



Coordinated Entry Workgroup

9830 Patuxent Woods Drive • Columbia, MD 21046

Minutes of the July 30, 2020 Meeting

Webex

Attendance:

Department of Community Resources and Services Staff: Cara Baumgartner, Rose Burton, Jennifer Corcoran, Elizabeth Van Oeveren

Attendees: Bola Afolabi, Josh Bombino, Karen Booth, Jen Broderick, Cami Carr, Shanika Cooper, Tina Field, Denatra Green-Stroman, Daniela McDonald, Rebecca Ostroski, Sara Smoley, Sam Tucker, Linda Zumbrun

The meeting began at 3:00 pm.

Move-On Initiative

Staff shared that the Housing Commission is making HCVP vouchers available to the Coordinated Entry System for the purpose of moving people out of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) into a subsidy-only placement. Implementing this change will create openings within the PSH projects for households currently experiencing chronic homelessness. *The Path Home* sets a goal of developing a formal move-on strategy in year three – one that involves developing a robust planning and client preparation phase – but the current opportunity is important given that our PSH providers have reported multiple times that they have clients who have been in the program for many years who are ready to move on.

DCRS, Humanim, and Bridges staff have met to discuss criteria to be used in identifying households for moving on and tentatively recommended use of the New York City assessment tool included in the Move On Toolkit provided by the Corporation for Supporting Housing, with three additions – how many evictions while in PSH, how much intervention has been needed to keep the household housed, and if there is a history of apartment damage that would impact tenancy. The additions are items included in other tools provided in the CSH Toolkit that were not included in the NYC assessment. The Committee reviewed the items in the NYC tool. Humanim staff noted their direct care staff found the tool accessible and helpful, noting it is good for assessing the level of independence of clients as well as setting target goals for other clients. Bridges staff reported a review of the other two tools (those used in Detroit and Ohio) did not raise questions or concerns about the New York City tool.

Both Humanim and Bridges staff raised questions about the scoring in the Acuity Index Interpretation and there was extensive discussion about the possibility and process for adjusting it. Concern was expressed that too much adjusting would compromise the validity of the tool and that there not be an attempt to adjust the tool to fit it to clients. Additionally, Sam advised that considering a household scoring lower than the ideal range would be acceptable but households scoring under the minimum score should not be considered. There was general agreement that even though the tool is an objective instrument there is still the possibility for scores to be impacted by the manner in which staff implement it. For example, if a client pays rent between the 5th and 8th of the month instead of the 1st and the landlord allows that, one

staff person might score that as paying rent on time while another might consider it to be late payment. Sam indicated that inclusion of qualifying information is acceptable and there was general agreement that agency supervisors could provide quality control for scoring reliability issues. The Committee agreed that, subject to Board approval, a smaller group of DCRS and provider staff rather than the full committee could meet to discuss and agree on a limited variance from the tool's Acuity Index Interpretation.

The Committee discussed an implementation plan in which all clients who are interested in the move-on initiative would be assessed. There was concern that clients would be nervous about a potential change and Humanim and Bridges wanted to be sure clients understood the potential differences in rent and utility costs. A plan was developed for DCRS staff to draft a brief summary of the project to share with clients and Humanim staff will work with the Housing Commission to review the way costs are calculated. The providers can then begin the screening process with clients but inform them of any rent changes before they have to make a final decision.

Permanent Supportive Housing Prioritization Standard

Though there was not enough time to review the COVID prioritization, staff provided background to the need to review. Some provider staff have expressed concern that vulnerable clients are being left out in the process of identifying households for resources based on the COVID prioritization standard, especially those with behavioral rather than somatic health concerns. Staff suggested revisiting the relative weighting of age vs. health conditions as well as whether RRH and PSH should have different prioritization standards. The Prioritization Workgroup will meet to develop a recommendation they will send forward to the Committee.

The meeting concluded at 4:19 pm.