Homeless Alliance Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2015

American Red Cross Building

Called to order at 3:08PM

NOTE: All these minutes were posted on the @HAWNY716 twitter account live as it happened

1. Introductions (Dale and
2. Nikole Wynn, of Volunteer Lawyer’s Project
   1. VLP provides free lawyers for a variety of things: family law, wills, immigration law, employment law, and they have help desks for family and federal court
      1. Immigration law includes those who are detained in federal detention and to refugees and asylees to navigate the citizenship process
      2. Some services have wait lists
   2. VLP partners with others (for instance, Neighborhood Legal) when an issue is outside their usual scope of expertise
   3. Their usual role is to advise people what to expect, though they will connect with a free lawyer in some cases
   4. 716-847-0662 for the Volunteer Lawyer Project
3. CoC updates
   1. Changes to the Written Standards
      1. Include Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties
      2. Coordinated Entry includes adults without children
      3. Modified referral for PSH programs (see page 13)
      4. Added Housing First language to the entire document as HUD has required many programs use this
      5. Discusses chronic prioritization and how we are going to prioritize non-chronic people after chronically homeless are housed (because we are close to housing all of the chronically homeless!)
      6. A committee created a new assessment document for adults without children to reflect new housing intervention inventory
      7. The VI-F-SPDAT was updated as OrgCode updated the document
      8. Added a housing first orientation to all transitional housing projects as we have chosen to do so
      9. Prioritizing veterans who do not qualify for VA benefits to CoC beds (we have nearly housed all veterans who are homeless; this requirement is part of the NOFA’s score and worth three points)
         1. Washington DC says we’ve ended veteran’s chronic homelessness, but we have disagreements about all homelessness
         2. Discharge type and criminal record can affect eligibility to VA benefits
      10. Sister Mary Augusta Kaiser of Teaching and Restoring Youth motions to approve, Al Haley of Cazenovia Recovery Systems seconds, passes unanimously
   2. Dale discussed the need to add Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties to the Homeless Alliance by-laws
      1. Don Van Every of Erie County DSS motions to approve, Robyn Krueger of Community Missions of the Niagara Frontier seconds, passes unanimously
   3. CoC NOFA
      1. Dale has consulted with other CoC’s in NYS, and we’re all feeling pressured. All have a sense that this is the most challenging NOFA we remember in its specificity and directives to make very difficult choices with current homeless alleviation inventory
      2. Dale explains funding breakdown
         1. Of a $10.1 million Annual renewal demand, $8.6 million is in Tier 1 and would most likely be funded. $1.5 is in Tier 2 and would be subject to additional scrutiny by HUD, as every Tier 2 project competes with every other Tier 2 project in the US.
         2. In addition to the $1.5 million in Tier 2, there is $2.1 million in potential bonus projects, making Tier 2 approximately $3 million in size.
            1. You *can* put one of the new bonus projects in Tier 1, but it pushes another renewal into Tier 2
         3. Tier 2 projects are scored, and thus funded, according to their conformity to HUD preferences. For instance, PSH scores 10/10 for project type, SSO scores 1/10.
            1. “Tier 2’s scoring is so complicated, it took three of our staff with master’s degrees to figure it out.” – Dale
         4. “Someone is going to be at the top and someone is going to be at the bottom. I don’t sleep well during this process.” –Dale
         5. Dale emphasized the need for a competitive application to conform to HUD’s priorities to thus score well and get as many projects funded
         6. Dale notes that Kexin reviews all 37 applications before they are submitted to HUD. In addition, we do our own collaborative application
         7. Kexin distributed a survey of project types and preferences to gauge community preference to inform our current project selection committee. The survey asked providers to indicate 7 projects that are of lowest priority
            1. Question from audience, “Do we need HMIS?” Nervous laugh from all of HAWNY’s staff, “We have a conflict of interest there,” Dale said
         8. Kexin also did an Esnaps tutorial
      3. We are seeking members for the 2016 Project Selection Committee. Dale notes that this is a significant commitment – they reviewed almost 40 CoC applications and are also consulted by the city of Buffalo for their ESG funding process.
4. We are seeking board members. 6 elections next year in January – hoping to get at least one position filled from someone in the Genesee Orleans Wyoming counties area.
5. Luncheon: December 11 at 12:00PM this year at Pearl Street Bar and Grill. This year: celebrating 10 years of incorporation.
   1. Awards: You may nominate people via a form on our website
   2. We have some ideas of people we’d love to honor based on their work. Told a reporter in particular to reserve that day
   3. Keep in mind people from Niagara, Wyoming, Genesee and Orleans counties.
6. We purchased Go To Meeting so we can broadcast meetings online – helpful to those who travel from an hour away! But we need a meeting space with internet access (the Red Cross does not have this)
7. Community Announcements
   1. Family Promise is hosting a fundraiser
   2. Matt Urban Hope Center is doing Trunk or Treat (10/30) and their Hope Harvest fundraiser
   3. Veteran’s Outreach is having an open house on October 28
   4. Veteran One Stop is celebrating opening their Batavia office

Meeting adjourned at 3:57 PM