

## OHS Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

May 15, 2025

9:00am

Front Steps Housing & Services

**Members Present:** Beverly Torres, Dr Kate Nagel, Barb Karam, Chris Knestrick, Jane Nichols for Dori Nolan, Cindy Rice for Kris Harsh, LeVine Ross for Yvonne Conwell, Liam Haggerty, Ed Abshire, Allison Schaefer, Yvette John for Shajuana Gaston, Angeline Sulak for Marcia Zashin, Chamomile Hendricks, Eric Milkie, Jeanna Davis, Sherri Clancy, Mike Bernot, Beth Graham, Cynthia Dailey, Beau Hill, Elaine Gimmel, Mike Sering, Raymond Mills, Loh, Stephanie Thomas

**Members Absent:** Michiel Wackers, Kellie Glenn, Karen McHenry, Linda Uveges, Christian Anderson

**Others Present:** Megan Scheck, Marcos Cortes, Erin Rearden, Allison Gill, Teresa Ruhl, Terrel Valentine, Fred Berry, Luke Drotar, Christie Sozio, Danielle Cosgrove, Jenny Eppich, Sharon Parries, Christa Palangio, Katherine Ungar, Candance Robinson, Kellie Glenn, Tiarra S May, Dr Adrienne Y Hatten

- I. Welcome and Opening Remarks
  - a. Elaine Gimmel welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:02am.
  - b. Chris Knestrick shared a QR code for a survey for Board members to update information and select a committee.
- II. Decision Issues
  - a. Approval of Advisory Board Minutes
    - i. Elaine presented the minutes from the 3/20/2025 Board meeting and asked for any discussion.
    - ii. Loh motioned to approve the minutes, Cynthia seconded.
    - iii. All were in favor with no opposition or abstentions. Motion carries.
- III. Status of CoC Grants (Howard Burchman)
  - a. 2024 competition
    - i. The competition has concluded, but we are starting to see the contracts coming out for that. HUD just released the scores.
    - ii. 176.75/200 points were awarded to Cuyahoga County CoC, which was 25 points higher than the median score.
    - iii. Could have gotten 7 points for housing leverage, but we likely did not receive those due to HUD not agreeing that was creating new beds.
    - iv. Scored very well on system performance.
  - b. 2025 competition –
    - i. In theory, since this was a two year competition, we would carry over the same score, but HUD has not released any instructions about this.
    - ii. August 29 at 8pm is the deadline for the competition and HUD has to give 60 day notice of the competition, so we should know soon what they are going to do with scoring, but it should be simplified.
    - iii. It is unlikely there will be any funding for new projects.

- iv. HUD staff are being laid off, so field offices have much fewer staff there to execute grant contracts. Field offices and Washington DC used to both include certain issues and conditions within the contracts, but now with field offices being so small in size, the only issues and conditions within the grant contracts will come from Washington DC HUD.
- v. If you have not accessed eSNAPS within the last 90 days, you'll have to be re-logged into the system through eSNAPS, so please make sure you login and have access so you can submit what is needed without delay.
- vi. Also make sure your SAM.gov registration is active.
- vii. Make sure you access eLOCCS every 90 days to not get locked out.
- viii. HUD is allowing projects to claim indirect costs if those are listed in the 2024 competition.
- ix. Will likely need to update match documentation and have those letters and MOUs ready for competition this year.
- x. Environmental review needed – can use national review for TBRA, but project based need their own environmental review.
- xi. Nonprofit orgs continue to not be required to document immigration status of persons served, there was a recent lawsuit on this, and there was a temporary restraining order where HUD was barred from requiring contracted programs to document immigration status.
- c. “Skinny” budget from the White House –
  - i. Proposed major changes to the homelessness assistance program.
  - ii. Recommended eliminating CoC and HOPWA and merge into ESG to include those projects – funds would then be dispersed to the states using the ESG formula. PSH is not an eligible activity under ESG, so those could be lost, and very likely HOPWA funds would be lost as well. Very important to contact representatives and let them know the importance of keeping these projects as a whole and PSH which would be most at risk.
  - iii. Elaine asked about grants that are coming up for renewal, Howard advised advocacy on those.
  - iv. Elaine wondered if there was a risk for any FY 2025 projects, and Howard said they would not be at risk because that budget was approved.
  - v. Projects could be pro-rata reduced to the level at which they can be funded if HUD decides they cannot fully fund all renewals at increased FMR.
  - vi. Mike Sering asked if congress could decide to change ESG to include PSH, and Howard said it is possible but it would require passing legislation. All changes will require a good amount of changes to legislation.

#### IV. OHS Updates (Marcos Cortes)

- a. Posted ED position, interviews held last week. Made recommendations to move forward, waiting for David Merriman to get back from vacation to move forward. Hoping to have someone in place by end of June.
- b. This is a budget year for the county, most of the funding is levy funds and is very tight. Marcos' intention is that we will stay flat for the next year, hopefully with no cuts to budget. This process will start in June/July to prepare for end of year.

- c. Received approval to move office to a location off Community College Blvd., goal to move by end of May/early June to be able to spread out. Might be able to host Advisory Board meetings there in the large conference room.
- V. Seasonal Shelter Request for Proposals (Marcos Cortes)
  - a. Released a RFP last year but did not get any applications. Looking to re-issue the RFP for seasonal shelter, and would like input from the community on needs. May 29 will host a community forum at the Old Brooklyn Center to discuss the community needs. Notice will be sent to everyone. Will issue the RFP following that meeting.
  - b. Stephanie asked how her organization could get the RFP. Marcos stated that if their organization is in the county's planholders list, they will receive it and Stephanie confirmed they are.
- VI. Communication Group Update (Allison Gill & Marcos Cortes)
  - a. Cuyahoga County has a specialized communications team for health and human services, and they ask for success stories and ask about what is going on in the community. Allison and Marcos thought it would be a good idea to have a CoC committee focused on communication, updates, strategies, events, etc. and it needs to be a small committee. Working on establishing a set of protocols on how to communicate information. Have been meeting monthly with large shelter providers and EDEN. Will move to quarterly meetings and invite more organizations soon. Typical attendees are development staff at organizations.
  - b. Elaine suggested we invite HUD to Cuyahoga County for a visit and wondered if that was the group to extend that invitation. Allison recommended that for now, this group would make that recommendation to the County Executive's office and they would invite HUD. In the future when the group is more developed, it could potentially come from that group. Marcos agreed.
- VII. Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA) and System Performance Measures (SPM) Overview (Nick Butina & Amanda Larson)
  - a. HIC and PIT now have a due date a month from now to iron everything out – please look for communications from OHS on this and complete your tasks in a timely manner.
  - b. Amanda presented the LSA, showing 3 years of data (2022, 2023, 2024) for the following items:
    - i. Persons served for Emergency Shelter/Transitional housing, Rapid ReHousing, and Permanent Supportive Housing
    - ii. Days homeless trend by household type (all HHs, Adult only, Adult/Child, child only)
    - iii. Average length of time homeless by category (All persons, 55+, 18-24, Disabled, adult child HH, Adult child parenting youth, adult & child w/ 3+ children, first time homeless, black, white, Hispanic, Non-Hispanic)
    - iv. Exits to permanent destinations trends
      - 1. One member asked if this was defined, and OHS staff that these are defined by HUD and categorized according to the options available in HMIS for exit destinations.
    - v. Returns to the Homeless System Trend
    - vi. Nick shared a system map of all households and a discussion ensued.

- vii. Demographics
  - viii. System Engagements
- c. Nick shared the System Performance Measures (SPM) for the following items:
  - i. Returns to Homelessness
  - ii. Income Changes
  - iii. First time homeless
  - iv. Successful placement and retention
- VIII. Advisory Board Subcommittees (Nick Butina)
  - a. Nick thanked everyone who has completed the survey, and shared a document that shows which Board members are on which subcommittee. Nick went through each subcommittee and asked Board members on that committee to confirm their membership, and asked those who are not on a subcommittee to fill out the survey and select one subcommittee to join. Nick shared a brief overview of each subcommittee, to include:
    - i. Executive – consists of chairs of subcommittees
    - ii. Governance
    - iii. Program & Policy – open to any interested party
    - iv. NOFA Review
    - v. NOFA Strategy – 3 advisory board members free of COI
    - vi. Youth – must be 18-24 at the time of joining
- IX. A Home for Every Neighbor update (Liam Haggerty)
  - a. Liam shared numbers, housed 154 people total since July 2024.
  - b. Liam also shared a map to show the different wards that people have been housed from, to include 13 wards.
    - i. One member asked if a map could be shown with where they were housed by ward, and Liam shared they would not want to share that level of detail for privacy but they have been housed throughout the greater Cleveland area.
    - ii. Liam shared that he would look into doing a heat map by zip code, and clarified that all units are tenant based rentals that the participants choose.
    - iii. Several members asked questions about landlord relationships and how households are defined, which are self-defined by the tenants.
  - c. In process of hiring a program coordinator, the budget is moving toward adding this program as a general funding item, which would mean more continued long term funding.
  - d. Working to house additional people through additional funds, likely between 80-100 people.
  - e. Initial goal of 150 people was met, so now the goal is more one of equilibrium – where people they are helping who are unhoused are recently homeless rather than chronically homeless.
  - f. One member asked if there was the ability to extend the 12 month subsidy limit, and Liam shared that there is flexibility with the general funds and that is something they are considering.
- X. Initiative Reports
  - a. Ending Veteran Homelessness (EVH)

- i. Luke presented for Shawna Gurley
  - ii. January saw a massive surge of homeless veterans which they have been working through, so there is a large number of people housed in April. Total overall census is 88. Overall average length of time to house people is 110 days. Recent average length of time to house people is closer to 90. May 1 saw only 6 veterans experiencing unsheltered homeless, the lowest ever.
- b. Rapid ReHousing (RRH)
  - i. Elaine presented
  - ii. Members were given a report. Will reopen RRH to single adults, have reached out to partner agencies about this to make sure they can provide ongoing case management. Permanent vouchers are also available to those who cannot sustain after the 12 months. DV households 165 currently, regular RRH is 118 households.
  - iii. Nick clarified that communication will be given specifically on when this is open and who can apply, please do not send referrals yet.
- c. Unsheltered Homelessness
  - i. Chris K presented.
  - ii. Influx in people moving back to unsheltered homelessness after the seasonal shelters closed.
- XI. Meeting adjourned at 11:00am.
- XII. The next meeting of the OHS Advisory Board is July 17<sup>th</sup>.

Submitted by Megan Scheck 5/15/2025