

AGENDA

Meeting Title: HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE– Arlington County CoC
Date: November 6, 2023
Time: 9:00 AM
Place: Microsoft Teams

Agenda Items

Welcome/New Member Introductions: Members present: Nicole Dula, Roslyn (Roz) McCoy, Danielly Dowling, Reginette Osby, Sara Thompson, Kacy Barker, Triina Van, Joel Franklin, Emily Siqveld, Cecily Whitfield, Margaret McGilvray, Manar Flynn, Matthew Tucker, Alice Barrett, Charles Williams, Sonja Allen, Kuante Scriven, Candice Lopez, Lisa York, Wesley Hard, Jennifer Endo, Demaris Goffigan, Keyla Yapura, Michael Marshall, Mary Marron, Roxana Hernandez, Cinthia Friedman, Jesus Esquivel, Amy Stizel, Jesus Rojas, Diana Hedman, Tishia Richardson, Yessenia Bethancourt, Tammy January, Daymon Williams, Yenny T. Nicho, and Tainannett Centeno-Braschi

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Review of Minutes: The October minutes were reviewed. Alice made a motion to adopt the minutes and Kacy seconded the motion. Members approved the minutes.

Property Management Status Updates: (Spotlight AHC-Harbor Group Portfolio)

Nicole, Co-chair states the committee is spotlighting the AHC-Harbor Group Portfolio whose representatives were in attendance. Our efforts are to continue to push those that are homeless or low income into available housing opportunities. Committee members thought it made sense to bring in certain portfolios at a time to get an understanding of what's going on in terms of points of contact and staffing. Question: Is there anything that can be learned from the disruption with staffing at some of these sites that the committee can help with?

AHC: Jennifer from AHC shared a document with the committee in which Lisa (Regional Director) from AHC explained that it is a reference point that includes AHC-Harbor Group's points of contact. It includes the regional level managers, property and assistant managers. It is broken up for all our Arlington properties, categorizing them under each regional manager, the office phone number and the property's general email address in hopes to aid in some added communication. In addition, there are the regional managers' points of contact with email as well as cell numbers; Lisa- (Regional Director), and Maureen McGuirk (Regional Vice President) who oversee this portfolio with our points of contact listed as well.

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Cecily, Co-chair thanks AHC and says this is an extremely helpful list. She hopes this is a living document because the turnover that is regularly seen particularly with some southside units/apartment complexes. This is helpful to see who can be contacted going forward at this point. There are some general concerns about the turnover that is happening at the Shelton and Macedonia Properties. When you get to know the person at the property and then they are gone staff must be trained again. It's not just from a housing service provider's perspective but also from the perspective of our clients. The committee wants to see what is being done to sustain someone in those positions.

AHC: Lisa, from AHC responded by saying she understands. It is certainly part of our process to make sure AHC hires and keeps the most qualified candidates for all our properties. She asked Wesley, Regional Manager with AHC, to speak specifically about some of the sourcing process happening now, particularly for those three assets, (Fort Henry, The Shelton and Macedonia) as he is our hiring manager right now.

Wesley went on to say Rishwan is in place as the Assistant Manager, and she was present last week at the meeting for The Shelton and Macedonia. He will be there this week for a meeting at Fort Henry with the residents and team. Carlos is filling in as a floating manager while AHC look to fill the position of permanent manager, especially for those three assets. It is important to find someone with the right skill set to push those properties into a new era. AHC is working to fill the position as soon as possible but wants to be diligent in finding the right person. No one is hired yet for the position, but we hope to decide as soon as possible. Also, AHC is looking for a Leasing Specialist to add to that team as well. Once those people are in place, AHC will send updated contact information and a newsletter to all team members there.

Bridges: Charles from Bridges spoke about how the turnovers affects the folks they serve, especially at Green Valley. The people or residents may have questions about their bills, rent, and utilities because of the high turnover it's left to Bridges staff to help our folks with trying to answer those questions. We would prefer to have a partnership and collaboration with the property manager onsite that can answer those questions, so having the right person in that position is essential. Maybe have a meeting with the new property manager and Bridges on site so people can meet the manager in person to build a rapport with them. This is just a thought but a great start.

AHC: Wesley responded saying a couple other properties where they have hired new team members his approach to these types of facilities is one of bridge building. With some of the other properties like The Shell, and St. James when a new team member start, they get time to settle into the position and get up to speed. Then they send an introductory email introducing themselves to their partners. He encourages people to get together in person to build a relationship overcoming any challenges that exist so we can build that partnership moving forward. Cecily, Co-chair thanks Wesley and asked any other questions or comments.

DHS: Reginette, Housing Location Analyst/ALP Co-Chair says we're having problems reaching anyone at many of the properties to find out the availability of units. This is something that the three Housing Locators with DHS do, by calling sometime daily or weekly to get the availability. With a lot of the properties there is a challenge getting through, so we don't have that information to pass on to our program participants. The Housing Locators are looking for the best way to get through to the properties. We already have a lot of your contact information, but we still can't get through to some of the properties.

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AHC: Lisa, Regional Manager suggests if you're making a call and don't get a response back when it is something like the availability of an apartment and it is important that you get that response back quickly. Lisa suggests emailing the property manager and carbon copy (cc) the regional manager on that as well so that either one of those management points of contact would be able to pull that availability listing and get back as soon as possible.

DHS: Reginette, ALP (Arlington Landlord Partnership), Co-chair states let me speak about the turnover with staff as far as the ALP is concerned. With the new staff, she is not sure that many of them are aware of the ALP, so can we ensure that the new property managers or leasing staff coming on board become aware of the ALP? If there is a way, can we make a presentation about the ALP to your new staff?

AHC: Lisa said yes, that is something you will want to do individually. We can certainly make that part of our onboarding process. Every individual hired or onboarded, AHC can do a one-on-one presentation or if you're willing to make a monthly call AHC is happy to collaborate on whatever you feel would be the best time commitment for DHS. Reginette (DHS) and Lisa agreed to get something planned.

Nicole, Co-Chair, ultimately the purpose of gathering this portfolio together right now is in what ways can the committee help when we notice there is this sort of an ongoing turnover issue. Arlington County is a lot when it comes to all the various programs in the spectrum of housing related support. If the committee can help with that onboarding process number one, being aware of when you see that transition is the first key point. Two, where we might be needed to help in that onboarding process, letting us know at what intersection we come to the table so we can make ourselves available. We're all centered around the same focus and mission, but we must communicate with one another and ensure that we are on the same page.

The committee wants AHC to know we are here to support you, and this meeting goes both ways as well. Some of you at Harbor Group have been working with us for a while so if there are other points of assistance you need from our providers or DHS this is an opportunity for you to ask for what supports you may need. Again, we ultimately share the same mission and focus.

AHC: Jennifer, from AHC said she has two questions: Who can this sheet (AHC-Harbor Group) management points of contact be circulated to at this point. Next question: If we can get a similar sheet with the main contacts at Bridges, the county and anywhere else so we can share it with Harbor Group that would be great. Nicole requested with a copy to Cicely (Co-chairs) and a CoC list would be provided.

Bridges: Charles from Bridges asked if ed new staff could be trained on Housing Choice Voucher process since there are a number of new applicants with issued vouchers

AHC: Jennifer from AHC states a training can be organized that covers the ALP and Housing Choice Voucher right away and then figure out what to do on an ongoing basis.

Nicole, Co-chair inquired about programs and services training as part of AHC's general property management onboarding process? Lisa and Jennifer from AHC said yes, these points are covered. Nicole, Co-chair said the Housing Assistance Bureau (HAB) did a sort of full-scale training a year ago. HAB went through Housing Grants (HG), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), Project Base, Tenant Base as well as our Continuum of Care (COC), Rapid Rehousing Program (RRP) where those federal continuums of care

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permanent supportive programs fall. So, if there are parts of those materials that AHC needs again we are happy to make that available. Not only to Harbor Group-AHC Portfolio but other landlords who are on the call as well.

AHC: Jennifer from AHC said that was great training. AHC created an informational guide with material received. Jennifer said she would share it with Lisa to make sure everyone gets the material again.

CoC New Strategic Plan: Triina Van (CoC Coordinator) tvan@arlingtonva.us shared and reviewed in detail the presentation with the committee about the newly adopted CoC Strategic Plan. We are proud as a Continuum of Care (CoC) to have our new strategic plan adopted. This was a yearlong process where there were over a hundred people coming to community input sessions, focus groups and a third of whom were people with "Lived Experience" to help develop this new Strategic Plan.

The CoC set an ambitious goal of ending homelessness for all by 2026. The way this will be done is that our work is grounded in six core values, accountability, collaboration, dignity, equity, innovation and integrity. The CoC adopted a new mission statement that "The Arlington Continuum of Care works to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring by providing affordable and sustainable housing, tailored services, and by centering the voices and expertise of people with lived experiences of homelessness."

To move toward our goal of ending homelessness for all we have two foundational strategies. One is to promote equity and equitable outcomes, and the second is the foundation across all our approaches adhering to best practices in homeless service delivery. There are three pillars of the CoC's work ensuring preventing homelessness, the response system which is adequate in meeting the needs to address homelessness in a way that preserves the dignity and respect of all people that are experiencing homelessness. It also has a lens of reducing the length of time people experience homelessness and increasing our permanent housing rates. Then meeting the CoC's housing pathways to help resolve homelessness for everyone, ensuring that people have a safe dignified home to call their own where they can stay long term.

The Housing Subcommittee's role as part of those efforts is facilitating access to affordable housing for homeless individuals and families in. Increasing the supply of rental assistance and affordable housing to homeless individuals and families. These are the three charges that the Housing Committee holds with several activities named to help in those efforts.

CoC prevention efforts: proactively reaching out to the landlord, property manager and housing providers to identify and quickly engage with people at greatest risk of eviction by connecting them with supports to avoid homelessness. Really understanding who is affected by evictions most, understanding the different demographic information, zip codes, neighborhoods, other trends and needs identified in this analysis. The CoC wants to make sure we're targeting our support to those who are more likely to experience homelessness by any trend we can find.

Eviction: CoC wants to understand why people are being evicted. What kind of specialized support can the CoC provide to these folks so they can stay safely housed and meet their lease requirements? Ensuring that people have information, while understanding their rights, their responsibilities and knowing how to connect to services and resources to prevent evictions.

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Resolving homelessness: Where the Coc is working to increase the rate at which people exit to and keep permanent housing. The need for SRO (Single Room Occupancy) and larger three plus bedroom dwellings was named as a need in Arlington community. Also, named was the effort to advocate and promote the development of committed affordable housing at 30% AMI and below for access to housing for the lowest income households and renters.

Nicole, Co-chair as a subcommittee we need to break down these activities and establish the SMARTIE goals. Essentially this body is formed to align with this strategic plan for a Continuum of Care. The committee may need to consider who else to bring to this committee when we're talking about evictions. Nicole went on to say there is a docket that's sent weekly. Maybe this is the place where the committee needs to become informed of exactly who's on that list and what data elements can be learned from this process. Perhaps, this will be a charge for this subcommittee to follow the trends and characteristics of those that are facing evictions. Also, tracing them back to which housing provider portfolio these residents might be stemming from at that point. The thing that stood out to me was the development at the 30% AMI units, and family units. The committee might want to have conversations with CPHD (Community Planning, Housing and Development) about those efforts and exactly what is within our resources. Such as what the committee can try to inform and create as a work plan objective that's aggressive yet achievable.

Cecily, Co-chair agrees and the thing that stood out to her was the compiling of documentation and folks staying in low barrier shelters not wanting to give their documentation. She is trying to think of different ways the committee can strategize on how to help our clients get housed. This is a large goal to carry out. Cecily thinks the committee is up against some interesting times with what is happening with evictions in addition to adding this to our work plan. Both Co-Chairs will put their heads together to see how the strategic plan can be broken down so it can be rolled out.

Opioid Awareness: Emily Siqveland, Opioid Program Manager esiqveland@arlingtonva.us: Emily gave a brief overview of the urgency of the Opioid overdoses in Arlington County community. Her team offers training on how to recognize and respond to opioid overdoses in as little as five minutes in a drop-in way or up to an hour-long presentation. Committee members and guests can reach out to Emily to give training for staff or community members.

Emily shared a document letting everyone in the meeting know of the available resources offered by Arlington County. Posters can be printed in any size that can be hung throughout communal areas or if you have those boards with TV's now with scrolling information that tells your residents how to access free naloxone. Also, naloxone is mailed free to any Arlington residents. Now emergency naloxone is offered in which everyone is encouraged to consider putting near your AED (Automated Emergency Defibrillator) or having emergency naloxone somewhere in your apartment buildings. These can be supplied at no cost to our community partners to install and have available for public access to respond to an opioid overdose emergency.

Program Updates: No program updates