

**NASHVILLE-DAVIDSON COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE
HOMELESSNESS PLANNING COUNCIL (HPC)-MEETING MINUTES**

<p>Council Members Present: Kennetha Patterson, Liz Mallard, Andrea Hancock, Dr. Xyzeidria Ensley, D’Yuanna Allen-Robb, Drew Freeman, Courtney Johnston, Laura Ward, Angie Lawless, David Langgle-Martin, Michelle Southard, Jamie Villegas</p> <p>Staff Present: April Calvin, Raquel de la Huerga, Allison Cantway, Bill ClenDening, Derrick Smith, Kelly Muldoon, Vai Sreenivasan, Suzie Tolmie, Charis Stegall</p>	<p>Date: November 13, 2024 Time: 8:30AM Place: Sonny West Conference Center, Howard Office Building</p> <p>Recorded by: Raquel de la Huerga</p>
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AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION
<p>I. WELCOME, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, MOMENT OF SILENCE, MINUTES AND CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT</p>	<p>► Welcome by Chairperson, Kennetha Patterson Chair Patterson introduced herself as the first ever Homelessness Planning Council chair with lived experience of homelessness and her additional role as chair of the Consumer Advisory Board. Chair Patterson emphasized her focuses for this year being transparency and avoiding harm towards those impacted by homelessness. Chair Patterson expressed concerns regarding delays to compensation for people with lived experience and shared her hope for a future where people with lived experience led the charge in crafting solutions for homelessness.</p> <p>► Remembrance & Moment of Silence Chair Patterson read the names of individuals who lost their lives while experiencing homelessness in October. Chair Patterson uplifted the dire conditions of those living on the streets, especially as cold weather approaches. The Homelessness Planning Council took a moment of silence.</p> <p>► Review of October Minutes No corrections were noted.</p>
<p>II. UPDATES</p>	<p>► Office of Homeless Services Director’s Report, April Calvin: Director Calvin shared that the Office of Homeless Services (OHS) is actively preparing for Cold Weather Shelter, which is intended to be an overflow shelter for the city. This is the first winter that OHS will be hosting and operating the shelter, which opens when the temperature is below 32 degrees for three consecutive hours. Thus far, the cold weather shelter has not had to open due to unseasonable warm temperatures. In previous years, there was 40 nights of sheltering. The average amount of people attending shelter per night was 222. This year, OHS will be utilizing the HMIS system to scan people in to speed up processing guests. OHS will notify the community on nights that the shelter is open via the Metro Emergency Alert & Notification System (MEANS). Community members can sign up for text notifications by texting OHSALERT to 888777.</p> <p>The Old Tent City structures that were deemed by Codes, NDOT, and TDOT to be uninhabitable and unsafe have been successfully removed without incident. There were ten structures that were removed, six on October 15th and four more on October 25th. Individuals residing in these structures were given 30 to 45 days of notice and the city partnered with local nonprofits to help get residents items to relocate. Director Calvin clarified that just the structures have been closed and that Old Tent City has not been identified for closure.</p> <p>The news has reported regarding the pods purchased by the health department a few years. A task force will be working on the viability of utilizing the pods and the process for creating a Request for Proposals (RFP) for agencies to apply.</p>

Regarding the \$50 million of American Rescue Plan Act funding, Director Calvin noted the chart of total spend down. The funds were originally awarded in 2022 and OHS has until the middle of 2026 to utilize the funds. All of the funds have been allocated to specific agencies and initiatives, however, there is \$13 million still available for funded initiatives to expense over the course of the next year and a half.

A Request for Proposals (RFP) will be released in the near future for capacity building as it relates to offering Interim Gap Housing at the Rodeway Motel. The Salvation Army has withdrawn from utilizing the \$1.9 million for operating the Rodeway Motel.

OHS and the Consumer Advisory Board (CAB) have been working in partnership with the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) to grow and strengthen lived experience engagement. Approximately, a year ago the CAB agreed to host meetings at the Contributor to meet people experiencing homelessness where they were. OHS has worked with MDHA to make reimbursements and provide gift cards to individuals with lived experience engaging with the CAB and the Continuum of Care. OHS, NAEH, and CAB leaders are now working to better train, educate, and orient people with lived experience so they are well equipped to engage with the Continuum of Care. CAB leaders are working to grow the CAB more intentionally and ensure sustainability for the initiative.

► Collaborative Applicant Report, Allison Cantway:

A year ago, the Continuum of Care General Membership voted for the role of the Collaborative Applicant to move from MDHA to OHS, who are still waiting for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to give their final stamp of approval for the Planning Grant to transfer to OHS. OHS and MDHA worked together to submit the Continuum of Care Consolidated Application on behalf of the community. The Performance Evaluation Committee received more new applications than ever before and there was a strong pool of applicants.

The Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO) named Nashville as one of nine communities eligible to reapply. Unfortunately, Nashville was not awarded the additional YHDP funding. Nashville will still retain the city's existing YHDP funding that was awarded in 2017 to the Oasis Center. In the process of applying for YHDP, the Continuum of Care revitalized the Youth Action Board, which will continue to work on other youth homelessness initiatives.

The third NOFO that was released this year was CoCBuBuilds, which was focused on the development and construction of new units of permanent supportive housing. HUD only allowed each CoC to submit one application so the Performance Evaluation Committee (PEC) hosted a local competition to narrow down one application. The PEC received three applications and identified the submission from Park Center as the strongest. OHS is currently working with Park Center to ensure that their application is submitted to HUD.

► Continuum of Care Updates, Raquel de la Huerga:

The Nominating and Membership Committee met for the first time as a combined committee. Their conversation focused on efforts to strengthen engagement and orientation for the Continuum of Care General Membership. The Point-in-Time Count Subcommittee is still looking for volunteers for the count that will take place on the night of January 23, 2025. The Equity and Diversity Committee is working on a Racial Equity Training for the spring, providing support to organizations that have significant disparities in program outcomes, and revisiting the draft Anti-Discrimination Policy draft.

► HMIS Monthly Report, Megan Vickers:

For the month of October 2024, 3290 people experienced homelessness in Nashville, which included 270 families and 2,475 adult only households. 8 percent of those in HMIS in October were veterans, an increase from the previous month; 48 percent were experiencing chronic homelessness; and 8 percent were youth age 18-24. 52 percent of those experiencing homelessness in October were Black, 39 percent were White, 57 percent were men, and 42 percent were women.

	<p>184 people experiencing homelessness were housed in the month of October, including 28 families and 84 adult-only households. A member requested for data on families to also indicate the number of children experiencing homelessness. 14 percent of those housed were veterans, 33 percent were experiencing chronic homelessness, and 9 percent were youth age 18-24. The average number of days between when people entered HMIS to when they existed to permanent housing was 117. A member requested more information about how the average days to move into housing has changed over time. In October, there was a huge jump in the number of people housed with VASH vouchers, a testament to the work of the VA, veterans service providers, and the OHS landlord engagement team which has been working to improve VASH utilization. 57 percent of people housed were Black, 32 percent were White, 56 percent were men, and 45 percent were women.</p>
<p>III. REVISIONS TO THE HMIS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL</p>	<p>► Overview of Proposed Revisions, Shanley Deignan and Kelly Muldoon: The Data and HMIS Oversight Committee has worked with the OHS HMIS team to update the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Policies and Procedures Manual. The manual guides the work of HMIS and expectations for those entering data into the system. The Data and HMIS Oversight Committee originally asked the OHS HMIS team to go through the manual and identify areas that needed updates or clarification. The committee then spent the last few months reviewing the manual and considering suggestions from the OHS HMIS team.</p> <p>The vast majority of the changes being proposed are minor grammar changes or updating terminology (e.g. changing references to the Homelessness Impact Division to the Office of Homeless Services). The first significant recommended change was to add language that participating agencies are responsible for providing some levels of oversight for their end users to ensure appropriate utilization of the platform. The committee recognized that there are many more end users than when the manual was last updated and the participating agencies have the ability to monitor their staff more closely.</p> <p>The next recommended change, which the committee spent the most time on, is to remove requirements that HMIS end users have a background check prior to receiving access. Instead, the committee is proposing that HMIS access will not be granted to any end user who has entered a no contest or pled guilty to identity theft and stalking related felony crimes. The responsibility for ensuring the end users do not have these types of criminal charges would fall on the participating agency. In 2011 HUD introduced a rule that required background checks, however, in the last couple of years they have pulled that policy due to the logistical challenges for local communities. In practice, the OHS HMIS team has not had the ability to verify that agencies are conducting background checks and a few participating agencies have shared challenges with conducting background checks such as financial barriers or a desire to provide low barrier employment to people with lived experience. The committee decided to align with HUDs shift and instead put the responsibility on agencies to ensure their staff do not have criminal backgrounds for the types of charges that data shows are most likely to abuse databases like HMIS. The committee also reached out to HUD Technical Assistance, who reinforced that HUD no longer requires background checks and there are other communities in the country that have moved away from this requirement for a range of reasons. The HMIS team would still reserve the right to request a background check if there are concerns regarding specific end users. Members expressed concerns that this shift would reduce accountability and could risk the safety of service recipients. Members emphasized that clients entered into HMIS are some of Nashville’s most vulnerable residents. Members noted that background checks function as a preventive measure to ensure those with criminal backgrounds do not have access to the platform in the first place rather than waiting until the HMIS lead or participating agency is notified. This shift would require the HMIS lead to react and punish rather than maintaining background check requirements that would prevent access in the first place. Other members emphasized the need for agencies to provide low barrier employment and recognized that background checks may intimidate people with lived experience from working in the field (even if their criminal background had nothing to do with stalking or identity theft). Additionally, background checks are not cheap and can be burdensome for non-profit agencies. Currently, there are no costs associated with participating in HMIS and the committee is worried that requiring background checks could cause agencies to pull out of the database. If the HMIS team were to be the entity responsible for verifying background checks that could pose significant logistical, administrative, and financial costs for a platform that has over 300 users, with many agencies having frequent staffing changes. Chair Deignan noted that the committee is made up of HMIS users and leadership from a range of participating agencies and the committee was initially split on how to proceed with this policy. However, after extensive deliberation, the committee felt that the revision brought the community closer to the current reality and better holding agencies accountable for reporting the</p>

	<p>background of potential users. HPC members suggested for the committee to revisit the policy and explore potential additional guardrails, such as updating new user agreements and strengthening language around accountability.</p> <p>Policy 4.2 clarifies that HMIS access hinges on an individual’s employment or volunteer status with an agencies. If the individual were to quit or be fired, their HMIS access would be revoked. Policy 4.5 adds language that participating agencies are to verify that their users have basic computer skills, since HMIS is a complex software. The HMIS team will correct the numbering for the duplicate sections 4.6. Policy 4.7 outlines how licenses are to be distributed for participating agencies so there is guidance in place if the community were to reach the current maximum allotment for licenses. The changes to Policy 5 focused on modernizing the data to reflect newer technology such as artificial intelligence and social media. Policy 9.5 outlines the possibility for participating agencies to conduct data imports, such as the current collaboration with the Nashville Rescue Mission.</p>
<p>IV. REVISIONS TO THE OUTDOOR HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY</p>	<p>► Overview of Proposed Revisions, Raquel de la Huerga: The Shelter, Weather, Outreach, and Prevention (SWOP) Committee has been working on revising the Outdoor Homelessness Strategy for months and at their meeting a week earlier the committee determined that their draft was ready to be finalized and brought to the Homelessness Planning Council (HPC). Due to the short period of time between the SWOP meeting and HPC meeting, a committee member could not be present to provide the overview of the proposed revisions. Chair Ryan Lampa and/or other committee members will be present for the meeting in December to answer any questions. Raquel noted that the committee had discussed for many months concerns and disconnects with the Outdoor Homelessness Strategy that was published in 2022, which prompted an effort to collect feedback and explore revisions. The committee spent a few months soliciting feedback from key stakeholders in the community, such as organizations involved in camp closures, current and former residents of encampments, and staff of the Office of Homeless Services. The interviews that were conducted focused on identifying what has been going well over the last two years and areas for improvement. A two-page summary of the feedback collected can be found on page 24 in the appendix of the revised Outdoor Homelessness Strategy. A key theme was that the plan itself was not the key concern, but rather the implementation, coordination, and communication among those involved. Thus, the committee decided to focus on clarifying the contents of the plan to clearly outline expectations for all parties, including creating detailed timelines and outlining responsibilities. Additionally, the committee reorganized the plan to bring forward key components of implementation and then place supplemental guidance further back. The committee also worked to define key terms and processes, such “interim housing”, “assessment”, and “prioritization.</p>
<p>V. STORY OF PROGRESS</p>	<p>► Charis Stegall, Low Barrier Housing Collective: The Shelby House is one of Nashville’s newest affordable housing partners. Through the American Rescue Plan Act funding, 102 gap loan units were funded to be set aside for people experiencing homelessness to secure housing across the city. Shelby House received funding to bring on 14 gap loan units. These units are zero barrier, which means there is no criminal background check, rental history check, or credit check. The units are targeted for individuals earning under 30% Area Median Income, which is about \$22,000 a year. Shelby House is located on South 4th and the property has a great view of the Cumberland Reiver, Titan Stadium, and downtown. These 14 units are referred through Coordinated Entry and come with Project Based Vouchers (PBV) which means the assistance is attached to the door. This is groundbreaking for the Nashville community because there are many people experiencing homelessness that do not have income or other subsidies. At this stage, Shelby House has nine residents and there are five more referrals to go.</p>
<p>VI. ADJOURNMENT</p>	<p>► Adjourned: 10:08am</p> <p>NEXT MEETING: December 11, 2024 at the Metro Historic Courthouse</p>