



# Coordinated Entry Workgroup

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9830 Patuxent Woods Drive • Columbia, MD 21046

## **Minutes of the March 12, 2019 Meeting**

9830 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia, MD 21046

### **Attendance:**

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

Attendees: Linda Zumbrun, Sara Smoley, Ayesha Holmes, Karen Booth, Joshua Bombino, Tifrie Criner and Anne Brinker.

The meeting began at 2:03 pm.

Linda Zumbrun, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and members introduced themselves.

**Minutes** from the February 2019 meeting were approved. A standing meeting date was set for the second Tuesday of the month at 10:30 am, though the April meeting will be held at 3:30 pm.

### **Rapid Rehousing Bridge to Permanent Supportive Housing**

The Committee discussed the potential use of Rapid Rehousing as a bridge to Permanent Supportive Housing. Under this scenario, when there is an opening in a Permanent Supportive Housing program or when the system receives vouchers from the Housing Commission, households meeting the chronic definition who are in a Rapid Rehousing program, even if already housed, would be eligible for the opening. The logic for this is that those households had previously been selected for the RRH project based on a high ranking according to the prioritization standard and thus might be the most vulnerable in the system at the time of the PSH opening. However, allowing those chronic households already in a RRH project to have a chance of obtaining stable housing through RRH rather than PSH is less costly to the system, and should allow for more system movement as people move more quickly through RRH projects.

Thus, two potential courses of action were discussed: leaving people already in RRH projects where they are, which led to a discussion about RRH itself, or bridging some but not everyone from RRH to PSH. Reservations about implementation of RRH in Howard County were acknowledged. RRH is still relatively new. It can be difficult to envision those with very low incomes maintaining housing without a permanent subsidy, though many people do it through strategies such as moving to lower cost areas or home sharing arrangements. It was noted that often households who go through a RRH program move several times after program exit before obtaining housing stability, but they have the benefit of a positive rental record obtained through the period of RRH. Allowing households to try to stabilize in RRH before offering PSH would be consistent with the recognized practice of progressive engagement, in which households are offered the least amount of help needed to stabilize.

With respect to using RRH as a bridge, there was a general feeling that it would be appropriate to bridge some, but not necessarily all, households to PSH, and conversation centered on how such decisions should be made. One possibility is that a household would have to go through RRH first and subsequently lose housing before being considered for PSH. Another option would be to review the status of a household with the Case Manager to assess functioning and to look for red

flags such as lease violations to determine whether the household is more appropriate for PSH. A third option would be to have the Prioritization Workgroup review households on a case-by-case basis, though this could be problematic because the projects need to be administered in an objective manner. The Committee discussed using the VI-SPDAT scores that recommend RRH vs. PSH as a basis for making the decision, with some discretion at the outer limits of each category. In this case, it would be important to ensure that a VI-SPDAT score is not significantly outdated.

### **By-Name List Active/Inactive Status**

The Committee continued the discussion from last month regarding dividing the By-Name List into active and inactive lists. The Committee was provided with data on how many people are on the list and how many would be lost at each cut-off date (30/60/90 days), as well as how much time passed between contact with hotline and referral date for those households who have entered programs in the past. Concern was raised that using an inactive list would put up a barrier to obtaining housing, as households might not be able to contact the system regularly or might become discouraged by that process. It was also noted that some people contact system partners but that information does not make it into HMIS, in which case people could be inappropriately placed on the inactive list. However, given that the Prioritization Committee will be reviewing the full By-Name List, there needs to be a way to manage its length. Additionally, caseloads and shelter rates are being impacted by difficulty reaching households on the list, and having outdated households being referred to partner agencies may be contributing.

A robust street outreach capability would allow us to know who is literally homeless at any given point in time. The Committee was interested in identifying ways to reach out to people on the By-Name List, perhaps starting with those who have been on the list the longest. Ideas such as replicating the Point-In-Time count or making periodic calls to those who have previously contacted the system were raised, as was the possibility of using the Prioritization Workgroup as a forum to determine whether any of the partners have been in recent contact with a household.

### **Next Steps**

Jennifer Corcoran will pull these thoughts together into a proposal for the Committee to consider, and discussions will continue at the April meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:41 pm.

