

Indianapolis Continuum of Care

Making homelessness in Indianapolis rare, short-lived and recoverable

Community Education and Policy Committee Meeting Minutes January 11, 2016

Present: Joan Harvey, Matt Holland, Lena White, Michael Schwing, Frederick Crawford, Emmy Hildebrand, Rebekah Bricker, Tahirah McCall, Amy Nelson, Nicole Spacey, Jeri Warner, Maurice Young, Alan Wichey and LaToya Lester

- Matt spoke about a set date and time each month for the committee meetings in 2016. The group decided that the second Monday of each month from 3-4:30 p.m. the committee will meet. Meeting locations will rotate – Amy volunteered her location after the legislative session (April or May) and Lena offered HVAF. Next meeting will be February 8, location TBD
- The group discussed breaking into smaller groups (task forces) to work on specific projects/initiatives. Depending on the work of the groups this might require attending more than one meeting a month and events outside work hours (i.e. City-County Council meetings). By the end of the meeting the group decided on three different task forces: Community Awareness, Local Legislation/Reuben Engagement Center, and State/Federal Legislation. Committee members were asked to respond by the end of the day on January 25th to Matt & Joan via email which task force they would be interested in working on. An email from Matt sent January 12 gives more detail on the task force plan
- Matt mentioned this committee working with the PATA (Program Application and Technical Assistance) committee on the CoC direction with HUD in 2016 – Matt wants to talk to the committee chair, Kirk Taylor, about this idea.
- A lot of discussion on bills introduced at the General Assembly that might impact people experiencing homelessness. Amy shared a legislation tracker document via email and emphasized that this is a short session dealing with policy while next year's session is a long session and a budget year. Discussion about how to demystify the process for CoC members and developing a training/fact sheet on how to follow legislation and committees online. Amy will add anyone to her email list for the tracking document. Amy advises checking on a bill daily because changes can happen quickly. SB100 (adds sexual orientation, gender identity, and veteran status to the Indiana Civil Rights Law) is the bill she thinks may get a hearing next week – it is Republican endorsed and overrides the city version. She also said the hate crime bills introduced are all good and Fair Housing would support them. Jeri mentioned the need to connect the dot between homelessness and hate crimes. Alan feels the committee needs to

have a platform or “matrix” to work from. It was suggested that perhaps the BP council could revisit the guidelines for how & when the committee shares information with the rest of the CoC. Joan mentioned informational emails from the committee but not asking for action should be shared with CoC members. Alan said that CHIP is working with the sponsor of a bill that impacts the Housing Trust Fund to revise the language of the bill.

- It was suggested that at the next full CoC meeting the committee present the process of what we would like to do in regard to local and state legislation and put it to a vote. Advocacy for a legislative piece can be as simple as contacting city-county councilors and state legislators via email. Amy and Matt with Alan’s help agreed to develop an educational document about the legislative process and advocacy. It could include a matrix of topics and issues we want to advocate for and also include issues we would not want to advocate for. Matt said he feels that more action-oriented work will attract more committee members and keep people interested
- Discussion about Councilor Robinson’s latest proposal on protections for the homeless came next. Maurice made the point that the language needs to be advantageous to the homeless community and he feels that the current proposal needs language changes. A lot of it is not currently advantageous to the homeless community. He cited section 231-503 “protections in event of displacement” and issues with 60 days as the length of time the city is responsible for storage of personal items after a camp has been closed. Rebekah was concerned about the phrase “the city will give priority to long-term residents of the camp” in regard to camps closing and the availability of housing. Would this mean that someone who has been patiently waiting their turn on the housing list gets bumped down the list to give priority to someone coming out of a closed camp? Alan offered assistance with pulling Maurice and Ken Falk (Indiana ACLU) together to talk to Robinson about the proposal’s language
- Matt said next steps would be getting the meeting minutes out to committee members, feedback from committee members on which task force they are interested in working on, getting the task forces up & running, letting Amy know if you wish to receive her legislative tracker (she thinks bills being introduced will be complete by the end of the week) and setting locations for future meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Harvey