

## OHS Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

September 18, 2025

9:00am

Front Steps Housing & Services

**Members Present:** Bridget Gill for Dr Kate Nagel, Chris Knestrick, Jane Nichols for Dori Nolan, Lonnie Williams for Liam Haggerty, Ed Abshire, Allison Schaefer, Shajuana Gaston, Angeline Sulak for Marcia Zashin, Chamomile Hendricks, Terrell Dent for Eric Milkie, Rebecca Prather for Karen McHenry, Mike Bernot, Beau Hill, Michaela DeAlexandro for Jacquie Salter, Elaine Gimmel, Mike Sering, Loh, Stephanie Thomas, Christian Anderson

**Members Absent:** Beverly Torres, Michiel Wackers, Kris Harsh, Barb Karam, Yvonne Conwell, Marcus Harris, Ian Mussell, Kellie Glenn, Linda Uveges, Jeanna Davis, Sherri Clancy, Dr Adrienne Hatten, & Raymond Mills

**Others Present:** Chris Murray, Megan Scheck, Connor Marroth, Erin Rearden, Allison Gill, Levine Ross, Nick Butina, Amanda Larson, Paula Stevens, Gina Titus, Sharon Parries, Blu Catanzaro, Sherri Brandon, Jennifer Harrison, Allie Petajohn, Prentis Jackson Jr, Katura Pleasant, Kate Lodge, Jenny Eppich, Allyson Kirsh, Fred Berry, Anne Face, Jeanne-Helene Roy, Danielle Cosgrove, Lester Holmes, Candice Robinson, Nikki Eggert, Samara McCullough, Jacquella Lattimore, Shawna Gurley, & Katherine Ungar.

- I. Welcome and Opening Remarks
  - a. Elaine welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:12am.
- II. Introducing Levine Ross (David Merriman/Chris Murray)
  - a. Chris Murray introduced new OHS Director Levine Ross
  - b. She has been with the county since 1998
  - c. Has been on the Advisory Board since 2014
- III. Seasonal Shelter
  - a. 11/15 start date. Next steps to come
  - b. RFQ: Levine is reviewing. Waiting for a date to release by the end of this month.
- IV. Decision Issues
  - a. Approval of Advisory Board Minutes
    - i. Elaine presented the minutes from the 7/17/2025 Board meeting and asked for any discussion.
    - ii. Mike Sering motioned to approve the minutes, and Chamomile Hendricks seconded.
    - iii. All were in favor with no opposition or abstentions. Motion carries.
  - b. Approval of Board Members
    - i. Law Enforcement – Commander Ian Mussell
    - ii. Provider Seat (HSPA) – Dr Adrienne Hatten
    - iii. Motion to approve by Stephanie Thomas, seconded by Allison Schaefer
    - iv. All were in favor with no opposition and no abstentions. Motion carries.

- c. Evidence-based policy (Matt White)
  - i. The PPC over the past two meetings has considered a new policy for the Board to adopt. Policy decisions, resource allocation will be guided by an evidence-based policy framework. Research findings and data analysis from experimental studies with critically appraised results to inform and guide decisions. Concern that federal priorities may not align with local needs to ending homelessness, so this policy allows to adhere to a local framework that EBPs will be used to inform decisions. No specific EBPs are listed in the policy, but there is
  - ii. Loh motioned to approve the policy, Chris Knestrick seconded. No further discussion. All were in favor with no opposition or abstentions. Motion carries.
- d. Recent Administrative Actions Affecting COC funding (Howard Burchman)
  - i. EDEN was one of 14 orgs in the US to apply for funding through the CoC Builds NOFO. On August 5 congress was notified of the selected programs. September 5 released a new NOFO but rescinded the rewards and NOFO, and gave a one week deadline and checked some boxes to cooperate with immigration and not follow harm reduction, and align with two sexes only, etc. One of the grantees went into court with NAEH and a temporary restraining order was granted to RI on this re-issued round and HUD cannot reward any funds on that NOFO from September 5. Removed the statutory deadline of 9/30 so we will see how the court decision plays out and if funds will be granted to EDEN.
  - ii. Federal funding for this FY ends on 9/30. Unknown what the outcome will be. HUD says they will release a NOFO for 2025, focus will likely be on treatment and recovery, reducing unsheltered homelessness, reducing returns to homelessness, and increasing earned income.
  - iii. Supposed to be a 2 year CoC NOFO last year but it was released in July that they would be releasing another NOFO, but there is no further information. There is concern that this CoC NOFO could include similar checkboxes on immigration, gender, etc.
  - iv. Executive Order July 24, 2025 – Crime and Disorder in America’s Streets. Summary items from this include:
    - 1. Homeless people can be placed in treatment centers or long-term institutional settings
    - 2. End support for housing first policies that “deprioritize accountability and fail to provide treatment, recovery, and self-sufficiency, increase competition among grantees through broadening application pool”
    - 3. Require CoC recipients to utilize treatment as a condition of participation for those with SUD and SMI
    - 4. Redirects funding away from states and programs that support harm reduction.
    - 5. Bring civil or criminal action against those who allow “safe consumption” or permit the use of “illicit drugs” on property
    - 6. Require CoC recipients to share data with law enforcement

- v. HUD has been adding additional requirements in grant agreements and include that any DEI work is in violation of the Civil Rights Act and it is discriminatory. Programs can also not promote “gender ideology”.
  - vi. Compliance with Executive Orders related to immigration – assistance cannot be provided to people who are undocumented under PRWORA.
  - vii. HUD will not mandate the implementation of HF but has also not repealed HF.
  - viii. Case pending on grantees v. HUD regarding DEI, gender ideology and immigration. Currently in court. Another suit resulted in a TRO regarding imposing these DEI, gender ideology and immigration requirements.
  - ix. What can we do about these things – the following ideas were shared:
    - 1. Monitor and track court cases
    - 2. Review the 2025 NOFO when issued to determine impact
    - 3. Work with legislators to stress importance of following evidence based practices.
    - 4. Seek to maintain inventory of permanent housing resources
    - 5. Review system performance measures and evaluate grantees based on key outcomes
    - 6. Establish cooperation MOUS with law enforcement
  - x. Elaine shared a summary from the meeting yesterday that she attended where many providers shared their concerns to elected officials about the federal administration’s push to pull back on the things we have implemented, such as HF, harm reduction, DEI, etc. and that this would have a great negative impact on these programs and on the program participants. There is great concern that the programs would be out of compliance, should these requirements be slated for immediate implementation. A discussion ensued regarding ICE, immigration, and concern about the National Guard coming possibly to Cleveland.
- e. PIT and HIC (Amanda Larson/Nick Butina)
- i. Nick sent out the applications for Advisory Board Seat and for Program Policy Committee with the agenda. Looking for Board seats for 2 people with lived experience as well as two at-large seats open to anyone who is in the homeless services sector that is *not* a staff member of an agency in the Homeless Services Provider Alliance (HSPA). Due by 10/24 and will be reviewed by the Executive Committee.
  - ii. Amanda provided an overview of PIT and HIC data from 2022-2025.
    - 1. PIT Count of homeless individuals has increased over time, but there was a large decrease in unsheltered population from 2024 to 2025, largely due to the Home for Every Neighbor program.
    - 2. Increase in CH persons, but decrease in adults with SMI and adults with SUD and adults with HIV/AIDS from last year.
    - 3. Inventory of ES beds, TH beds has increased. Safe Haven beds have stayed the same. RRH beds have decreased. PSH beds have mostly stayed the same compared to 2024.
    - 4. Nick reminded everyone to keep up with their data quality and be responsive to emails from OHS related to data.

- f. Introducing Levine Ross (David Merriman)
  - i. Made decision to bring Levine Ross on. It has been a longer process than would have liked but thrilled to have found the right candidate for the job.
  - ii. Expressed appreciation for the Board during the transition.
  - iii. Thanked OHS staff and Marcos.
- g. Initiative reports
  - i. A Home for Every Neighbor (Lonnie Williams)
    - 1. Provided an overview of the report. Goal was to house 150 in 18 months, which would be January 2026, but this was accomplished by March 2025. Housed 177 individuals to date. Resolved 53 encampments in 13 city wards.
    - 2. Average length of time between intake and move in is 10.7 calendar days.
  - ii. Ending Veteran Homelessness (Shawna Gurley)
    - 1. Shawna provided an overview of the report sent out.
    - 2. Currently there are 6 CH veterans on the list. 45 veterans moved into permanent housing, and 30 veterans entered transitional housing.
    - 3. Working towards maximum utilization of beds
  - iii. Rapid Rehousing Report (Elaine Gimmel)
    - 1. Elaine provided an overview of the report sent out.
    - 2. Processing more applicants this year as compared to last year.
    - 3. Currently 35 households in DV-HT RRH
    - 4. Currently 65 Households in regular RRH
  - iv. Unsheltered Homelessness Report (Chris Knestrick)
    - 1. Around 100 people outside right now
    - 2. Rocky River is considering making it illegal to sleep in the park, please advocate against this
    - 3. Lorain is also pushing for this, please advocate against the criminalization of homelessness

V. Meeting adjourned at 10:52am

Submitted by Megan Scheck 9/18/2025