light of the many funding streams that go into each program. She continued, because State funds are flexible, communities are able to collect more city, county, and private dollars, both as match and leverage. Members were concerned that caps would make it more difficult to pull projects together. Mr. Gary then asked members how they felt about placing caps on services as this relates to *all* project funds instead of just the State's funds. Many members expressed a lack of support regarding the use of *any* caps. Members were adamant that the decision as to how these funds should be broken out should be a local one. A suggestion was made that instead of capping services, limitations could be placed on case management services.

Comments by Sadicka White, Chief of the Community Services Division

Sadicka White introduced herself to the Advisory Committee and spoke about her history in community development. She commended the Advisory Committee on their work toward eliminating homelessness in Ohio and noted that we must continue the hard work. She told the group that she is constantly building her knowledge and understanding around the various grant programs administered by OCD, but

particularly in the area of homelessness and permanent supportive housing. She further conveyed to the group her strong sense of passion and commitment to these issues.

Housing Assistance Grant Program

Bob Johnson presented the update on the Housing Assistance Grant Program (HAGP) which funds emergency home repair and down payment assistance. He indicated that emergency home repair is targeted to 50% Area Median Income (AMI) and limited to $7,500 per unit, while down payment assistance is targeted to 65% AMI. Scott Gary commented that HAGP has dwindled from a historical level of funding - $6 million - to its present level of funding - $5.3 million.

Mr. Johnson led a discussion around whether the State should continue to fund down payment assistance. In considering program feasibility he asked members to consider the current state of the housing market, the fact that only a few agencies access the program, and the relatively low number of constituents who benefit from the program. While the group acknowledged the program's limited reach, there continues to be support for funding down payment assistance on a limited basis.

Scott Gary shared that leftover funds from the SHP and HCRP competition are rolled over into the HAGP allocation to help address the need created by previous cuts in funding.

Mr. Gary closed the discussion by indicating that the FY 2015 funding round is approaching and that an OCEAN application training date will be announced.

Performance Measures

Samantha Makoski indicated that we are again looking at performance measures as we create our five-year plan. She circulated a document of the current set of performance measures that was designed to be used for Balance-of-State grantees and indicated that a majority of the objectives in the document are HUD objectives. A copy of the performance measures is attached to these minutes (See attached). Scott Gary emphasized that the State will allow entitlements to establish their own set of performance measures, but added that entitlements must include the local measures with their application if they want us to substitute them for the Balance-of-State measures.

Shelter Standards

Patrick Hart shared that the current set of Emergency Shelter Standards need updated. He indicated that the current standards are available on the COHHIO website. He asked for volunteers to update the standards. The following members volunteered: Tom Bonnington (TLC Homelessness Board), Ruth Gillet (Cleveland/Cuyahoga Office of Homelessness) and Beth Fetzer-Rice (Salvation Army of Central Ohio). The work group, which will be led by a Supportive Housing staff member, will plan to release a revised document for comment in Spring 2015.

Coordinated Assessment

Scott Gary opened this discussion with an acknowledgement that communities throughout the state are coordinating, albeit in different ways. Mr. Gary encouraged members to share their experiences regarding coordinated assessment. One member remarked that it would be helpful if the State provided some guidance around coordinated assessment and diversion. COHHIO commented that they are working on designing an assessment tool for Balance-of-State communities with common elements that could be customized according to local practice and priorities.

Mr. Gary then polled the group on how they monitor and evaluate that agencies are in compliance with the assessment process. Members commented that monitoring is a constant process that requires ongoing training to make sure that everyone is in alignment.

Cost of Youth Shelter

Scott Gary indicated that the State would like to gain a better understanding of the costs associated with serving youth since the costs appear to be much higher than with other populations. He indicated that this

issue will be examined outside of the advisory meeting.

Emergency Shelter Awards

Scott Gary discussed the competitive and non-competitive elements of Emergency Shelter funding. He indicated that for the last two years the State has used a 70% allocation-based and 30% competitive scoring in reviewing shelter grants. Prior to that change, shelter awards were 100% allocation-based. When the new allocation was implemented last year, four shelters received a 30% cut and 10 shelters received a 10% cut. Mr. Gary explained that those grantees who received 30% cuts were given one-year awards allowing them to submit an application this year providing them the opportunity to be restored to their prior funding amount. Mr. Gary acknowledged that while there is merit in holding shelters accountable, shelters are often the last safety net for individuals and families in many communities and continued cuts could lead shelters to close. He then sought comments from members about whether the State should maintain a competitive element in the emergency shelter category and whether the current 70/30 split is appropriate. Before commenting, members inquired about the reasons the affected shelters scored poorly. Mr. Gary cited various weaknesses and issues, including poor HMIS data quality, poor outcomes or performance, and poor grantsmanship. Members responded that while the State must have some leverage over poorly performing shelters, a 30% cut could result in the defunding of shelters. Members were more comfortable with an 85/15 split between formula and competitive. Other members inquired about whether shelters with cuts receive technical assistance from the State. Mr. Gary assured members that very targeted technical assistance has been provided in each of the affected areas. Moving forward, COHHIO recommended that the State consider issuing a corrective action plan to shelters with cuts that requires the shelter to address performance issues within a certain timeframe. It was further recommended that the region or entitlement lead be included in the plan since there are repercussions to the community-at-large.

Housing and Homelessness Collaborative

Scott Gary updated members on the State's Housing and Homelessness Collaborative. Mr. Gary indicated that the group met early in the year and again recently. Mr. Gary announced that three new members were recently added to the group including Ruth Gillet – who will represent Continua of Care, Bill Faith (COHHIO) and Sally Luken (her successor, since she recently resigned, Corporation for Supportive Housing). Mr. Gary reported that additional members will be added to round out the group's membership in light of a grant recently awarded to OMHAS. Mr. Gary elaborated that OMHAS recently received a Coordinated Assessment Behavioral Health (CABHE) grant – a 3-year $3.6 million grant. OMHAS added that the grant will be used to fund the State's five largest Projects for Assistance with Transitioning from Homelessness (PATH) projects and that funds will assist chronically homeless veterans, homeless veterans and (non-veteran) chronically homeless persons. OMHAS noted that it is implied that these groups will be experiencing severe mental illness and/or addiction. The Housing and Homelessness Collaborative recently created a work group charged with creating a grant plan which is due to SAMHSA at the end of November 2014.

Mr. Gary also indicated that some new operations funding has become available for Recovery Housing, also known as Sober Housing. OMHAS indicated that the available $5 million will come from the community capital budget and will be used to increase capacity and expand recovery housing in areas where it is lacking. A short discussion followed. Members expressed their concerns about Recovery Housing, especially regarding how the model complies with "Housing First" tenets and how continuums will be able to access these sober housing resources for people who are homeless. It was noted, however, that this housing is not targeted to people who are homeless. While Recovery Housing and models using a Housing First focus are important components of a community's response to addressing homelessness and substance abuse issues, OCD's funding is targeted toward Housing First models.

Training Needs/Recommendations

Jeannette Welsh went over some potential training needs including Housing First, use of Transitional Housing for high-barrier populations, Rapid-Re-housing misconceptions and Fair Housing/ADA issues.

When asked to respond to the proposed topics, members first commented on Housing First. A few members indicated that while most staff are capable of articulating the main concepts of Housing First,

there is often a disconnect between concept and implementation. Members recommended training frontline staff on how to apply Housing First concepts in their work with clients. Another member proposed that the State prepare a set of materials directed at (private) funders clarifying the reasons why the State values Housing First. Another member called for Housing First training directed at shelters. The member explained shelters do not always recognize how Housing First applies to them. In response to this last recommendation, one member representing the youth population explained that certain populations, such as youth, may not benefit from all Housing First policies.

Another potential training topic raised by members was moving clients to the next level". The member who suggested this topic felt the training could address client readiness versus enabling clients.
Finally, a member who works with the veteran population raised a possible training issue related to the veteran's population and their Grant per diem (GPD) program.

Miscellaneous

Comments were heard in connection to the new OCEAN system. They included creating efficiencies within the application process, especially with regard to Entitlement communities. A concern was raised that Entitlement communities spent a great deal of time supplying each of their grantees with information about the entitlement processes, since the application inquires about program information, as well as the local processes. While the State agreed to look at this issue, it was explained that the State needs to make sure that grantees within the same continua structure are in sync with one another.

Scott Gary announced that if anyone is interested in joining any of the soon-to-be formed work groups, to please contact staff.

Ian Thomas indicated that the draft Con Plan will be sent to the Director in early December. He further noted that the Director's Office will complete their review by March, 2015 and that the document will likely be released to the public for comment at that time.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Ohio Development Services Agency
Office of Community Development

PY 2015
Supportive Housing Program Advisory Committee Members
Creekside Conference and Event Center
October 15, 2014

ATTENDANCE LIST

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Douglas Argue	Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio
Doug Bailey	Ohio DMHAS
Colleen Bain	National Church Residences
Liannu Barbu	Community Shelter Board
Bambi Baughn	Community Action Commission of Fayette County
Tom Bonnington	TLC Homelessness Board
Dorothy Crusoe	Community Housing, Inc.
Genelle Denzin	Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio
Beth Fetzer-Rice	The Salvation Army of Central Ohio
Ruth Gillett	Cleveland/Cuyahoga Office of Homelessness
Jim Kennelly	U.S. Department of Veteran's Services
Linda Kramer	Daybreak, Inc.
Erica Mulryan	Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio
Kimberley Alexander	OCD
Scott Gary	OCD
Pat Hart	OCD
Bob Johnson	OCD
Ian Thompson	OCD
Samantha Webb	OCD
Jeannette Welsh	OCD