

# HOMELESS COORDINATING AND FINANCING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 10, 2017

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

7<sup>th</sup> and H Apartments

720 7<sup>th</sup> Street

Sacramento, CA 95814

Ben Metcalf called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

## **In attendance**

Council Members present: Ben Metcalf, Director Department of Housing and Community Development; Alicia Sutton, Chief of the Housing, Homelessness and Civil Rights Branch for the State Department of Social Services, Donald Cavier, Chief Deputy Director for the California Housing Finance Agency, Marianne Cantwell, Chief Deputy Director of Health Care Programs for the State Department of Health Care Services, Russell Atterberry, Undersecretary for the Department of Veterans Affairs, Stephanie Welch, Executive Officer for the Council on Mentally Ill Offenders (COMIO) in the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Mark Stivers, Executive Director for the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC) in the Treasurer's Office, Gina Buccieri-Harrington, Assistant Director of Grants Management, Victim Services Program within the Division of Grants Management within the Office of Emergency Services, Gary McCoy, Policy and Community Affairs Manager, San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department, Jody Ketcheside, Deputy Regional Director for Turning Point of Central California Incorporated, Gail Gilman, Chief Executive Officer for the Community Housing Partnership, Amy Anderson, Executive Director at PATH Ventures

Absent: Jennifer Loving, Executive Director for Destination: Home

## **Agenda Item 1**

### **Election of a Council Chair**

Ben Metcalf volunteered to Chair the Council's first meeting. It was noted, Council Member Metcalf would serve as the interim Chair until the council members vote in a permanent Chair.

**MOTION:** Council Member Metcalf moved the motion; seconded by Council Member Ketcheside to recommend Council Member Metcalf to serve as Interim Chair.

Council members observed a moment of silence to honor all the people affected by the wildfires around the State. Interim Chair Metcalf noted there are households who are now are facing the possibility of becoming homeless as a result of the wildfires.

## **Agenda Item 2**

### **Council Member Introductions**

Interim Chair Metcalf welcomed everyone and asked council members to introduce themselves; share a snapshot of their personal and professional experience; and to share their motivation to volunteer for this opportunity. Each member shared both their professional and personal experience with homelessness and Housing First.

## **Agenda Item 3**

### **Best Practices from Other State Councils Focusing of Homelessness**

Katy Miller, Regional Coordinator from the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) applauded the Council's first meeting and provided best practices from other state councils nationwide. Ms. Miller provided a brief history of USICH's first Federal strategic plan to end homelessness, *Opening Doors*. Originally released in 2010, *Opening Doors* is a roadmap for coordinated, joint action on homelessness among the nineteen USICH member federal agencies with local and state partners in the public and private sectors. *Opening Doors* outlined the following four goals to help create a sense of urgency around homelessness issues:

- Prevent and end homelessness among Veterans in 2015
- Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness in 2017
- Prevent and end homelessness for families, youth, and children in 2020
- Set a path to ending all types of homelessness

States could achieve any of the above goals when all levels of government (local, state, and federal) align towards a common goal. Ms. Miller encouraged the Council to implement the following best practices:

- Develop structures to support the operations of the Council such as the Council Policy Group and Interagency Task Forces;
- Ensure that all meetings provide for decision points to allow members to discuss and vote to adopt actions and strategies;
- Set statewide goals;
- Utilize performance management and metrics to monitor progress of goals and activities.

In addition, the Council could institute various State levers to drive action around homelessness issues, such as:

1. **Using existing federal policy guidance tools to advance existing tools and guidance at the state level.** USICH published: [Enlisting Mainstream Resources to End Homelessness](#). This document lists many ways a state can leverage mainstream programs such as TANF, Medicaid, and Housing Choice Vouchers and how they can support efforts to prevent and end homelessness.
2. **Technical assistance:** Access available federal technical assistance and provide coordinated assistance to address gaps to improve systems. For example, use technical assistance provided to two HUD funded [Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program \(YHDP\)](#) projects and ensure that learnings are shared across the state to help shift state policy based on recommendations from those efforts.
3. **Industry engagement:** Engage related trade associations and leaders in housing and related fields.
4. **Partnerships with national and federal agencies:** Use federal, state and local partnerships to demonstrate unity and support. There is a new Federal Regional Council, Region IX, their members meet quarterly and are eager to engage with partners at the local level.
5. **Convening:** Bring together partners across sectors to amplify and align strategy and advance progress
6. **Communications:** Provide messaging from state officials and agency leadership to drive action. With the recent Hepatitis A outbreak, work to ensure that other cities are getting ahead of this crisis and putting in place measures to ensure that it does not get worse. Coordinate across agencies.
7. **Bright Spotting:** Promote key innovations and promising practices that can and should be replicated.
8. **Guidance and Policy:** Issue official guidance or informational memorandums that provide direction and promote accountability

#### **Agenda Item 4**

##### **Opportunities to Address Homelessness in California**

Sharon Rapport, Associate Director for CSH (Corporation for Supportive Housing) presented on the core components of Housing First. Highlights from the presentation include:

- Per [Senate Bill 1380](#), state housing programs must now incorporate the core components of [Housing First](#).
- A Housing First approach provides the following:
  - Connects people experiencing homelessness people to a home as quickly;

- Removes barriers to housing homeless people typically face;
  - Provides choice in whether to participate in person-centered services;
  - Gives tenants leases with rights and responsibilities of tenancy.
- A Housing First approach recognizes that a person experiencing homelessness must first be able to access a decent, safe home, before:
  - Exiting homelessness;
  - Addressing harmful behaviors;
  - Improving his/her health; or
  - Increasing his/her income.
- Housing interventions, by applying a Housing First approach is different for individuals or families experiencing homelessness or chronic homelessness.
  - Households experiencing a housing crisis and have few barriers to housing stability may benefit from rental assistance over short period of time, assistance with security deposits, back utility payments etc..
  - Individuals experiencing chronic homelessness may benefit through long-term rental assistance paired with intensive services that promote housing stability.
- Housing First approach is an evidenced based model where:
  - Housing First Programs have lower rates of return to homelessness, allow people to exit homelessness faster, and serve more vulnerable populations than transitional models.
  - Tenants in Housing First programs access services more often, have a greater sense of choice, and incur fewer days in institutions than “treatment first” programs.
  - Housing First programs allow tenants to remain stably housed longer than other programs.
  - People who are chronically homeless or cycling through institutions and homelessness there is a significant decrease in health, corrections, and child-welfare costs.

In addition, Ms. Rapport led a panel discussion on the perspectives of Housing First, panel members included:

- *Katy Miller, Regional Coordinator, USICH.* Ms. Miller explained that the State should align the core components of Housing First to State Funded Programs by:
  - Identifying opportunities to advance the Housing First approach in the execution of state policy and funding commitments;
  - Providing training to appropriate state employees;
  - Training for grantees of state funded programs involved in implementing housing services;

- Incorporate housing first in key messaging from all state officials as a policy imperative;
  - Bright spot CA programs that are best practice Housing First providers;
  - Offer incentives for compliance and incorporate housing first into compliance reviews;
  - Set up data tracking systems on state funded programs utilizing Housing First to monitor outcomes and further the evidence base;
  - Link Housing First to Medicaid high utilizers across state programs to reduce health and other related costs;
  - Assign a Housing First Officer at state Department of Housing to coordinate a Housing First response across the state.
- *Michael Robinson*, a supportive housing resident, narrated his experience from homelessness to a recipient of rental assistance and supportive housing services. He attributed his success of stable housing to the supportive services received over the last six and half years.
  - *Mike Alvidrez*, Chief Executive Officer for Skid Row Housing Trust provided his experience developing and managing supportive housing projects in Los Angeles. He expressed conflicts arise when a project has multiple sources of funding. He would like to see the Council's recommendations be integrated seamlessly across projects.
  - *Emily Cohen*, San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, provided examples of San Francisco Projects that implement the core components of Housing First. She touted the success of individuals moving from institutionalized settings and moving into permanent housing.

## **Agenda Item 5**

### **Establish Council Governance Subcommittee**

Interim Chair Metcalf asked council members to establish a subcommittee on governance. The subcommittee is expected to bring back topics or recommendations for discussion for future Council meetings. The following council members volunteered for the Subcommittee on Council Governance:

- Stephanie Welch, Executive Officer for the Council on Mentally Ill Offenders, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation;
- Mark Stivers, Executive Director, Tax Credit Allocation Committee;
- Amy Anderson Executive Director, PATH Ventures;
- Russell Atterberry, Undersecretary, Department of Veterans Affairs;

- Donald Cavier, Chief Deputy Director for the California Housing Finance Agency
- Alicia Sutton, Chief of the Housing, Homelessness and Civil Rights Branch, State Department of Social Services.

Council Member Welch asked whether the Subcommittee will be supported by HCD staff. Interim Chair Metcalf stated HCD staff would assist the Subcommittee. Council Member Sutton volunteered her team to help with staffing efforts.

## **Agenda Item 6**

### **Other Matters as Placeholders for Future Meetings**

Council members provided the following topics for future discussions;

- Review Housing First implementation approaches in small communities such as Napa.
  - Council Member Ramirez suggested the Council review the Housing First implementation in Riverside County.
- Evaluate and prioritize the goals specified in [Senate Bill 1380](#).
- Overcoming the barriers faced when implementing Housing First in rural communities.
- Build a comprehensive list of all the funding sources and identifying any funding gaps.
- Potential impact of the new Housing Package bills and do the legislative priorities intersect with the Council's goals.

## **Agenda Item 6**

### **Public Comments**

#### **Jeff asked the Council Members to:**

- Familiarize themselves with local partners working with the homeless in Sacramento.
- Look for practical best practices on the implementation of Housing First in each of the council members' jurisdictions.
- Set up a state database to understand the rural and urban issues in dealing with homelessness.
- Require building owners to be responsible for the accessibility issues.

#### **Mandy Taylor, California LGBT Health and Human Services Network:**

- Ms. Taylor presented the following statistics:
  - 30 of 40 percent homeless youth identify themselves as LGBT;
  - 1 in 5 transgender youth experience housing instability issues or at risk of homelessness or are unhoused;

- LGBT community is most likely to experience a mental health diagnosis particularly around trauma and depression;
- Twice as likely to use illicit drugs;
- Individuals who identify themselves as queers and transgender experience higher rates homelessness.
- Ms. Taylor noted the council's membership included veterans and victim services advocates and recommended that someone from the LGBTQ community fill one of the vacant Council positions.

**Liza Kirkland, Community Outreach Manager: Dignity Health:**

- Ms. Kirkland shared success results from the Sacramento Housing with Dignity program. The program provides housing to chronically homeless people discharged from the hospital. The results are as follows:
  - In collaboration with insurer Health Net, the program has expanded from five stabilization units to twelve;
  - Program participants decreased inpatient hospital stays by sixty two days;
  - Hospitalization stays decreased by 52 percent;
  - Emergency room utilization decreased by 52 percent.
- Ms. Kirkland is seeking opportunities to expand the program to all areas of the state.

**Jane Adcock, California Mental Health Planning Council:**

- Ms. Adcock urged the Council to reach out to the rural counties who withdrew their participation from the Mental Health Services Act program. She suggested the Council reach out to one or two of the counties to learn what challenges or barriers they faced and what led to their withdrawal of the program.
- Ms. Adcock stated with 10,000 Americans reaching age 65 age every day, the Council should look into Permanent Supportive Housing or other type of housing that is suitable for older adults and individuals with health issues. Seniors may not necessarily need nursing care but still require some assistance with their health issues.
- Ms. Adcock asked the Council to not only think about the individuals who are currently in the streets but also serve individuals who are at risk of homelessness.

**Rob from the 7<sup>th</sup> and H Apartments Supportive Housing Committee:**

The Council should find out what works and what does not work for the homeless population. In addition, Council should find ways to prevent individuals from becoming

homeless in the first place. Rob urged to Council to find more Permanent Supportive Housing units.

**Bill Mendelson Executive Director, Central Valley Low Income Housing:**  
*Comments on Housing First and SB1380*

Mr. Mendelson congratulated the Council on the efforts surrounding the passage of SB1380 and the inclusion of the principles surrounding Housing First. He relayed concerns not previously addressed in earlier discussions or the presentation as:

- Require monitoring and enforcement on state funded programs that do not adopt or rewrite their policies to comply with the Core principles of Housing First.
- Impose a penalty or a fee for noncompliant programs.

Mr. Mendelson mentioned that most of the presenters spoke about Permanent Supportive Housing in single site projects; however, programs in San Joaquin County usually serve the chronically homeless in scattered site housing projects. He noted the Council would find that not many communities could develop single site projects.

Mr. Mendelson stated Section 8257 (13) (of the Welfare and Institution Code) calls for the creation of a statewide data system or warehouse that collects local data through Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS). He pointed out that State funded transitional housing projects do not participate in the local HMIS. He reiterated that all state funded homeless program should enter their data into HMIS.

**Randy Hicks, Legislative Chair, California for Disability Rights:**

Mr. Hicks stated that we have lost a lot of good things that stopped a lot of homelessness and understands that there were big budget cuts, wide ranging from both the State and the County. We need to find out what other funding resources are available to close funding gaps. We also need to take into consideration the accessibility needs when constructing new units for individuals experiencing homelessness.

**No comments received from the participants on the phone**

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:03 pm.