



THE HUDSON COUNTY ALLIANCE  
TO END HOMELESSNESS

## HCAEH Meeting Minutes

August 18<sup>th</sup>, 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 Competition Updates* –Katelyn stated that all current agencies receiving CoC funding should have received their monitoring and evaluation documents. Everyone is still waiting for the 2021 NOFA to be released any day. At that time, the 2021 competition will start, as the local application is ready to be released. She will keep everyone posted as the process moves forward. Everyone also should have received the environmental review information; the majority of programs are exempt for this year.
- *CoC Data Work* – Kevin Llangari from the Hudson County Division of Housing & Community Development showed the group a graphic with the typical data points tracked. The charts illustrate the extent of data quality errors throughout the CoC by HMIS Project Type. The percentages demonstrate the percentage of client records that have a given errors. HUD advises that no more than 10% of all client records have any of these errors. A red trendline is featured on all charts, showing whether our CoC is below the 10% error threshold. The elements highlighted are all areas that impacted performance review scoring. Kevin demonstrated how to run a data quality report on HMIS to identify which clients have missing information. Candy Brewster from NJ HMFA added that if you are an outreach or services-only program and do not tend to discharge clients in a timely manner, then many will show up as missing an annual update. To help with this issue, HMIS can set the program to automatically discharge clients for a specific period of time (for example, 90 days after last contact). In preparation for the LSA, they have been working to ensure that all programs have the correct HMIS bed inventory set up. There is no need to keep residence units, please reach out to Candy to discuss eliminating these. Kevin asked if Candy knew of any big upcoming changes in October. Candy said that all changes will be relatively minor, and include changes to wording on gender, race, and ethnicity choices, and will begin to incorporate coordinated entry data.

### 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

- *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. Nadine Azari from Monarch Housing announced that focus groups of persons with lived experience were held over the past two days, with around six participants. One-on-one interviews will be held with individuals who previously expressed interest but were not available for the focus groups. The timeline for the release of the report is around December. Katelyn explained that this is the first part of the project, and that the next phase will be focus groups with case workers and other frontline staff, which providers will be reached out to about soon.
- *Emergency Housing Voucher & 100 Day Challenge Progress*– The CoC voted to approve two MOUs on Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) programs – one administered through the Jersey City Housing Authority which was allocated 94 Emergency Housing Vouchers, and others through DCA which are open to the entire State of New Jersey. Susan Milan from GSCDC announced that they have been very busy with new initiatives and vouchers. They are in the process of submitting vouchers for both the JCHA and DCA EHV programs. Monarch is spearheading an initiative to submit 100 applications to the DCA program in 100 days, which Susan is hopeful that Hudson will be able to meet. The collection of documents (birth certificates, social security cards, etc.) delay the submission of applications, but GSCDC is helping clients through this process, and it is moving along very quickly. Susan added that these vouchers do not come with services, so they may not be appropriate for all clients.

## Ongoing Updates

- *COVID-19 Updates*
  - *Eviction Moratorium Update* – Rebecca Symes from The Waterfront Project explained that there have been a series of new laws that have been passed. Throughout COVID-19, New Jersey has had such a strong eviction moratorium that the goings-on on the federal level have been largely irrelevant. However, this is now changing. The Governor signed a bill that is focused on protection for people who are 120% AMI or below. Tenants must take affirmative action to receive protection from the moratorium. Tenants can not be evicted for rent arrears from March 2020- August 2021. Tenants must complete a self-certification form online in order to be protected. For clients below 80% AMI, they can not be evicted until after December 31, 2021. The eviction moratorium has been narrowed to only protecting cases involving non-payment. There is also a federal eviction moratorium that lasts through October 3, 2021. Tenants must also file a self-certification form for this protection, and clients above 120% AMI may also be eligible. Community Health Law Project provides legal services for tenants who are living with disabilities, Northeast New Jersey Legal Services works with clients who meet income requirements, and The Waterfront Project also provides free legal services to low- and moderate-income clients, as well as undocumented individuals. Each program has different dates and deadlines associated with it, which can be found online. There are now mandatory virtual settlement hearings being held through housing court. Clients who receive notice of such a hearing must attend, or a default judgement will be issued against them. LaTrenda Ross from the Food and Shelter Coalition asked what happens to Jersey City residents who apply to the Rent Relief program but owe

more than \$10,000. Samantha Carpio from Jersey City Community Development responded that if a household owes more than \$10,000, a legal services provider will be working in conjunction with the housing authority and the landlord to come to an agreement about the remaining portion.

○ *Prevention Programs*

- *Hudson County Eviction Prevention Program Update* – Monica Yeng from the Hudson County Office of Social Services updated the group that the ERA I program closed on July 23<sup>rd</sup> because all of the funding had been allocated. ERA II opened on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, so there was no lapse between the two programs. There were 1,530 successful applications for ERA I, of those, 1,431 were below 50% AMI and 64.6% were receiving unemployment. The total requested amount to date is a little over \$11 million, and \$4.2 million had been paid to date. Forty-four households were approved for perspective rent to maintain household stability, totaling over \$367,000. For ERA II, 210 applications have been submitted and the review of those will begin in approximately 45 business days once ERA I application review has been completed. All households that received summonses were sent flyers with information about the Eviction Prevention Program.
  - Michele Musumici from North Hudson Community Action Corp announced that they also have rental assistance funds available for households below 120% of the federal poverty guidelines.
  - Links to all programs will be updated on the [cares.hcnj.us](https://cares.hcnj.us) website.
- *Family Stability Committee* – The committee took a summer break and will meet again on September 13<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM.
  - *Food and Shelter Coalition* – LaTrenda announced that there was successful food distribution event with Goya and seven different agencies. The next meeting is on September 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 PM.
  - *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. The County's veterans are mostly male, mostly Black, and 54% report a disabling condition. 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, two referrals have already been made, so (if approved) there is one more unit available for a veteran with their own voucher. Next meeting will be October 20<sup>th</sup> at 1 PM.

## **Announcements**

- Jaclyn Nunziato from NJ 2-1-1 announced the Katelyn will be sending out the Quarter 2 statistics for Hudson County. NJ 2-1-1 is seeing about 75% of the calls they saw during the same period in 2020, and Hudson County is accounting for about 5% of the statewide calls. About 21% of callers are families with children in Hudson County, compared to 17% statewide, and 51% are Black or African American which is a little higher than the statewide rate.

- Dorian Santiago from the Metropolitan Family Health Network reminded the group that they are open for business and welcome clients for medical, dental, and behavioral health services. They provide van transportation and telehealth appointments as well.
- Jaclyn Cherubini from the Hoboken Shelter shared that she would like to chat offline with service-provider colleagues about how to implement and enforce vaccination requirements for staff.

The meeting was adjourned with the next meeting scheduled to take place on Wednesday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at 2pm.

### Voting Agency Attendance

Agency	Name
Catholic Charities	Crystal Hopkins Angelo Hunt Melba Espinosa
Community Health Law Project	Jonathan Tolentino*
Community Hope	Pilar Rodriguez*
Covenant House	Caroline Sunchuk
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*
Hudson County Housing Resource Center	Carmen Esquilin
Hudson County Office of Social Services	Monica Yeng*
Jersey City Community Development	Jamie Ding Samantha Carpio* Saulo Diaz Stacey Johnson
Let's Celebrate, Inc.	Angelique Williams*
North Hudson Community Action Corp	Michele Musumici*
Soldier On	Danielle Mineo* Kelly McGuinness*
The House of Faith	Jennifer Rejfir*
The Waterfront Project	Rebecca Symes* Kimberly Goycochea
United Way Hudson County	Carmel Galasso*
Women Rising	Anne Christensen*

*\*Designates voting member*

### Non-Voting Agency Attendance

Agency	Name
Family Promise of Hudson County	Alyssa Lopez
Horizon New Jersey Health	Ricardo Pasos
Hudson County Welfare & Food and Shelter Coalition	LaTrenda Ross
Jersey City Health and Human Services	Derrick Casanova

Metropolitan Family Health Network	Dorian Santiago Garrick Hall
Monarch Housing Associates	Nadine Azari
NJ 2-1-1	Jaclyn Nunziato
NJ DFD	Keshia Reynolds
NJ HMFA	Candy Brewster
Northeast NJ Legal Services	Joseph Calaceto Christine Ricardo