



TREASURE COAST HOMELESS SERVICES COUNCIL, INC.  
2525 St. Lucie Avenue  
Vero Beach, FL 32960

[irhsclh@aol.com](mailto:irhsclh@aol.com)

[www.tchelpspot.org](http://www.tchelpspot.org)

772-567-7790

Minutes of the meeting of the Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council, Inc.  
June 16, 2017

This meeting took place at 9:00 am at Community Church, Vero Beach, FL

**Present:** Todd Heckman, Bradley Bernauer, Louise Hubbard, Leanne Sacino, Anthony Arroyo, Eve Ballance, Dennis Bartholomew, Cynthia Beddow, Jennifer Bresnahan, Nate Bruckner, Jean Buntin, Amy Burns, Lorne Coyle, Vic Diaz, Catherine Dickerson, Renee Deschenes, Penny Dietzen, Lesley Frederick, Lesley George, Debra Gerthoffer, Robert Gonzalez, Madeleine Greenwood, Diana Grossi, Brett Hall, Joel Herman, Miranda Hawker, Bonnie Hurd, Latlia Janke, Andrea Johnson, Kim Johnson, Linda Kane, Jason Kittendorf, Karen Knapp, Carl Kobin, David Long, Jay Lundy, Linda Mattison, Vanessa McGriff, Bob McPartlan, Sharon McPeak, Marilyn McQueen, Loretta Millan, Barbara Moody, Jessica Munoz, Stefanie Myers, Patty Oliver, Ronda Polca, John Porta, Rob Ranieri, Cindi Siepel, Veronica Simpson, Jane Snead, Keith Theriot, Kim Tolbert, Cathy Viggiano, Christopher Wilson.

Chairman Todd Heckman called the meeting to order. Todd welcomed everyone and invited anyone who had not been at a CoC Meeting to introduce themselves. Miranda Hawker from the Indian River County Health Department; Carl Kobin, SSVF Outreach Staff; Linda Mattison from Safespace; Jay Lundy from Career Source and Loretta McMillan from the St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce all introduced themselves.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

President Brad Bernauer called for approval of the minutes of the April 28, 2017 Continuum of Care Meeting. Louise Hubbard pointed out that Catherine Dickerson was present for the meeting and should be added to the minutes. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved with the correction.

#### **2017 Out of Reach Report**

Louise Hubbard, Executive Director presented the 2017 Out of Reach Report. The National Low Income Housing Coalition publishes an "Out of Reach Report", which shows the Nationwide cost of housing and the difference between earned wages and the fair market rent for every single municipality in the US. The 2017 Out of Reach Report was presented. Louise mentioned that Florida is the 17th most expensive place to live according to this national data. The fair market rent in most places in the state of Florida at FMR is \$1075 for a two bedroom. This FMR is only affordable if you earn over \$43,000 a year. Most of the clients that we serve earn well below that level.



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The minimum wage for the State of Florida is \$8.10. This minimum wage is higher than many places in the United States. Some areas actually have a minimum wage that is less than the Federal Minimum Wage. The average renter median wage for the state of Florida is \$15 an hour, however in our area it is much less than that.

There are 2.5 million renter households in the state of Florida, which is 35% of the total households in the State. Some of the most expensive places to live in Florida include Monroe County, West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale, Miami and Naples.

**Indian River County** data was presented (page FL-4 of the Out of Reach Report). To afford a 2 bedroom FMR, at \$846, individuals would need to earn \$16.27 per hour. Fair Market Rent (FMR) is the maximum rent amount set by the Federal Government. This is the maximum that the PHAs and other Federal funding assistance can pay. Many landlords charge more. As we have seen in the past few months, the market rent is much higher and there are very limited rentals available within the FMR limit. Louise explained that this is the first time since the CoC began, that we have money that we cannot spend because the rentals that are available are renting well above the FMR rate. When the market is tight, individuals with limited income just can't afford housing that is available.

**St Lucie and Martin County** data was presented (page FL-5). In both areas, renters need to earn \$19.88 per hour to rent a 2 bedroom FMR, which is \$1,034. Both areas are listed the same, but from our experience, Martin County is more expensive than in St. Lucie County.

The Area Median Income is definitely skewed by the income reported by individuals on the beachside. Leslie George stated that the Out of Reach Report can be deceiving because the FMR rates are well below the market rate. The market sets the rate for rent and in many times the actual rents are well over the FMR limit. Louise Hubbard explained that with ESG regulations, it has been very difficult because utilities have to be factored in the rent and utility allowance has to be below FMR.

Louise Hubbard explained that this Out of Reach Report is important information for all of us to use because it is National Data. This shows that there is no place in this State, let alone this Country where you can afford a rental unit unless you are earning more than \$40,000 per year.

Louise Hubbard, Executive Director, explained that affordable housing is just one issue in the State of Florida. Absentee landlords and uninhabitable units continue to be a



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problem for many of our clients. We have seen several rental units with rats. The Health Department and Code Enforcement have no authority to do anything about it.

Code enforcement only responds when there is a report and when you look at tenant complaints they very low. Clients with very limited options because of credit issues, low income and/or eviction history don't have many options to rent affordable and acceptable units. Many clients have reported that if they complain to code enforcement about their landlord, their landlord will just evict them.

**Amy Burns, Florida Rural Legal Services** offered to help any client that is being victimized with housing issues such as these. Amy explained she can help a client do a rent withholding, and many times that will make the landlord fix the issue. Amy explained that a lot of clients do not know their rights and don't follow the next step. This is really the only way that landlords fix their units – when they can't get rent. Louise said that this specific landlord has over 150 citations and thousands of dollars in unpaid fines and the client paid her rent anyway because she has no choice. She provided an 800 number for clients with housing issues, family law issues and other referrals. The number is on our website.

### **Sober Homes**

An article was published in the Press Journal and was presented showing Port St. Lucie Municipal Complex pictures. The article is reporting that sober homes are moving from West Palm Beach into our community. What the article didn't report is that this is wide spread. In the city of Ft Pierce, a sober home purchased a large piece of property with shacks, the rent on these units are well above FMR rates as they are collecting approximately \$600 per person per month.

Linda Kane said these Sober Homes are brokering patients between one unit and another. They actually give them drugs so they can add more expensive treatment to their bill. In West Palm Beach, she reported, that people who are overdosing are insured and from out of State.

Linda Kane explained that the managing entity is on the West Palm Beach task force and some of the sober homes in the State are licensed and some are not. There has been a push to make it a requirement for licensure so that these brokers get shut down.

Brad Bernauer commented that these individuals are not from here and when their insurance runs out, they are back out on the street and now our problem. The insurance companies in other areas of the Country (like New York and the North) pay a lot of money to ship drug addicts down to Florida and live in unsupervised units.



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Louise Hubbard explained that these clients have the higher score, so in our SPDAT, they are taking the opportunity and there is pressure to take these individuals instead of homeless families with children. This is a huge problem because this affects us all. It's an interesting topic that we should all be looking at, there is a lot of money available to serve this population – no housing dollar, but opioid treatment is huge.

### **Emergency Solutions Grant**

Louise presented the Coordinated Entry Pre-Screen Forms. This is basic information per County. This is on our website and it's a PDF. As any of these boxes are checked, a score will populate. There is an HP score or an RR score depending on the answers. You can prioritize callers based on this pre-screen document. If one individual scores an RR 15 and another scores RR 29, the RR29 will be seen first. These forms are available on our website at [www.tchelpspot.org](http://www.tchelpspot.org). We just got a two year contract for the Emergency Solutions Grant. We are expecting another round of ESG funding in July.

Back in the day with HPRP funding, we gave Agencies access to money. We asked, what amount of money do you think your Agency can spend? We would like to see if any Agencies in the community are willing to perform the case management and housing assistance. We are going to put out an application online and send it to everyone on the mailing list. You will need to put in your application that you are willing and able to complete the requirements of the ESG program.

We have Agencies that currently help us, if you would like to be considered for a budgeted allocation, we will be sending this application out. If you already have case managers who are housing individuals, but do not have access to money, we want to help. We will set aside some funding for your Agencies, once you spend it, we can provide more. There is a lot of work associated with this funding, but our clients really need this. HMIS access is required for assistance. If you do not have an HMIS license, you cannot access Federal or State funding.

### **HMIS User Training**

Leeanne Sacino discussed the Homeless Management Information System updates. There have been strong data quality requirements for all CoC programs. HMIS reports are now being uploaded for Emergency Solutions Grants, Runaway and Homeless Youth Grants, CoC Program APRs and the Supportive Services for Veteran Family grants. They are not asking for information anymore, they are taking the data right from the system. Anyone receiving funds from the Federal Government is now required to directly upload data from the HMIS system.



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Data Quality will be extremely important for all CoC programs going forward, whether you are getting Federal funding or not. Our system-wide performance is effecting our HUD score and funding. The new data quality report requires full social security numbers, information being entered as all zeros or subsequent numbers (123-45-6789) are now being counted as invalid. The relationship to head of household is now a required data field. Disability information is being collected for all members of the family – including children. Information about when the client became homeless and how many times they have been homeless in the past three years is now being collected. The HMIS system is now determining (based on your answers) if the client is chronic. As all CoC PSH Programs (Legacy Shelter plus Care) are prioritizing chronically homeless individuals, this information is very important, as it will be uploaded directly to HUD annually. HMIS is now counting the number of days the enrollment information is being backdated. For example, if a client is supposed to be enrolled on the 1<sup>st</sup> and you wait until the 15<sup>th</sup> to enter the data into the system and enroll the client as of the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, this is a data quality error. HUD believes that the quicker you put in the information.

Louise Hubbard reported that we have provided many years of HMIS training and we have paid for the licenses. The only new money that will be provided will come from special appropriations We have Penny, Leeanne and Daniel on HMIS to keep the data as clean as possible. This is going to impact your ability to serve clients. System performance is the new tool. It doesn't matter if you get funding or not, this data will impact the whole system.

Some of the biggest data quality issues have been duplicates, missing or incorrect social security numbers, enrolling the correct family members. It's important to create the family first. It is important to review and update the client's record before you enroll the client in a program. Also, make sure that the date remains the same throughout the workflow.

TCHSC will be holding group training for data quality concerns and all Emergency Solutions Grant participating Agencies will be required to attend HMIS training.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at ten thirty a.m.

Sincerely,

Louise Hubbard  
Executive Director