



THE HUDSON COUNTY ALLIANCE
TO END HOMELESSNESS

HCAEH Meeting Minutes

June 16th, 2021

2:00 p.m.

***Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, this meeting was held over Zoom.**

Welcome and Introductions

Katelyn Ravensbergen of the Hudson County Division of Housing and Community Development called the meeting to order. Introductions were made of anyone who had called in to the meeting.

CoC Business

- *FY2021 CoC Program Monitoring and Competition Timeline* –Naomi Lesnewski of the Hudson County Division of Housing and Community Development stated that they are working on the CoC monitoring, and agencies can expect to receive the documents next week. As in years past, agencies will be given time to review and submit any changes or updates. The grant inventory worksheet has been confirmed with HUD and the local offices are supposed to have all GIWs finalized with HUD Washington by mid-July, which is around when they anticipate the 2021 NOFA to be released. At that time, the 2021 competition will start. Katelyn added that Naomi is working on a list of all the different HUD waivers for the CoC program. Once complete, there will be a Zoom call to go over all waivers and dates. Gloria Acosta-Nelson from York Street Project asked if the HUD rental assistance waiver is extended to January. Katelyn said she may have to submit an AAQ for several items before the call to clarify any grey areas, but all information will be shared on the zoom call.
- *CoC Data Work* – Kevin Llangari from the Hudson County Division of Housing & Community Development updated the group that he recently reached out to all HMIS users regarding data quality, with information on clients that need updated annual assessments. HMFA requested that Kevin let everyone know that HMIS users must update their passwords and should not save it on any password manager program. Candy Brewster from NJ HMFA let HMIS users know that in the event they get locked out due to password updates, you can go back in and change it if you have the security questions set up. On a recent call with HUD, they said beginning October 1st there will be some minor changes to data elements, including to race and ethnicity questions, among others.

CEAS Business

- *SSH Updates* – Katelyn reported that providers are moving along on utilizing this funding. She requested that providers ensure that funds requested through vouchers are matching up with HMIS records. Vouchers will be compared with HMIS as they are received to avoid issues down the line.

New Initiatives/Programs

- *System for Addressing Households Experiencing Violence* – Amy Albert from Haven Adolescent Respite Center updated the group that her organization has had several recent cases of clients experiencing violence needing to move quickly, and then having a hard time finding a voucher. Because of the uptick in domestic and community violence, she is concerned that there is no clear pathway to house effected individuals. Amy is interested in finding out the larger scope of the problem and seeing if it would be possible to set aside vouchers specifically for this purpose. She would like to start a subcommittee to begin looking at this issue and asked for interested volunteers from HCAEH. Katelyn added that they will be reaching out to Coordinated Entry to get more numbers.
- *NJ DCA Housing First Expansion RFP* – Katelyn announced that the Voting Members approved a letter of support for the County in conjunction with Jersey City to submit a RFP to DCA for the Housing First Expansion program. The focus of the project is cross-sector data sharing. Ideally this project will incorporate data from different systems (hospitals, jails, HMIS, housing authorities etc.) so client's needs are better understood and when different housing opportunities arise, all entities connected to a client are made aware in real-time. The County recently found out they have been awarded this funding so the project will be moving forward but is still in the very early stages. The funding will go towards CSH as a technical assistance provider and to a vendor that will be able to put this type of system together. Katelyn will reach out to partners for collaboration and input.
- *Hudson County Racial Equity Work* – Katelyn explained that she and Kevin are working with CSH, Monarch, and SHA around racial equity in the homeless system. Monarch is hosting focus groups of persons with lived experience to gain their perspectives as they have moved through these systems. Nadine Azari from Monarch Housing reiterated that they are looking for participants with lived experience in the homeless system – emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing. This is a paid opportunity, and a Google form for referrals has been created and will be disseminated through the listserv along with a one-page description of the project. Katelyn explained that this is the first part of the project, and that the next phase will be focus groups with providers to give feedback from clients and to take a deeper look at data that has been collected. From this, recommendations for change will be created.
- *Emergency Housing Voucher & Foster Youth to Independence Programs* – All voting members received an email to vote on MOU and LOS requests. These include two new programs: Jersey City Housing Authority was allocated 94 Emergency Housing Vouchers, all of which will have to come through the coordinated entry system, prioritizing the literally homeless and clients who are usually not eligible for other vouchers. The hope is that with these vouchers and ESG-CV funding, a substantial number of clients will be able to be moved out of the system. When referring clients to Garden State, they should not be referred to a specific program, but rather to coordinated entry as a whole. Secondly, CSP through their Community Enterprise Corporation arm is applying for 25 vouchers through DCF to the Foster Youth to Independence Program. These would be for youth who have come out of the foster system and are either homeless or at-risk. Both of these programs would provide longer-term vouchers, as opposed to other vouchers that have come out during COVID which have a much more limited timeframe.

Ongoing Updates

- *COVID-19 Updates*
 - *Eviction Moratorium Update* – The Eviction Moratorium has been extended again, even though the Public Health Emergency has been lifted. As of right now, Governor Murphy has left the eviction moratorium in place until January 1, 2022. The County's CARES website has

been updated (cares.hcnj.us) with information on all eviction prevention programs that are currently open, legal services, etc. They will look to keep this page as up to date as possible as new programs and resources are available. Legal service partners will be contacted to provide input on any additional information that should be provided there.

- *Prevention Programs* – Monica Yeng from the Hudson County Office of Social Services updated the group that the CARES II Eviction Prevention Program deadline has been extended through August 15th. Currently there are 2,876 applicants and 1,273 applications have been submitted successfully. Out of that, 1,202 are below 50% AMI and 63% are receiving unemployment. The total requested amount to date is \$9.4 million. Thirty households have requested assistance with future rent totaling \$173,000. Within the last 30 days, they had over 196 households in the hotel/motel program and the length of stay has increased to 138 days. Outreach has been made through public and parochial schools, as well as DCP&P about the Eviction Prevention Program. A list provided by the courts included over 5,400 pending summonses from January 2020-March 2021. They are continuing to contact these households to inform them about the Eviction Prevention Program. Rebecca Symes from The Waterfront Project asked a clarifying question on whether those numbers provided included Jersey City residents. Jacqueline Gomez from the Hudson County Office of Social Services confirmed that they did not but did say that they are processing applications separately from Jersey City residents if they owe four months of rent or less because they are then able to use SSH funds. Samantha Carpio from Jersey City Community Development updated that the City is working on releasing their ERA program with the Housing Authority which will be administering it. They are hoping to release information to residents in August.
- *Family Stability Committee* – Anne Christensen from WomenRising reported that at their last meeting, the group followed up on the shared Google calendar and other ways to work across agencies to offer clients virtual learning opportunities. Naomi did a STELLA data overview and discussion with the group. The group also discussed COVID vaccination reluctance, re-opening strategies, and eviction moratorium. The next meeting is on July 12th at 10 AM on Zoom.
- *Food and Shelter Coalition* – No update.
- *Veterans Committee* – Kelly McGuinness from Soldier On announced that the subcommittee just met prior to this meeting. They began with Kevin giving a snapshot on the County veteran data trends in the County. They also had a by-name list case conferencing session with SSVF providers, coordinated entry, and VA. The new veteran building on Ocean Ave. will have three homeless veteran units, these veterans should come with their own voucher. Community Hope's Hope for Veterans program has a 20th anniversary Flag Day 5K run tomorrow, June 17th at the Lion's VA at 7 PM. Finally, Soldier On is excited to announce that they broke ground last September on a 70 unit building in Tinton Falls in Monmouth County, but the project will be open to all veterans throughout the State. They are currently taking a preliminary interest list of names. Once the full application is open, they will send it to Katelyn for distribution. Next meeting will be August 18th at 1 PM.

Announcements

- Scott Carey from Metropolitan Family Health Network updated the group on their Healthcare for the Homeless program, which has moved to 935 Garfield Ave. in Jersey City from their previous location on Bergen Ave. There is transportation available, please reach out if any clients need that. Medical, dental, and integrated behavioral healthcare are all available to the homeless. Scott introduced Dorian Santiago who is the new LCSW on-site point of contact for any questions or clients who need assistance. Telehealth services are also available. On Saturday, June 26th the Network is hosting a vaccine drive to encourage those who are on the fence about getting vaccinated. Walk-ins are welcome and all three types of vaccines are available.
- Anne announced that there is a new IRS Child Tax Credit, clients do not need to have earned income. Please make sure to share with all clients who might be eligible. Rebecca asked if there is an agency to refer to that helps with tax-related issues. Anne responded that the IRS link she sent out through Katelyn has further information.
- Jaclyn Cherubini from the Hoboken Shelter introduced the new Programs Manager Khalil Curtis to the group who has replaced Ana Prado.
- Gloria asked about the \$10 shelter increase that has been in place during COVID. Jacqueline said that they are updated on its status on a month-to-month basis.

The meeting was adjourned with the next meeting scheduled to take place on Wednesday, August 18th at 2pm.

Voting Agency Attendance

Agency	Name
Bayonne Economic Opportunity Foundation	Donna Cullen*
Catholic Charities	Claudia Marks*
	Crystal Hopkins
	Susana Armas
Community Hope	Pilar Rodriguez*
CSPNJ	Pamela Baker*
Garden State Episcopal CDC	Susan Milan*
Helping Arms	Donald Weinbaum*
Hoboken Shelter	Jaclyn Cherubini*
	Khalil Curtis*
Hudson County Housing and Community Development	George Serio*
	Katelyn Ravensbergen*
	Kevin Llangari*
	Naomi Lesnewski
Hudson County Housing Resource Center	Carmen Esquilin
Hudson County Office of Social Services	Jacqueline Gomez*
	Monica Yeng*
Jersey City Community Development	Jamie Ding
	Samantha Carpio*
	Amari Torres
Jersey City Housing Authority	Bianca Mendoza
Jersey City Medical Center	Kimberly Blackwell*

Let's Celebrate	Angelique Williams*
North Hudson Community Action Corp	Maria Crespo*
Palisades Family Success Center	Vivian Patino*
Soldier On	Danielle Mineo* Kelly McGuinness*
The House of Faith	Jennifer Rejfir*
The Waterfront Project	Rebecca Symes* William Paige
United Way Hudson County	Carmel Galasso* Samantha Martinez-Mendoza*
Women Rising	Anne Christensen*
York Street Project	Jahmillah Gantt Gloria Acosta-Nelson* Lesly Guzman Shakila Ali

**Designates voting member*

Non-Voting Agency Attendance

Agency	Name
Alliance Community Healthcare Inc.	Marilyn Cintron
City of Jersey City	Denisse Santiago
Community Health Law Project	Sean Benoit
DCP&P	Georgina DeRosa
Haven Adolescent Community Respite	Amy Albert
Horizon New Jersey Health	Ricardo Pasos
Jersey City Health and Human Services	Alma Santana Derrick Casanova
Metropolitan Family Health Network	Dorian Santiago Scott Carey
Monarch Housing Associates	Nadine Azari
NJ DFD	Keshia Reynolds Rhonda Walls
NJ HHC	Denise Brown
NJ HMFA	Candy Brewster
The Community Builders, Inc.	Audrey Nonemaker
US Veterans Affairs	Charmaine McLawrence Rick Macnamara
WellCare Health	Joel Martinez
YMCA Newark & Vicinity	Brenda Myrick Mabel Elmore