

HOUSING FIRST SOLANO GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2020 | 10:00 – 11:30 A.M.
SUISUN CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
701 CIVIC CENTER BOULEVARD, SUISUN CITY, CA 94585

MEETING MINUTES

If you wish to address any item listed on the Agenda, please feel free to participate in the discussion. Housing First Solano does not discriminate against persons with disabilities and holds meetings in accessible facilities. If you wish to attend this meeting and you require assistance in order to participate, please call Homebase (415.788.7961) at least 48 hours in advance of the event to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. For items not listed on the Agenda, please see items from the public comment section below.

1. Call to Order

Colleen Berumen called the meeting to order at 10:02 A.M.

2. Roll Call and Introductions

CoB HFS Board Members Present:

Colleen Berumen, Chair, Vacaville Social Services Corporation
Tranine Chisom, Caminar, Inc.
John Eckstrom, SHELTER, Inc.
Kathy Lawton-Caesar, City of Suisun City
Kari Rader, Community Action North Bay
Judy Shepard-Hall, City of Vallejo
Shelley Tiran, Secretary, City of Fairfield

Other Attendees:

Mary Anne Branch, SafeQuest
Rosa Elaine Garcia, SHELTER, Inc.
Andrea Foti, SHELTER, Inc.
Lisa Hoff, Berkeley Food & Housing Project
Patrick Kowalski, Department of Veterans Affairs
Germaine Luciano-Hatchell, Edge Community Church
Tamara Murphy, Lutheran Social Services
Angelica Naranjo, Resource Connect Solano
Jesse Pooni, Resource Connect Solano
Barbara Simpson, SHELTER, Inc.
Candice Thomas, Resource Connect Solano
Alex Thorson, Berkeley Food & Housing Project
Keetra Welling, Resource Connect Solano
Brandon Wirth, SHELTER, Inc.
Melissa Wurz, Edge Community Church

3. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda

ACTION

Shelley Tiran made a motion to delete item 7.2 from the agenda. John Eckstrom seconded the motion. There were no objections or abstentions. The motion carried.

4. Approval of the Agenda

ACTION

Kathy Lawton-Caesar made a motion to approve the agenda. John Eckstrom seconded the motion. There were no objections or abstentions. The motion carried.

5. Consent Calendar

5.1 Approve HFS General Membership Minutes of Meeting on December 18, 2019

ACTION

Shelley Tiran made a motion to approve the minutes. Kathy Lawton-Caesar seconded the motion. There were no objections or abstentions. The motion carried.

6. Old Business

6.1 Coordinated Entry Evaluation Technical Assistance Webinar

UPDATE

Colleen Berumen presented on the 2019 Collaborative Applicant Survey. Colleen Berumen reported that respondents were satisfied with CoC staff. Most respondents reported having attended JPA meetings in 2019. Colleen Berumen reported that everyone who attended the meetings reported positive feedback. Some respondents reported dissatisfaction with an agenda that was pre-determined; Colleen Berumen reminded that community members are welcome to reach out in advance to offer suggestions or bring up topics for discussion. Shelley Tiran also reminded community members to contact CoC staff in advance of the meeting to be in compliance with the Brown Act. Colleen Berumen also stated that if members of the public have a niche interest, they should be encouraged to reach out to the CoC board. Tranine Chisom cited the Coordinated Entry Workgroup and encouraged members of the public to get more involved. John Eckstrom asked for clarification regarding the difference between a workgroup and a sub-committee. Tranine Chisom responded that the workgroup reports fairly consistently. Carolyn Wylie stated that the difference concerns whether the committee is an ad hoc committee. Kyle Wehner discussed the Point-in-Time Count and Housing Inventory Count and the possibility of collecting more precise data related to age.

Colleen Berumen asked how the CoC can help other agencies build capacity. Judy Shepard-Hall stated that pairing community members with non-profits that are more experienced may help providers leverage funding opportunities. Kathy Lawton-Caesar stated that the JPA released limited funding to give smaller agencies an opportunity to get experience running a grant and encouraged interested providers to attend workshops provided by JPA staff. Mary Anne Branch stated that agencies often do not apply for grants at all because they do not understand the process. Devra Edelman stated that the CoC recently hosted a grant-writing workshop and offered to send materials to those who are interested. Judy Shepard-Hall stated that the CoC can make this information available on the CoC website. Mary Anne Branch added that SafeQuest has a grant-writer who would be glad to offer any knowledge or information they may have.

Colleen Berumen asked attendees for more thorough feedback on the scoring process for HEAP and CESH. Colleen Berumen described frustration with comments about how long it took to get under contract with HEAP funding, the invoicing and reporting processes, and creating clear and concise MOUs. Kathy Lawton-Caesar said that when the CoC gets new funding opportunities, it is possible that the issuing agency has not resolved underlying issues, such as determining what elements required in an MOU would be accepted. Kathy Lawton-Caesar added there may be times when the JPA receives a written notification of approval for funds and the JPA may wait up to four months for the contract to come from the state. Kari Rader stated that developing policies and procedures regarding CESH and HEAP can be a time-consuming process, adding that CANB started spending some of this funding before the policies and procedures were approved. Carolyn Wylie stated that this issue is not unique to Solano County, adding that the state administration of these grants is understaffed. Colleen Berumen said that the community needs to be prepared as funding can be made available at any time with no prior notice.

7. New Business

7.1 Board Seat Elections.

ACTION

Colleen Berumen stated that there are four open Board seats and noted that the four candidates had previously held seats on the Board. Tranine Chisom stated she has helped provide mental health services for nine years and described her excitement to take on a leading role. Maurilio León, Scott Mulvey and Lori Bowley were candidates but not present.

Scott Mulvey and Lori Bowley were applicants for the faith-based and veterans-related seats, respectively. Colleen Berumen asked whether an alternate was required for the three absent candidates. Carolyn Wylie responded that this is not required for general membership meetings. Brandon Wirth observed that he has never seen all 23 members at a Board meeting. Colleen Berumen asked for suggestions for how the CoC can better track attendance and asked if any members wanted to run for the vacant at-large seat.

Kari Rader made a motion to approve of all four candidates as a slate. John Eckstrom seconded the motion. Tranine abstained. Judy Shepard-Hall opposed the motion and added that the fact that applicants were not present to answer questions is problematic. The motion carried. Kari Rader stated that she has been attending CoC meetings and is familiar with all of the applicants but added that she can understand Judy Shepard-Hall's concerns.

~~7.2 — Best Practices for Serving Survivors of Domestic Violence~~

UPDATE

7.3 Emergency Shelter Training

UPDATE

Devra Edelman introduced Brandon Wirth and Germaine Luciano-Hatchell. Brandon Wirth said that there are several levels of need that need to be addressed and that it is important to understand where providers fit within the broader CoC.

Brandon Wirth described the difference SHELTER, Inc. and Shelter Solano and emphasized that Shelter Solano is the location. Brandon Wirth stated that the mission of SHELTER, Inc. is to end homelessness for low-income, homeless and disadvantaged families, adding that Shelter Solano is just one aspect of what SHELTER, Inc. does. General access to the program is coordinated through Resource Connect Solano. The biggest frustration, Brandon stated, is access to beds. Brandon Wirth stated that significant funding is needed to operate a facility with large insurance and utility bills, noting that this was a challenge for the previous operator. Brandon Wirth reported that there need to be funding streams for individual beds.

Brandon Wirth stated that the City of Fairfield provides the main source of funding for Shelter Solano. Brandon Wirth stated that there are three general access beds for the entire shelter; clients occupying those beds are referred through RCS. There are an additional 18 beds that are set aside for veterans.

Prop 47 also places limits on bed funding. The Vacaville Police Department has three allocated beds. Solano County has two one-year beds and one ten-year bed. Brandon Wirth described respite beds for clients who have been discharged from local hospitals. Brandon Wirth said there is a constraint with the lease, as the property is owned by a private landlord and it is leased to the City of Fairfield. As a result Shelter Solano is not a drop-in center and Shelter Solano is legally required to limit intake hours to office hours. Brandon Wirth said that Shelter Solano is allowed to work with direct referrals only in special circumstances.

Barbara Simpson described Shelter Solano's trauma-informed care approach that meets individuals where they are when they present, emphasizing that each client needs a different type of case management. Barbara Simpson said Shelter Solano is Housing First, although clients are not allowed to use substances on site. Barbara Simpson reported that Shelter Solano also uses wrap-around services to support clients who may be chronically homeless and uses a warm-handoff approach. Barbara Simpson added that since the new care coordinator arrived in December, about 60% of sheltered persons are now using their medication.

Brandon Wirth added that an appeal is issued when someone is being discharged; a letter is provided to the client and gives them the opportunity to describe why they want to remain enrolled in a program. Brandon Wirth also said that a sound grievance process opens up opportunity for both transparency and healing. Brandon Wirth added that 292 individuals were served in 2019. John Eckstrom said that between 35–40% of leavers exited to permanent housing, which is on the high side for rates of exits to permanent housing. John Eckstrom said that, for substance abuse programs, the rate is closer to 15%.

Germaine Luciano-Hatchell presented on Solano Dream Center and its nomadic emergency shelter program, noting that 482 individuals were served in 2019. Germaine Luciano-Hatchell added that Solano Dream Center utilizes a Housing First model to ensure low-barriers, although clients cannot use substances on the properties. This program is funded largely through private churches and hospitals.

Germaine Luciano-Hatchell added that the nomadic program served homeless persons, homeless families and persons who are recently medically discharged. The program serves an average of 40 persons each night. Germaine Luciano-Hatchell said Solano Dream Center prefers clients to be referred in advance rather than showing up at a pick-up location when

there may no longer be space available. Germaine Luciano-Hatchell added that after the first night, clients are required to present for intake at the office, when they are entered into HMIS and connected to resources. Germaine Luciano-Hatchell added that if the client is a veteran, the client is referred to Roads Home.

Germaine Luciano-Hatchell said that Solano Dream Center hopes to procure a transitional housing location and is in the process of procuring a service location that would provide a permanent address, providing clients a place to stay seven nights a week. Germaine Luciano-Hatchell said Solano Dream Center also hopes to procure a permanent emergency shelter location with 75–100 beds. Germaine Luciano-Hatchell stated that Solano Dream Center also hopes to provide on-site social services right at the shelter. Germaine Luciano-Hatchell reported that there is a program fee or service, such as serving tables or cleaning, after the client’s 28th night at the shelter.

Devra Edelman stated that she has worked with shelters for many years and understands how difficult it is to combine funding and leasing constraints and staff training to meet best practices requirements. Colleen Berumen said that the best practices training can be moved to the next meeting because of time constraints.

7.4 HHAP Funding Priorities

UPDATE

Colleen Berumen said that the remainder of item 7.3 and item 7.4 will be moved to the next general membership meeting.

7.5 FY 2019 CoC NOFA Awards Announcement

UPDATE

Carolyn said that the NOFA Tier 1 awards were fully funded and that Tier 2 has not been announced, although HUD has now exceeded the legal deadline.

8. Staff Updates

8.1 Funding Opportunities

UPDATE

Staff provided information on funding opportunities were provided in a handout.

UPDATE

8.2 Regulatory Updates

Staff provided information on regulatory updates in a handout.

9. Comments from Board Members

UPDATE

Colleen Berumen encouraged HMIS users to attend the that quarterly workgroup on March 5 in Suisun. Colleen Berumen also encouraged community members attend a CoC new project technical assistance workshop that will be held on March 25 in Suisun. Colleen Berumen said the CoC Performance and Evaluation Committee will meet next month and described the meeting as an opportunity to provide feedback on scoring tools and supplemental questions as well as appeals.

Jesse Pooni asked a question regarding the appeals process. Colleen Berumen suggested she consult Brandon Wirth after the meeting.

10. Adjourn

ACTION

Colleen Berumen moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:33am. John Eckstrom seconded the motion. There were no objections or abstentions. The motion carried.