

**Housing Continuum of Care-Bucks County**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 27, 2017**

**Welcome, Introductions, Approval of minutes (Don Detweiler)**

Don Detweiler welcomed those present. Attendees introduced themselves. Don called for the approval of the minutes for the February 23, 2017 HCoC-BC meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Andy Warren. The motion was seconded by Marti Woglom.

**LHOT (Joyce Schug):** LHOT continues to coordinate with Jeff Fields from the self-determination housing project on the prepared renters' education program. They are in their third week of a pilot program at Village of Hope and are gathering feedback on the materials. They will look at other counties for information on implementation and how to get landlords involved.

**Training (Deb Neidhardt):** The training committee met on March 27. They are reviewing materials for a case management training. A survey is being developed to determine the training needs of library staff. The next meeting is May 3 at 9:30 at BCOC's office on Doyle St. A morning conversation will be held at BCOC on May 31 – the group will be a sharing of challenges and case examples.

**Outcomes/Data Management (Stefanie Hendel):** The outcomes/data management group met on April 11. They reviewed the system performance measures. These measures are part of the annual CoC application. 2015 was set as a base year. Stefanie will work on creating program level reports on these outcomes. The employment and income growth outcomes need to be improved. The next meeting is scheduled for Tue., June 13 at 9:00 at BCOC's office on Doyle St.

**SOAR (Stefanie Hendel):** SOAR met on April 25. SOAR stands for SSI/SSDI Outreach Access and Recovery. It's a national program that focuses on individuals who are homeless and have severe mental health issues or mental illness. SOAR helps reduce the barriers to receiving SSI/SSDI, reduces the length of time, and improves approval rates. They have had 4 applications submitted – all 4 were approved and it took an average of 43 days until the decision. They have 3 more waiting on decisions. The goal is to process 15. It is a long process that requires dedicated staff. There is a need for a full-time staff person to manage SOAR applications and the group is looking at grant funding as a possible way to fund such a position. The next meeting is Tuesday July 25 at 9am.

**Local Preference (Stefanie Hendel):** This is a program through Bucks County Housing Authority that sets aside section 8 vouchers for families facing homelessness here in Bucks County. The families must be current residents of transitional housing or emergency shelter. The vouchers are intended for families that require permanent rental subsidies to resolve their homelessness. The committee has met for about 2 ½ years and has housed 52 families with vouchers. They meet to review and rank applications and submit them to the Housing Authority – ranking is based on need. They last met on March 17 and reviewed 13 applications, 7 of which were approved passed on. Some applications were not eligible, or were being taken care of through another program. The next meeting is Friday June 16 at 10:30am.

**CoC Update (Marti Woglom):** A handout was provided explaining the CoC application process and types of projects that can be funded. Joint projects of transitional housing and permanent supportive housing are now eligible for funding. The CoC has been registered to be eligible for funding. The second step will be to confirm the renewal amounts. After that, HUD will announce funding and will indicate how much our CoC can apply for between the two tiers – tier one funding is usually renewals minus a percentage set by HUD. It was asked if a joint transitional project is in the works. It's too early in the process and there isn't enough information from HUD to know at this time.

**Housing Services Action Plan (Roger Collins):** The plan is being reviewed by the commissioners. It reflects the recommendations from the consultant, the housing advisory board, the executive committee, and the general CoC. Some of the recommendations are already being implemented. The HCoC is being restructured – and the bylaws are being revised. The goal is to design a better way to determine the priorities of the system and funding mechanisms to meet those priorities. Changes include establishing co-directors from Housing & Community Dev. and Health and Human Services, they will be permanent, non-voting members of the executive committee, and will serve as the primary conduits between the HCoC and the commissioners. Changes also include adding additional members to the executive committee including representations from the Workforce Development Board, the Bucks County Housing Authority, and the Drug and Alcohol Commission. We will rewrite the way some of the committees are run along with elections. Another recommendation is to develop a better discipline around determining the needs and how to resource them. This involves making sure that the Departments of Human Services and Housing and Community Development are more integrated. The county is looking at being a virtual unified funding agency. As such, they would be able to have the funding plan better match community needs. This will require standardizing how budgets are submitted.

**Quarterly Performance Report (Stefanie Hendel):** Stefanie reviewed the Quarterly Performance Report which included a Housing Link report along with a housing services report. In the 3 month period ending March 31, 2017, there were 1068 unduplicated call screenings (number of calls input in to system with a screening). Of those calls, 615 were referred on to assessment, 64 referred to other community services, 88 referred to diversion, 175 were unavailable, and 126 were classified as “other” which includes out of county. 26 callers identified as having served in the military, 38 identified as being a victim of domestic violence, and 112 identified as transition age youth (ages 18 – 24). The majority of assessments are being done in Bristol (69%). 479 assessments were completed during this time period. Of those, only 4 were no shows, and 3 did not follow up after screening. 256 assessments were referred to housing services. The highest housing service needs continue to be emergency shelter, rental assistance, and rapid rehousing. Residency as an “other” was discussed. The five county region had come to an agreement that it would take 60 days to establish residency. In an effort to address some of the drop points, work is being done to streamline and combine the process of screening and assessment. Stefanie then reviewed the housing services report. The report shows year over year as well as year to date. The shelter bed utilization rate is up, and while length of stay for families is down, length of stay for single adults has increased. For rapid rehousing, more people are being served, and there is currently an 85% exit rate to permanent housing. For transitional housing, 390 people have been served this year and the

exit rate to permanent housing is 65%. There was discussion on the various success rates between rapid rehousing and transitional housing – each strategy has different costs and some strategies work better with certain populations. It's important to look beyond the raw numbers. Additionally, because these are relatively small numbers, a few clients can skew the percentages. For permanent supportive housing and outreach, 79 people were served in permanent supportive housing – those numbers do not tend to change much. 179 people were served through outreach.

**Code Blue Update (AHTN, AHUB, CSSH):**

**AHUB:** They utilized 110 volunteers and were open 76 nights including 21 nights in December. The most guests they had on any given night was 12 and the fewest was 1. Some guests came only for meals. They've seen an increase in the number of guests struggling with incontinence and will have to learn to deal with "biohazard." They had to ban 1 guest. They will do monthly fellowship dinners. They are finding that their services are getting better with each season.

**CSSH:** They were open 70 nights and 2 days, and served 58 unduplicated clients. They averaged 17 – 20 guests per night. They are working on developing an outreach team. They've seen an increase in the number of drug and alcohol cases.

**AHTN:** They were open for 50 nights, had 158 unduplicated clients, and the highest number of clients served on any given night was 43. Additional statistics can be found on the AHTN website ([ahtn.org](http://ahtn.org)).

**Street Outreach (Erin Lukoss):** With the closing of the HOST program, BCOC, United Way, and members of the executive committee have worked on developing a street outreach position that will serve the entire county and the Housing Link system.

**Agency Announcements:**

Liz Fritsch announced that David Bennethum is retiring and that Rob Kim is the new housing attorney. Additionally, on May 5 from 11- 4 at the Levittown Library, Legal Aid will provide assistance to help people secure their birth certificates.

Nancy Scheible announced that there will be a landlord forum at the end of June.

Jessica Peterson from Career Link made available fliers for several job fairs.

Keystone Opportunity Center is in the final stages of selecting a new Executive Director.

Nancy Scheible asked if there has been any progress to provide clients with the results of their assessments. Marlene answered that because the intake and assessment process is being revised, the initiative to develop a form has been put on hold. Access to client assessment results needs to be restricted to only those people listed on the release form.

**Recorded by Matt Uhler, HCoC-BC Secretary**