

**SLC Heading Home Advisory Council Meeting**

**Via Webex only**

**Thursday, July 15th, 2021 – 1-3 PM**

**Members attending by Webex and/or phone will be included in a quorum.**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call:
2. Members – Nathan Thompson, Theresa Drift, Salaam Witherspoon, Angela Neal, Paul Pederson, Deb Holleman, Kristy Eckart, Victoria Nugent, Kassie Helgerson, Georgia Lane
3. Staff – Courtney Cochran, Laura Birnbaum, Kate Bradley, Stacy Radosevich, Cara Lundquist, Thom Romano
4. Review and Approval of Agenda (2 minutes)
   1. \_\_\_\_\_\_ moved to approve the July 15, 2021 agenda and \_\_\_ seconded. Approved.
   2. \_\_\_\_\_\_ moved to approve the June meeting minutes and \_\_\_ second. Approved.
5. Approval of Meeting Summary (3 minutes)
   1. Moved to approve the meeting summary of the June
6. Board Business (10 minutes)
   1. Board retreat/get together this Fall
      * A half day retreat was proposed to occur in the fall for HHAC members. This retreat would occur from 12pm-4pm on the third Thursday in October in lieu of the regular HHAC meeting. Suggested venues included Cotton Town Hall, Habitat for Humanity, The Salvation Army.
      * Additional steps include agenda setting and identifying if HHAC would like to host a presenter at the meeting. Courtney and Nathan will collaborate on an agenda item to guide discussions next month. Tabled until next meeting.
   2. Land Acknowledgement (Courtney, Kassie, Salaam, & Teresa) (15 min)
      * Courtney, Kassie, Salaam, and Laura presented the draft Land Acknowledgement that was drafted by the workgroup for review and approval by the HHAC. This was adapted from the St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services Land Acknowledgement and includes a focus on homelessness and housing. The purpose of this Land Acknowledgement is to acknowledge that St. Louis County CoC resides on Indigenous land. The intention of adopting this Land Acknowledgement is to help ground this decision making group in remembering that we are on Indigenous land and in being aware of systemic racism, oppression, and trauma and how these impact the disparities in our homeless response system.
      * The goal of this conversation is for the HHAC to adopt this Land Acknowledgement and to read this at the beginning of each HHAC and Committee meeting.
      * Kassie Helgerson moved to adopt the Land Acknowledgement as written to be read at Heading Home Advisory Committee meetings moving forward. Salaam Witherspoon seconded. Approved.
      * Courtney, Nathan, and Salaam will include reading of the Land Acknowledgement statement on HHAC agendas moving forward. HHAC members will rotate who reads this statement at the start of each meeting.
7. Committee Updates & Action Items -- (20 minutes)
   1. Affordable Housing Coalition – No updates this month. The next meeting is on Tuesday 7/20.
   2. Rural Housing Coalition - No updates this month.
   3. Ad Hoc Veterans Committee – Paul Pederson shared an update on the Veterans Committee If anyone has any suggestions for people to add to this committee, contact Paul. This committee is working to meet the four benchmarks that exist to declare functional zero to Veterans homelessness in St. Louis County. Some of the barriers to declaring functional zero include that veterans are remaining in transitional housing longer than 90 days and that it’s taking longer than 90 days to house veterans due to the shortage of available housing. The veterans committee is working to create dedicated units at the Duluth Inn for veterans As of today, 15 veterans are on the veterans registry in St. Louis County. The HUD VASH program in the Twin Ports.
      * Paul shared a client success story. A client was staying in the shelter last fall and was connected to services through MACV. This individual has been on the Veterans registry for 379 days as of today. Due to barriers, it took a lot longer to get the veteran into housing and get him stable. He will move into permanent housing in Superior using a HUD VASH voucher on Friday.
      * MACV reviewed the CE priority list with Kate Bradley. There are currently twelve veterans on the CE priority list in Duluth and MACV has connections to each of these veterans and a plan to get them connected to housing.
   4. Advocacy and Education Committee (Paused)
   5. Housing Response Committee – Kate Bradley provided an update for the Housing Response Committee. The Housing Response Committee is in full support of the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) priority plan. The Housing Response Committee is looking into issues with people in Board and Lodge settings who want to relocate. Individuals in Board and Lodges are not eligible for homeless programs through the Coordinated Entry list or for rent and deposit assistance. If you are interested in participating in discussions about Board and Lodges, contact Kate for information to join the Housing Response Committee meetings.
      * + 1. -Duluth Priority list overview (Kate) – Currently in Duluth, there are 1,331 households on the priority list. 1,023 of these households are in the permanent supportive housing (PSH) tier. Of those in the PSH tier, 715 are singles. PSH for singles is the biggest unmet need Roughly 280 households in the transitional housing tier. Of those, 204 households are singles. In the Duluth area, there are only four units of transitional housing for singles. There are only 27 families in the rapid rehousing tier and 22 are singles.
   6. Evaluation and Planning Committee – Courtney gave an update on Evaluation and Planning Committee activities. This committee has been focused on developing a draft of the Ranking and Reallocation policy and other documents for the NOFA.
8. Updates (60 minutes)
   1. State Updates (Pat Leary) – No updates this month.
   2. St. Louis County Updates
      * Heading Home Corps (Laura) – Laura Birnbaum provided an update. St. Louis County (SLC) was approved as a site for a Heading Home Corps Vista. The Heading Home Corps Vista will act as a navigator to connect individuals to homeless programs, likely working closely with the Coordinated Entry System. This position will be for approximately one year (September 2021 – July 2022). HHAC members are asked to spread the word of the position availability. Laura will send an email with a position description.
      * Racial Equity & Accountability Project (REAP) (Laura) – Laura gave an update on REAP. MESH will host this project (REAP) and will work with consultants to provide guidance and structure for the process. Courtney and Laura have met with Mike Manhard (MESH) to discuss how this project can address racial inequities within the homeless response system. REAP will include a leadership team that will ideally be made up of individuals of lived experience, people of African heritage, Indigenous persons, and other persons of color. Laura and Courtney submitted a grant application to provide stipends, child care, and food support for members of the leadership team.

MESH is requesting that CoCs across Minnesota, including SLC CoC, support MESH to submit a request for technical assistance (TA) from HUD to support the work of C4 for REAP. The TA request would be on behalf of all CoCs in the state who approve of the TA. The TA would provide direct support to the REAP leadership team.

Salaam Witherspoon moved to approve a letter of support for a HUD TA request for REAP. Kassie Helgerson seconded. Approved.

Courtney will draft a letter for support for the REAP TA request on behalf of the SLC CoC.

* + - Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project Grant (Courtney) – Courtney provided an overview of YHDP. St. Louis County and local providers have been meeting to collaboratively work on an application for YHDP Grant in St. Louis County. Partners in this collaborative project planning include AEOA, Lutheran Social Services (LSS), Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, YWCA, Child Protective Services. Youth and providers who have been at the table are committed to this work and collaboration to address and end youth homelessness regardless of YHDP funding being awarded.

Requirements of this grant include that SLC would form a formal youth committee within CoC governance that would have formal pieces of work and influence on CoC decision making. This committee should be made up primarily of youth who have experienced homelessness, individuals age 25+ who experienced homelessness as a youth, and service providers. The committee would need to be a part of this process and would need to become a committee of the HHAC.

If the funding is approved, it would go through the CoC similar to the CoC NOFA. An open request for proposals (RFP) would be issued to identify service providers.

There is a six month planning period for YHDP awardees. HUD does not fund the planning period, so there would likely be a need to identify additional funding to support capacity needed for this. The amount of funding that would come to the CoC homeless response system is significant and would provide additional capacity to address and end youth homelessness.

Kassie Helgerson moved to approve that Courtney Cochran, CoC Coordinator, submit a collaborative application on behalf of the St. Louis County CoC for the YHDP grant and to approve that a Youth Committee of the HHAC be formed to guide collaborative efforts to address and end homelessness for youth in the SLC CoC. Deb Holleman seconded. Approved.

Courtney will bring updates on this project and the Youth Committee to HHAC moving forward.

* + - 2021 NOFA Update (Courtney) – Courtney provided an update on the CoC NOFA, including an overview of the Ranking & Review Policy draft and an update on application materials.

- The HUD NOFA is the main funding that the SLC CoC administers as a CoC. This happens annually with the exclusion of 2020 where it was automatically renewed due to COVID. HUD has not released the 2021 NOFA as of yet. Once this NOFA is published, the CoC will have 90 days to complete the application. Applicants apply for funds through the CoC for the NOFA. Applications are reviewed by a Ranking and Review Committee of HHAC who scores applications and ranks projects based on criteria that is approved by HHAC. The Ranking and Review Committee has formed and completed orientation.

- The Ranking and Review Policy draft was presented. This draft will be posted to the St. Louis County website for public review and comment. The HHAC will vote to finalize the policy at the August meeting. Updates to this document include a formal description of the ranking and review process of the CoC and the description of the Ranking and Review Committee scoring process. Other updates include that at least four reviewers will review each of the CoC project applications, which is an update from all Ranking and Review Committee members reviewing all applications. The CoC priorities center Coordinated Entry and HMIS as essential pieces of the system, which is reflected in the draft policy by prioritizing HMIS and CE projects in the project ranking. The draft policy includes a new project reallocation policy that outlines when voluntary or involuntary reallocation of some or all project funding would occur.

- Nathan Thompson moved to approve the draft Ranking and Reallocation Policy as presented and to approve that the draft be posted on the St. Louis County website for public review and comment. Kristy Eckart seconded. Approved.

* + - Emergency Housing Vouchers (Courtney) – Courtney provided an overview of the 49 Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs) that were awarded to the Duluth HRA. These EHVs were created through the American Rescue Plan. EHVs will be administered by Duluth HRA in close partnership with the St. Louis County Continuum of Care.

EHVs are mandated to go through Coordinated Entry. EHVs allow for flexible funds which supports higher rent rates than typical housing voucher programs. The target date to launch EHVs is September 2021. All vouchers must be awarded by September 2023. After this date, if a client exits the EHV program, the voucher dissolves and is not funded again. The program ends in September 2030 and it is unclear if HUD will transition this into a permanent program or if households will need to be transitioned to other housing options (e.g. Section 8).

- CoCs are responsible for determining priorities for EHVs. Based on discussions with providers and a review of needs on the CE priority list, the following priorities for vouchers were proposed to HHAC approval: 1) Persons on the Duluth priority list who scored at the bottom of the PSH tier based on their VI-SPDAT (scores of 8 or 9). This targeting was determined because individuals in this category typically do not receive housing through Coordinated Entry due to lack of available resources. 2) Move Up – households currently in permanent supportive housing (PSH) or transitional housing (TH) programs in SLC CoC and interested in accessing EHV as a Move Up program. This program would free up PSH units for others on the Duluth priority list who may need more support. This was determined by doing a survey of PSH and TH providers to identify if there are clients who could access EHV and benefit from this program. PSH and TH providers reported that there are currently 18-23 households in PSH and 7 in TH who could benefit from an EHV voucher through this Move Up method.

- Feedback on these proposed priorities: The Move Up strategy is a great opportunity to free up space in programming for others who are in need of more supports.

- Nathan Thompson moved to approve the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) priorities for Move Up and for individuals on the Duluth Coordinated Entry PSH priority list with VI-SPDAT scores of 8 and 9 and to approve that the St. Louis County Continuum of Care sign the EHV MOU with the Duluth HRA. Angela Neal seconded. Approved.

- St. Louis County CoC and the Duluth HRA will work to identify service providers who are willing to work with households who receive these vouchers. An update will be provided at the next CoC meeting.

* 1. City of Duluth Updates – No updates this month.
  2. HMIS Updates – Thom provided HMIS updates. The Quarterly Data Quality (QDQ) portal opened today. ICA is collecting feedback to update the QDQ scoring rubric. Agencies can provide feedback via a link in last week’s HMIS Newsletter. HMIS User Groups will change platforms due to feedback from across the state and request for more interaction with other end users. User groups will now be held via Zoom. End users will need to re-register for the upcoming user group. Thom will send a new link to Northern HMIS end users with the new registration link.
  3. Any other updates? (Open to all) – No other updates provided.

1. Adjourn
   1. Meeting adjourned at 2:54pm.

**Webex Details:**

Webex Meeting: <https://stlouiscountymn.webex.com/stlouiscountymn/j.php?MTID=md4cd4ad8399bb2f854c7c24fcc9a7f9a>

Join by phone:

+1-415-655-0001 US Toll

Access code: 927 818 091

**Next Meeting:**

Thursday, May 20th– 1-3PM

Via Webex