

Indianapolis Continuum of Care

Making homelessness in Indianapolis rare, short-lived and recoverable

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 12.4.2015

Present: Matt Holland, Joan Harvey, Maurice Young, Sandy Jeffers, Lori Casson, Lindsay Leonhard, Tahirah McCall, Lena White

- Introductions – new faces: Maurice, Sandy and Lena. Six other committee members responded to the meeting request email that they would be in attendance but did not attend
- Joan & Matt reported on November awareness activities which included installation of the “kids” signs at 2 shelters, 3 community centers and at HIP. Joan also mentioned doing a big display at Central Library 4th floor on homelessness awareness – two people who saw the display contacted Joan by email about how to get involved in advocacy and 75 handouts with advocacy contact info were distributed
- Appointments to Indianapolis Housing Authority Board of Commissioners were discussed at length. Lindsay said “every city that has ended veteran homelessness has had a huge buy-in from their local housing agency.” The only special population that currently gets any preference with IHA is the elderly. Discussion on asking the mayor to appoint at least one CoC member to the IHA board. The group agreed that Joan and Matt should draft a letter to Mayor Elect Hogsett on behalf of the Continuum asking that he appoint a member of the Continuum to the IHA Board in 2016. Matt said he would send out a draft to the group who attended the meeting to allow people to vet the letter and then forward the letter on by December 10. Also asking for input on the letter from Alan Wichey.
- Report from those who attended transitional housing workgroup meeting on December 2: CHIP has contracted with TASC Consulting to draft a case statement about transitional housing. From an email from Alan Wichey: [The case statement will be a document that clearly defines transitional housing, its success outcomes, unique value for specific subpopulations, and key providers in our community. The case statement is the first step in a three part plan: 1\) clearly define the value of transitional housing for our community; 2\) Educate funders and the community about transitional housing and the value of supporting it; 3\) collaboratively seek funding](#)

strategies for transitional housing. Participants at the meeting provided an overview of their programs and key unique features of their populations, as well as outcomes they think should be featured. Participants are encouraged to send any research or outcomes about transitional housing to Alan. Hope to have a draft or structure for the case statement by the next meeting (January 6 at noon at the MIBOR Foundation Building). Lori, Sandy and Lindsay attended the workgroup meeting and spoke about the issue of special populations (families, those with addictions and in recovery) who need transitional housing before they are ready for permanent supportive housing. There seems to be a concern that some advocates do not understand the challenges of these special populations and that one approach, i.e. "Housing First" does not work for everyone. Lori said she gets 300-400 calls a month at Dayspring from families seeking shelter that have to be turned away since she doesn't have enough space for all. Sandy spoke about people in recovery needing the group setting in order to stay sober/clean and that permanent supportive housing does not work initially for that population. All agreed that since HUD funding is now concentrating on permanent supportive housing other local funding solutions must be found to support existing programs and fund additional transitional housing in Indianapolis. Someone pointed out that the average stay in transitional housing in Washington D.C. is 6-9 months while in Indianapolis the average stay is 60 days. Someone stated that the Indianapolis Continuum of Care "should not just be a HUD continuum but a true continuum of care for all of those experiencing homelessness in Indianapolis".

- FYI – Strategy meeting to end veteran homelessness on December 14 – Alan Wichey has details on meeting location, time etc.
- Due to time factor there was not a lot of detailed discussion on committee priorities and initiatives for 2016 but all agreed we have more than enough things to work on and the challenge will be prioritizing initiatives. Someone stated the committee should focus on the reality of homelessness in Indianapolis – misperceptions and solutions. Committee members hope to build on the political energy that came out of Prop 291 and revisiting the Homeless Bill of Rights. Maurice stated there is an effort to adopt a statewide homeless bill of rights that needs Continuum support.
- Next meeting date, time and location TBD

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Harvey
Committee Co-chair