

HAC Minutes

January 29, 2021

12:00 pm

Facilitator, Reggie Gordon

Welcome

Thank you for being present with us. We want to be sure that everyone has received their Homeless Advisory Council (HAC) Workbook. If you have not received your copy, please contact Khilia Giacobone, khilia.giacobone@richmondgov.com.

Today we are looking at homelessness at regional and local levels so that when we get to the point of reviewing recommendations we will have a good foundation based on Richmond's Homelessness Strategic Plan. We will all have a good foundation with the same body of knowledge and facts.

Process:

- Presentation from guest speakers
- HAC last 15 mins for comments and questions

Session 2:

Monday, January 29 (12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

Purpose:

Understanding the Regional System. Presentation of the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care, Funding and Metrics.

Presenter(s):

- Annette Cousins: Vice President, Community Foundation For a Greater Richmond, Community Engagement and Vice Chair of the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care board
(804) 330-7400 acousins@cfrichmond.org

*Bios are included in the HAC Workbook
- Terri Lawson: Homeward, Homeless Crisis Line Coordinator
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Introduction and highlights to the Powerpoint Presentation



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Matthew Desmond, author of Evicted states that “Without a home, everything else falls apart.” Most believe in the idea that decent affordable housing should be a basic right for everyone in this country. This is also a really good grounding and why we focus on a housing first approach and homelessness, because we know that it is easier to solve almost any problem when you have stable shelter, then it is to solve it when you do not have that stable shelter. Housing first is really the fundamental best practice that our homeless services system operates.

We believe that everyone should be able to access housing in our community.

We know that our system cannot provide that housing to everyone who needs it. Here is how the system operates and how we help individuals access that permanent housing, given the limited resources that are available for everyone who needs it.

Goals for today:

- Our intention is that this power point program will be for everyone to use as a resource in the future. That it can serve as a resource in further conversations.
- Touch briefly on the best practices.
- Walk through how an individual moves through the system.
- Cover the function of the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care and Homeward's role in our community.
- Do a little bit of a deep dive into the funding that's available to address homelessness and the coordinated entry which functions as the front door to the homeless Services System.

CONTINUUM OF CARE

1. The Continuum of Care (COC) is a community coalition that is dedicated to helping our most vulnerable neighbors exit homelessness. The ideal goal is that we are ending homelessness for that individual and for our community not just managing the condition of homelessness.
2. There is a network of COC's across the country. It is a structure that is mandated by HUD in order to manage the federal resources that are allocated to our community to address the needs of our neighbors and homelessness crisis.
3. The Continuum of Care is a committee that is comprised of representatives from local government, local funding sources, non-profits and individuals who work at homelessness, but who do not work for funded agencies. This committee makes recommendations for federal and state funding. The COC is open to any member of the community who wants to join, there is no fee to participate. It is guided by the data collected by using the Homeless Management Information System, HMIS. This is a requirement at the federal level that all of our funded agencies collect their data in a central system, this allows us to compare one project to another locally. It also allows the federal government to be able to compare outcomes across COC's in the country so that we have consistent data on what's working and what isn't working in particular regions.
4. The COC board along with Homeward, plans for the system to ensure that we are staying on top of best practices, understand what's working in other communities and making sure that if there's something changing here locally that we're seeing in the data or that we're hearing from individuals that are experiencing homelessness, that we're really responsive to that information and adjusting the way that our system works to best meet the needs of our community.

HOMEWARD

1. Homeward was created as a non-profit organization in 1998 with the intention that they could support the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care. It is led and supported by a board of directors. It has organizational bylaws and other policies. The staff is comprised of a very professional, compassionate and diverse group of smart individuals; they are dedicated to this work, day in and day out and have been able and had to respond to everything that's going during this extraordinary time and we have been able to expand and increase our staff and the volunteers. This has been under the dedicated leadership of Kelly King Horne as the Executive Director, she has been with this agency for over 13 years.
2. Our key programs:
 - We support the team of care operations and that we help fulfill the responsibilities of the COC and those requirements.
 - We oversee the data management and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). We are responsible for this database that crosses over 14 different providers and well over 50 users along with the coordinating piece for collecting that data and reporting out.
 - We definitely have a role with our strategic Community Partnerships when we think about what is going to fall or come under the umbrella where we also support Homeward the homeless crisis line and that in and of itself is a community collaborative.
 - We also figured out a way to address what happened with the pandemic back in early, March of last year. We stepped up to meet those needs; everything that was happening was aligned with our purpose and mission, which is to fight homelessness.

FUNDING

1. What funding looks like for homelessness in our region? The information can be better understood through the powerpoint slide presentation. It shows all of the funding that's flowing into the programs:
 - From the coordinated entry as the way that individuals enter the homelessness system, emergency shelter, which is ideally a short-term stay that then leads to permanent housing through either rapid rehousing permanent Supportive Housing or an individual being able to resolve their homelessness themselves through the Out of a case manager while they're in emergency shelter, all of those activities across our are supported agencies require substantial funding in order to make this happen.
 - We have thousands of people would go through our system every year and who are moved towards stability through the funding that comes through the COC.
2. Funding sources include:
 - Federal dollars that come into our community through HUD.
 - State dollars through a program called Homeless Solutions, which is actually a technically a combination of Federal dollars in State dollars.
 - City of Richmond emergency Solutions grants and Henrico County Emergency Solutions grants. These are Federal dollars that are allocated in different ways. It is through specific localities and the City of Richmond Henrico both receive allocations of those dollars all of those dollars though are regulated by HUD.
 - Some of these are funds come into our homeless service agencies through local government and there are some additional dollars that may come in through State Housing Trust Fund grants.
 - United Way, Public and Private Foundations, and individual donors, most if not all of the HUD regulated funding on the left hand side requires some degree of local match of those dollars.

Coordinated Entry

1. Coordinated entry is the front door to our system. The front door reduces the misinformation that's out in the community. We want to make sure that the only the people who absolutely need our resources are going through that front door. The Coordinated Entry allows us to ensure that we are the system of Last Resort and that we are targeting resources to those individuals who are the most vulnerable in our community.
 - Part of the role of our coordinated entry system is to say given, 500 people on a daily basis experiencing homelessness and the existence of only 300 shelter beds. How do we as a system decide who is going to get access?
2. Individuals that are experiencing a housing crisis, whether they are sleeping outdoors, living in a car, fleeing domestic violence - our end goal is to get them to a two core primary permanent housing solutions; Rapid Rehousing and permanent Supportive Housing, designed to be long-term. An individual in the current Continuum of Care, experiencing a housing crisis is going to have three access points to our coordinated entry system, consisting of:
 - Homeless Crisis Line 804-972-0813
 - Domestic Violence hotline 804-612-6126
 - Outreach worker team (they go throughout the community and connect with individuals experiencing homelessness.) (804) 972-0813

Conclusion:

We want to make sure it is clear that despite the amount of effort that goes into targeting limited resources. I think everyone within the system recognizes that what we're doing is not enough. Everyone should have access to housing and so I think we have two parallel conversations around.

- How do we make the resources we have work to the best of their ability,
- How do we also collectively advocate for additional affordable housing that can get people out of shelter faster because that is the number one barriers finding an affordable unit when someone is ready to move into it?

Please review the powerpoint for an in depth understanding of this talk. You will find graphs, charts, fliers, statistics and much more information about the robust Continuum of Care and Homeward programs. Review the data and discover how many folks moved through the system last year that our per capita rate of homelessness is actually significantly lower than other communities.

Reggie - Thank you to our guests for sharing their wealth of knowledge of strong and rich information for the HAC, it will move us forward as we begin to unpack homelessness in the Greater Richmond region.

Please email questions and comments to our staff so we can build upon and address these issues, your comments and questions are important for us to understand our shared all of our concerns.

End 1:00 pm

