

**Nashville-Davidson County Continuum of Care**  
**Performance Evaluation Committee**  
May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 | 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM  
East Park Community Center

**Attendance**

- ❖ **Members:** Jeffrey Jackson, Stephanie Cooper, D’Yuanna Allen-Robb, Andy Zhu
- ❖ **Staff:** Allison Cantway (OHS), Raquel de la Huerga (OHS), Hannah Cornejo-Nell (OHS)
- ❖ **Guests:** Norman Deep (MDHA), Karri Gornick (Oasis Center), Alyssa Fernandez (Oasis Center), Courtney Berner (Oasis)

**Values & Equity Statement**

Read aloud by Andy Zhu.

**Collaborative Applicant Transfer Process**

Everything has been submitted and the HUD field office has confirmed their receipt. Suzie followed up earlier this week, but at this point it is just a waiting game. HUD has to wait on the federal designation to approve the transfer and the financial office in Texas has to move the grant. In the meantime, an MOU has been signed between OHS and MDHA that allows OHS to function as the Collaborative Applicant and receive reimbursement from the Planning Grant funds through MDHA. Suzie plans to send an email out to the Continuum of Care notifying of this transition and that she will be phasing out of her current role.

**Agency Spotlights**

**Oasis Center.** Oasis is funded through the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) Grant – Rapid Re-Housing and Supportive Services. Nashville was awarded the YHDP back in 2018 and opened applications through a NOFO, which was awarded to Oasis Center in 2019. In March 2020, the initiative was reprogrammed for COVID. At this stage, Oasis’ Program is no longer a demonstration and is now officially part of the annual CoC allocation. Previously, Oasis has not had to compete for the funding, but it seems like that HUD will likely expect their YHDP to be ranked and reviewed along with other applications. Supportive services only is a diversion program that serves youth aged 13 to 24 experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Program participants have to fall into 1 of 3 HUD categories to qualify. The intention is to divert young people from homelessness as quickly as possible. Oasis operates a basic emergency center for minors. Youth 18-24 are served through their street outreach program. Oasis also operates a drop-in center. Oasis offers a range of wrap around services, such as mediation, financial assistance, groceries, transportation, life skills, etc. Oasis also provides long-term case management and housing programming through Coordinated Entry. Case management is designed around a plan that the young person comes up with themselves, including having them set goals regarding housing. The Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) program is referral only, with a focus on youth 18-24. A lot of their youth are young parents.

- ❖ **Are referrals from CE?** Yes, for Rapid Re-Housing. Supportive Services Only (SSO) is not through CE. At one point Oasis piloted CE referrals for SSO, but it did not work well. The SSO program is exempt from CE through a YHDP waiver. Oasis uses a 24/7 crisis line that folks can call and there are 3<sup>rd</sup> party referrals. Oasis also does street canvassing and office hours at the Mission and Launch Pad.
- ❖ **This is the only diversion program funded through the CoC. In terms of numbers of people served, how many people are we seeing?** Approximately 55 households in shelter. Dependents

of 18-24 year olds also get diverted. Half of those in the shelter are dependents. 105 people total. Overall, Oasis is seeing a large number of minors, particularly dependent. Rapid Re-Housing has served 81. More than half are parenting – originally thought they'd see only 10 parents. Oasis has been having a lot of conversation with The Family Collective because they are seeing a lot of young families. Last year, under 18 served 54 and shelter was 53.

- ❖ **What has been waived?** Because the program was started as a demonstration program, Oasis received waivers that allowed them to provide 3 years of rental assistance and 1 additional year of supportive services. Oasis can also serve youth from outside the county and pay for things like cell phones and hotels. Nashville does not have a 18-24 youth shelter year-round and many youth do not feel safe at the Mission. Oasis is also seeing a large influx of family homelessness, which is likely related to a shortage of shelter beds in the city.
- ❖ **YHDP might need to be ranked and reviewed with other applications this year. What might that look like?** Diversion programs do not necessarily provide housing, which makes it difficult for YHDP to be scored since many programs are scored based on successful exits into permanent housing. A successful exit for diversion could be a temporary placement since that person is safely housed and working through other resources. Scoring for YHDP could be simply taking into account temporary placements as positive exit destinations.
- ❖ **What does RRH look like for the youth?** Ages 13-17 cannot be housed on their own. If they are under 18 they can stay in the shelter and Oasis will work very closely with DCS , which allows a 72-hour sanctuary period. Oasis has seen a big spike in young people who have just turned 18 and are still in the MNPS school system – majority were in foster care, adopted, kicked out – working closely with MNPS HERO program. Tricky population that they are exploring new avenues to work with. Sending any 18 year old to the rescue mission is something they try to avoid to keep them out of the homelessness system.
- ❖ **Oasis just got a prevention demonstration grant, not through HUD.** Oasis is working with families in Metro Schools to serve many parents who become separate from their children while they go on the streets. Oasis has received funding from HHS to provide street outreach and shelter. HUD only allows Oasis to work with unaccompanied minors, however, HHS recognizes that youth can be experiencing homelessness in a family unit too. The hope is to prevent families from fragmenting and entering homelessness.
- ❖ **Who are Oasis' partners on employment?** Oasis has an income coordinator that was absorbed into their programming. They have a sheet of businesses with direct connections who they work with to place youth. Income has been a big push this year. Employment for young people is hard because they don't have a resume built and often only qualify for low paying jobs. Oasis tries to help them through steppingstone jobs and certifications. However, finding a job that provides enough income to rent stable housing is very challenging.
- ❖ **MDHA.** Norman Deep is the director of rental assistance at MDHA. MDHA receives CoC funding for rental assistance and shelter plus care. MDHA receives \$2.1 million rental assistance, which has served 208 families, including 600 individuals. On average MDHA spends about \$1000 per unit cost on each family. Most of the households are single persons. 69% are Black and 30% are White. Eligibility for Shelter Plus Care (S+C) is that there has to be a member of the household with a disability (does not have to be head of household). MDHA has had this grant for years. MDHA used to have 4 S+C grants but they have now been combined. 70% of participants have been in the program 5 years. 10% are 5-10 years. 3 families on the program for 20 years. Average income is - \$11,359. 68% of families have an income of \$10,000. The majority of

participants earn between \$10,000 - \$15,000. 70% of those with income are on SSI. 14% are working. Majority of these individuals are disabled.

- ❖ **Are any referrals turned down?** Norman has not seen at S+C referrals rejected. S+C has also expanded eligibility to include those on the sex offender registry, who are excluded for other programs based on HUD requirements. Exceeding the income limit would be the main reason why someone would not be eligible for S+C. The referring agency also has to commit to providing services for the family. Supportive services can include general housing navigation.
- ❖ **How are you doing with increasing income?** S+C has struggled with this. Sometimes the housing subsidy can disincentivize folks from working because they are worried about making too much money and losing their housing.
- ❖ **Demographics of staff and board members?** Norman's office has 44 employees, 36 are Black, 6 are White, and 1 is Asian. The board has 7 members, 3 white, 4 black, 5 women, and 2 men.
- ❖ **How do you plan to spend down?** This grant ends in July and MDHA anticipates spending the funds. The grant anticipates serving 212, however, MDHA historically serves between 195 to 210. Cannot fully support 212 families. Not having to dip into other grants. This is a very small piece of their portfolio – they have 7,000 vouchers. \$68 million for other voucher programs and this is \$2 million.
- ❖ **Could this be considered a diversion program since those served in the program are retaining housing for 5-10 years.** In a way, yes, because Nashville does not have enough PSH that this program has turned into a PSH alternative, since the housing can be maintained for a long period of time and the referring agency is required to provide supportive services.
- ❖ **How is S+C doing at increasing income?** Hannah clarified that S+C has one of the highest increases for income at 80%.
- ❖ **How many more individuals in our system – could benefit if there was more funding for S+C?** 1,400 people experiencing chronic homelessness and could be eligible if there were more S+C units. MDHA does have other dedicated homeless vouchers as well.

### CoC FY 2024 Competition

After the competition ended last year, OHS and MDHA debriefed everything to identify areas of improvement. Suzie went through the application and made suggestions. OHS is working to transition the application onto an online platform to help streamline the application process and make it easier for the PEC to score. OHS has changed very few substantive things in the application and just focused on reorganizing and asking more direct questions so that it would be easier for both the applicant and reviewer. The OHS team also added a few questions to better understand program requirements and policies, such as notice of rights, reasons why individuals might be exited, efforts to lower barriers, etc.

A committee member asked how changes to the application might impact scoring. Allison explained that questions can likely be separated out into 3 categories: questions that need to be scored; questions to better understand the program and ensure proper monitoring; and questions that could strengthen Nashville's Consolidated Application. Allison expects that scoring can be done on the application platform that they have acquired for these applications. Committee members flagged that a consistent complaint that they have heard from the community is needing to increase transparency into the scoring system. A member suggested clarifying the purpose of questions that do not directly impact scoring and to make sure the applicant's time is not being wasted. Committee members asked OHS to color code the questions to understand which questions need to be scored. The committee agreed to use an adapted version of the Equity Scoring Rubric from last year and asked Allison to create a Housing First Rubric.

Committee members also suggested adding APR data directly into the application for organizations so they can see their performance.

OHS has also moved the timeline up to allow more breathing room for applicants and the PEC. OHS plans to host an interest meeting in the last week of May to help agencies gear up for the application and understand what might look different this year. Committee members encouraged Allison to go over the CoC Priorities Report at the interest meeting. Allison asked for any feedback on the Renewal Application to be emailed to her in the next week. OHS then hopes to have the new application ready by the next PEC meeting.

Committee members suggested adding a question to ask if renewal applicants are willing to provide any trainings or consultation to new applicants. OHS also plans to send out an FAQ in response to any questions that are submitted in the first two weeks that the application is open.