

# HOUSING and SUPPORTIVE SERVICES NETWORK(HSSN) CoC Board

Friday, December 10, 2021 - 8:30 to 9:55 am

## AGENDA

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83051897634?pwd=NkpRb255NHUz2NSTnTjhxGQ4QT09>

Meeting ID: 830 5189 7634, Passcode: 551333, Mobile: +12532158782, 89587246956#, \*252415#(Tacoma)

Chair: Annette M. Evans, Washington County Department of Housing Services

Co-Chair: Katherine Galian, Community Action Organization

I. Welcome and Announcements (8:30 a.m.)

A) Roll Call of the [CoC Board](#) with Board Member Announcements

II. Public Comment (8:35 a.m.)

III. Approve CoC Board Minutes (8:40 a.m.)

A) **Board Action: Approve October 8 meeting minutes.**

IV. Business Items (8:45 a.m.)

A) Report on the [Homeless Plan Advisory Committee \(HPAC\)](#) – Komi Kalevor

B) Report on [Supportive Housing Services \(SHS\) Program](#) – Alex Devin

C) Report on Project Reset Initiative– Rick Peel and Vernon Baker

D) CoC Governance Charter

1. Recruitment:

- Voluntary resignation Blair Schaeffer-Bisht effective 12/1/2021 with nomination of Mancin Boyd. Follow policy for recruitment, nomination, and voting. – Vara Fellger
- Are there other positions that will become vacant prior to 6/30/2022 that we need to consider for this next CoC Board recruitment?

2. Proposal to [amend CoC Governance policy](#) to add Culturally Specific Provider Organization and Application Process to support CoC Board Demographic Profile – Lydia Radke and Vara Fellger

**Board Action: Approve amendments to CoC policy to include adding Culturally Specific Provider Organization position for total of 20 voting positions and Recruitment Application.**

E) [FY2021 CoC Program Grant](#) submittal 11/9/2021 and other activities – Phyllis Bittinger

1. CoC Board approval on 11/3/21 to raise income to 50% MFI and below for rapid rehousing projects under CoC Program, 24 CFR Part 578.

2. Selection of CoC Program Application Subcommittee to review scoring criteria that will include equal number of CoC Board members that are CoC Program Providers and non-CoC Program Providers.

V. Open Discussion (9:50 a.m.)

VI. Adjournment (9:55 a.m.)

Future Meetings: 8:30 to 9:55 a.m. (Virtual until further notice)

- Friday, February 11, 2022
- Friday, April 8, 2022
- Friday, June 10, 2022
- Friday, August 12, 2022
- Friday, October 14, 2022
- Friday, December 9, 2022

The CoC Board meeting is open to the public, with the [agenda](#) online. Please direct comments to [CoCinfo@co.washington.or.us](mailto:CoCinfo@co.washington.or.us)

### Department of Housing Services

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# CoC BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Virtual Meeting via ZOOM

October 8, 2021, 8:30 a.m.

## COC BOARD MEMBER PRESENT

- Baker, Vernon – Just Compassion EWC
- Calvin, Mellani – ASSIST Program
- Cardwell, Shawn – Forest Grove Foundation
- Downen, Lindsay – New Narrative
- Evans, Annette – WC Housing Services
- Gawf, Mandy – City of Hillsboro
- Hille, Marcia – Sequoia Mental Health Services
- Kalevor, Komi – WC Housing Services
- LeSage, Amy – Cascade AIDS Project
- Logan-Sanders, Andrea – Boys & Girls Aid
- Pero, David – Homeless Education Network/  
McKinney-Vento Homeless Student Liaison
- Radke, Lydia – WC Parole and Probation
- Ramirez, Bernadette – Bridges to Change
- Rogers, Patrick – Community Action Org.
- Schaeffer-Bicht, Blair – WorkSystems, Inc.
- Smith, Gary – U.S. Dept of Veteran Affairs
- Taylor, Rowie – Domestic Violence Resource Center
- Valencia, Mari – WC Office of Community Dev

## COC BOARD MEMBER NOT PRESENT

- Brouse, Renee – Good Neighbor Center
- Cohen, Megan – City of Beaverton
- Galian, Katherine – Community Action Org.
- Peel, Rick – Oregon Law Center
- Teifel, Gordon – Families for Independent Living & DEAR
- Wyatt, Kent – City of Tigard

## OTHER ATTENDEES

- Bittinger, Phyllis – WC Housing Services
- Devin, Alex – WC Housing Services
- Fellger, Vara – WC Housing Services
- Schwoeffermann, Ty – WC County Administrative Office

Chair: Annette Evans, Public Agency Representative, [Annette\\_Evans@co.washington.or.us](mailto:Annette_Evans@co.washington.or.us)

Co-Chair: Katherine Galian, Nonprofit Agency Representative, [kgalian@caowash.org](mailto:kgalian@caowash.org)

Annette Evans called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

## I. Roll Call and Announcements

- Vernon Baker announced Just Compassion of East Washington County was awarded \$4 million from AARP to build on their existing property to provide transitional housing, shelter services and expand all current service offering. They hope to break ground in Spring 2022.
- David Pero shared the McKinney-Vento Liaison's first meeting for the school year is scheduled for October 21 via Zoom.
- Komi Kalevor shared, of the 86 Emergency Housing Vouchers received from HUD earlier this year, 4 have been leased up, 52 vouchers were issued and participants were searching for units, 3 were pending inspection and 30 vouchers were pending (in process or invited to briefings). The Family Unification voucher program had 1 household that was leased up and 5 vouchers issued, with participants searching for a unit. The VASH Program had 141 households leased up, 7 were pending referrals (Project-based and Tenant-based), 10 vouchers were issued with participants searching for a unit and 3 had an inspection in process. The Mainstream Voucher Program is at full utilization with all 173 households leased up. New households will only be leased up from attrition.
- Andrea Logan Sanders announced Boys & Girls Aid was re-awarded a 3-year grant through Administration for Children and Families to provide housing for up to 2-years for six youth aged 16 – 21 years. They also have openings for a case manager position and a Program Director position for the Safe Place Youth Program.
- Gary Smith announced The Salvation Army Veterans and Family Center was awarded \$2.4 million which they will use to convert many of their double occupancy rooms to single and hope to do the renovation while keeping transitional housing beds open.

- Mandy Gawf announced the City of Hillsboro’s Wood Street Camp Project is transitioning indoors to The Salvation Army space on 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Referrals will continue through Project Homeless Connect.
- Rowie Taylor announced October was Domestic Violence Awareness month. She will continue to share more specifics and flyers via the HSSN listserv as she learns of the various events scheduled to bring awareness to the issue.

## II. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

## III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Action: Approve August 13, 2021 meeting minutes.

Motion: Pat Rogers

Second: Lindsay Downen

Vote: Approved, unanimous.

Action: Approve September 9, 2021 Special Meeting Notes.

Motion: Lydia Radke

Second: Rowie Taylor

Vote: Approved, unanimous.

## IV. BUSINESS ITEMS

### A. FY2021 CoC Program Homeless Grant Application – Annette Evans

1. CoC Consolidated Application, Project Application and Project Priority Listing Timeline  
Annette provided an overview of HUD NOFO Application process and the timeline for its submission noting it was comprised of three components, the first of which included narratives and data from reports submitted to HUD throughout the prior program year and the remaining components (rating and ranking of new and renewing projects) to be completed today. Upon completion, a vote would be taken to approve the submittal of the FY2021 CoC Program Consolidated Application following a 10-day comment period. She noted, unlike previous years, HUD had placed the entire Annual Renewal Demand (ARD) in the amount of \$4,074,317 into Tier I and included all renewing projects. Additional funding was available in a CoC Bonus in Tier II in the amount of \$203,716.
2. CoC Application Rating and Ranking  
Annette noted a public Request For Proposals released on 9/3/2021 resulted in 10 project applications. The CoC Board will rank project applications based on performance and compliance with 24CFR 578. New and renewal project applications were reviewed to include an analysis of project scoring criteria and a discussion that followed on barriers and challenges that led to lower scoring projects as follows:

#### **What barriers exist that prevent programs from moving individuals into housing within 60-days from program start date?**

Blair Schaeffer-Bisht shared justice-involved individuals often experience housing application denials due to credit history. Even though applications are usually ultimately approved through an appeal, it takes longer. She heard that during the eviction moratorium, landlords were becoming less flexible with people who had any red flags and just denying their application. The COVID pandemic was also causing delays with landlords becoming less accessible because they were not working in the office and case managers no longer able to drive clients to view multiple units in one day.

Rowie Taylor shared, in the domestic violence (DV) world, there were many barriers for survivors to work through, such as documentation that they didn’t have in their possession and determining where it might be safe for them to live. DVRC is required to adhere to

VAWA and VOCA laws that were layered on top of HUD's housing guidelines. Applications were ultimately approved, but the process took longer.

Lindsay Downen agreed, obtaining required documentation has been particularly difficult for all teams at New Narrative within the past 18 months (verification of benefits, Social Security cards, and identification cards). For the Reentry Housing program, having a safe space to meet prior to release to begin relationship building was extremely important. For the past 18 months, because the team has had no access to the Restitution Center or Jail, it might take two weeks – 30 days from the time that a person was released to connect with them.

Pat Rogers reported Community Action Organization has also noticed that landlords were not willing to hold units while awaiting third-party payment.

Vernon Baker shared their clients had a hard time trusting or warming up to the process. If they finally did agree to go forward but ran into barriers, oftentimes they disengaged because it reinforced all the negative experiences they previously had working with programs or agencies to obtain resources and services. He felt some flexibility was needed as to when the clock started ticking which might help in increasing outcomes.

Marcia Hille reported Sequoia Mental Health Services, Inc. continues to work through barriers to obtaining documentation for individuals and was exacerbated during the pandemic. Similar to everyone else, housing programs at Sequoia are also struggling to find vacant units.

Gary Smith shared their veteran clients struggle with budgeting and debt challenges as well as obtaining ongoing mental health support if not eligible for a VASH or Emergency Housing voucher. Obtaining documentation and proof of income causes delays in obtaining vouchers. Availability of units has been an issue as well as complex situations with families and children around mental health and addiction.

**Is housing affordability an issue? Rents appear to be increasing as the moratorium is lifted and people move to new units.**

Rowie Taylor shared it was extremely difficult to find available units that meet HUD's affordability guidelines in Washington County and would appreciate flexibility from the County and HUD in working with their population.

Lindsay Downen shared workforce turnover had been an issue in the past year. New Narrative was fortunate to have sustained a strong staff in their housing programs, but have also experienced turnover which not only required training but also caused disruption and delay for people that were potentially in the midst of a housing search. Some of the newer staff were surprised by the income limits of vouchers. The system changes and trainings that have been occurring within Washington County's homeless programs were exciting but at the same time, had a learning curve that also contributed to delays in housing people.

**People of color were over-represented in the homeless population but under-represented in housing programs. What barriers might exist for communities of color in accessing our housing programs?**

Rowie Taylor shared that victims of domestic violence (DV) with immigration status are hesitant from seeking services and accessing housing programs.

Pat Rogers shared the increased access points of the modernized *Community Connect* system may improve access for communities of color, although, a persisting issue may be that some groups were just not familiar with the system as a whole and may not realize there was a system to access at all.

Alex Devin felt the addition of new service providers, lowering of eligibility criteria through the *Community Connect* screening tool and allowing the provider network to enroll 50% outside of the *Community Connect* system will show some different results next year from an equitable standpoint.

Blair Schaeffer-Bisht felt language may be a barrier that prevented people from accessing services as well as immigration status. Undocumented individuals often have a fear of receiving government benefits. Also, families of color were more likely to be doubling up making them ineligible for programs.

Bernadette Ramirez shared her experience working with communities of color with mental health disorders and substance abuse, and being a person of color herself, trust in the system was a major issue. The system had historically not worked in favor of people of color so it was important to go out to communities and build that trust so that people could believe that services were available to them, could understand what they could do for them and be willing to reach out.

Lydia Radke shared there was a disparity between how many people of color were in the criminal justice system, compared to the white population. As a result, for communities of color, criminal history was a barrier to accessing and qualifying for services.

Annette Evans shared this discussion has been informative in the work to identify barriers and opportunities for system change and prioritizing funds to address gaps in the homeless system of care. The CoC Board will need to complete the CoC Program project rating review and ranking of projects for the FY2021 CoC Program Consolidated Application, and suggested tabling the remaining two items (low rates of increased income and timely HMIS data entry) to provide additional time to continue the discussion at a future meeting.

Annette reviewed the rating and ranking worksheet which listed projects in rank order based on objective and performance-based scores. She noted projects underscoring in their first-year renewal (Reentry Housing and Clover Court) and first-year expansion renewal (Sojourner's House) should be given consideration for having to ramp-up to serve individuals. She solicited board member comments on assigning a ranking order, whether they should continue to rank by score as they have in the past, which was in compliance with HUD requirements, or take a different approach which might include a change in the way projects were scored, requiring a policy change. Also, with regard to the CoC Bonus, should it be ranked as a bonus project in order of its score or should it be ranked as a bonus in Tier II as project 10.

Lindsey Downen inquired of the drawback to ranking the Bridge Housing project in Tier II and not in Tier I with the other projects?

Annette explained, Tier I projects could not exceed the total of the Annual Renewal Demand (ARD) established by HUD valued at \$4,074,317. If the Bridge Housing project was moved to Tier I, a renewal housing project would need to be moved to Tier II and be at risk of defunding. HUD funds Tier II projects using a formula that includes points based on the Consolidated Application score with nationwide funding from the highest scoring to the lowest on the Consolidated Application. In the past, the CoC was awarded bonus project funding in Tier II because the Consolidated Application scored high with System Performance Measurement outcomes higher than the past year.

Marcia Hille requested more information on the Bridge Housing Program. Annette shared Centro Cultural was requesting \$203,715 under the CoC Bonus to provide 11 housing units

to serve six adult-only households and 5 family households using a rapid rehousing tenant-based rent assistance model.

Vernon Baker inquired whether ranking projects based on scores incorporated the collective priority of needs or did it just reflect funding being allocated effectively. The ranking process required projects serve a “Special Needs” population or a critical need within the community. For projects that did not, a reallocation or a movement to Tier II might be in order. Annette reported that all current projects meet a critical need as we do not have enough housing rent assistance programs to serve the current homeless in our community.

Pat Rogers noted the CoC Bonus project, Bridge Housing, also met a critical need and would fill a gap in the continuum. Annette agreed and advised if the Consolidated Application scores high enough that CoC Bonus funds may be awarded. Pat Rogers inquired of the likelihood of scoring high enough to be awarded CoC Bonus Project funding in Tier II. Tier II awards were based on how the Consolidated Application scored against other applications nationwide. HUD was allowing comments within the application this year which Annette was hoping to take advantage of to explain the lower System Performance Measurements and the reason for her request for the discussion that occurred prior to this rating process to understanding the barriers and challenges that programs had experienced. Analysis of program barriers will also provide an opportunity to strategize how to improve program outcomes going forward. The added capacity and intensive case management services provided by the Supportive Housing Services (SHS) Program should also improve scores for in future System Performance Measurement reporting.

Blair Shaeffer-Bisht wondered whether other/local funds could be used for the lower ranked projects.

Lindsay Downen shared the compliance part of her supports continuing the ranking process used in the past, which another part of her strongly disliked. She would advocate for a change in the way scoring has been done because she felt it didn’t align with values in service delivery but recognized those changes will require additional work and a policy change to ensure alignment with the funder – HUD – regulatory requirements and metric reporting.

Rowie Taylor asked for a reiteration of the methodology for how ranking had been done in the past. Annette shared the CoC Board ranked projects based on scoring criteria. Programs that no longer met the need or demonstrated low utilization/performance were reallocated with funding transferred to new projects created; e.g. Example is the Safe Haven project that was defunded through reallocation to create the Reentry Housing project. Traditionally, new projects were placed in the Tier II bonus category where they were scored based on the how the application ranked against all others within that category.

Marcia Hille agreed it might be wise to remain consistent with how ranking was done in the past and then look at other strategies going forward.

Mellani Calvin shared Washington County finds itself in a unique position with the passing of the Metro Supportive Housing Services Measure and the additional funding for homeless programs that were now available. Even though there is room for change and re-prioritizing of CoC projects, she felt it was probably wise to continue the process as before, for now.

Vernon Baker agreed that continuity in the way projects were ranked before was the wise choice but suggested a strong emphasis for doing whatever possible to ensure funding for Tier II.

As the only project in Tier II, the Bridge Housing project would receive priority.

Action: Approve Project Applications and Project Priority Listing by Project Score Order in the ARD with Bridge Housing as the 10<sup>th</sup> Project Listing, and Approve submittal of the FY2021 CoC Consolidated Application following Public Comment Period.

Motion: Vernon Baker

Second: Marcia Hille

Vote: Approved, unanimous.

**B. Proposal to add Culturally Specific Provider Organization to CoC Board Membership – Blair Schaeffer-Bisht and Lydia Radke**

Lydia reviewed a CoC Board Recruitment Plan they had developed proposing action steps that could be taken for representation on the CoC Board. The proposal included promotion of open positions to city leadership programs, adding a “Culturally Specific Organization” position to the CoC Board and possibly offer a stipend for board participation. Blair noted, it should be emphasized there was not a requirement to be a top official to be considered for the board. Vara Fellger shared a demographic survey that was developed for completion by current board members and applicants for future open CoC Board positions. She noted HUD’s new demographic data elements were incorporated in the survey. Upon agreement of the board membership, the proposal will be presented at the November 3 HSSN meeting where the membership will vote on whether to recommend approval of the plan at the December 10 CoC Board meeting. A “thumbs up” survey was taken, with the majority in agreement to move forward with the proposal.

**C. Report on Project Reset Initiative – Rick Peel**

Rick Peel was unable to attend the meeting but provided an update via email. Oregon Law Center was still looking for ideal candidates that could benefit from the *Project Reset* program for participation in a case study. Next steps will include an email to the HSSN membership looking for folks who meet the criteria, including anybody with outstanding fines and fees related to court proceedings and particularly if those fines and fees have impacted their ability to access housing (those eligible for expungement of the criminal case but because of outstanding costs, don't qualify). For questions or to provide a case study candidate, email Rick Peel at [rpeel@oregonlawcenter.org](mailto:rpeel@oregonlawcenter.org).

**D. Discussion to provide bonus points for CoC projects in rural cities to address geographic equity and local access to homeless services – Annette Evans**

Agenda item was tabled to be included in discussion on CoC project application scoring criteria based on today’s discussion.

**V. OPEN DISCUSSION**

- None.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Vara Fellger, Washington County Housing Services