



Housing Assistance and Models Meeting Minutes July 13, 2009

Items of Relevance to Other Workgroups

- *All workgroups:* HPRP training sessions will be scheduled for the last two weeks in August. Dates and times will be announced shortly. Discussion for the structure and content of these trainings can be found below. These trainings will be followed by detailed webinar sessions.

Attendees

Present:

Stacey Vandenberg, Co-Chair
Christine Miller, Co-Chair
Paul Beiring, MSHDA
Pat Caruso
Suzanne Gaffney
Janet Irrer
BriAnne McKee
John Peterson

Christine Sickle
Joe Heaphy
Jim Yarborough
Vanessa McDonald

Staff:

Nancy McCrohan, PPA
Joe Quick, PPA

Discussion Items

HPRP Update and Action Needed from Workgroups

- The goal of the meeting was to discuss training, and how the team might involve the other workgroups in this training.
- Sally Harrison was unable to attend the meeting. Janet Irrer gave the group an update of the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) stimulus money.
 - MSHDA received approval from HUD on July 2. The final NOFA and application is available on-line. Minor changes were made last week with respect to budget items, so there is a new version on the Web site.
 - Applications are due on July 31st. MSHDA is looking at how these HPRP applications will need to be reviewed. Applications will be copied and sent out to reviewers upon arrival.
 - ◆ Applications will be reviewed starting August 7th or so, and MSHDA plans to get grant amendments/agreements out by August 15th.
 - MSHDA needs to get the grant applications in the mail in time to get them back by the end of August, so that stimulus money can start to be spent by September 1st. MSHDA needs to report back to HUD by October 10th (10 days after end of the 3rd quarter).

Training Sessions

- The last two weeks of August will be the eight regional trainings for HPRP. Dates, so far, are just penciled in, but will be announced to the regions shortly.
 - Not too much flexibility on training dates. Need to be between August 15th, when grant amendments/agreements are sent out, and September 1st.

- Sally is looking not just for representatives from MSHDA and the Coalition to do these trainings, but for community partners as well that can demonstrate how their models are effectively working in their communities.
- Webinars will be used for the more detailed trainings.
- Structure of training sessions:
 - Afternoon sessions of the trainings will be devoted to an overview of HMIS (101 level, not in-depth, how you do intake, etc.), HALO (how you bill) systems, and what each tenant's/recipient's file will need to have in it. This session will be more like a systems training, with follow-up trainings by webinar.
 - Mornings sessions will generate buy-in on systems change/transformation (closing down shelters in favor of shift to permanent housing) and CTEH issues. This is why Sally wants to engage the statewide workgroups about the HPRP trainings; because HUD is changing the ESG program to align with the HPRP money. The importance of lead agencies in ESG dollar rollouts will also be discussed.
- Janet will start a morning agenda for the trainings ASAP and send to Paul Beiring, BriAnne McKee, Pat Caruso and Stacey Vandenberg for input.
- For inclusion in the training:
 - BriAnne suggested that the more detailed and specific information was what would be most helpful in her region; e.g., how HMIS assessments will be done, the info that will need to be in each participants file, ensuring that all the correct info for the initial progress report is submitted, etc.
 - ◆ Barb and Vanessa are developing webinar trainings to cover some of these specifics. This is a separate, in-depth training.
- Sally has stressed that the trainings should address continued planning that goes beyond just submitting the application and receiving the HPRP money, looking at systems change through a prevention and rapid re-housing focus. Not every region or community is ready for this transformation, but several can be discussed as examples in these trainings.
- One barrier of note, there are a lot of rural counties that have never done permanent supportive housing. Additional trainings may be needed in those locations to ease the transformation.
- Sally would like maybe Stacey and Betty to talk about how to change systems and what is working in their communities.
- There are eight trainings; they will be one day trainings.
- Who should attend trainings:
 - Helpful to know what topics and how in depth the trainings will be to determine which staff need to be in attendance. BriAnne wants to be sure that the all of the members of her staff are as well-equipped as possible.
 - People suggested/required to attend the trainings would be: financial person (who will deal with HALO), HMIS system admin person, frontline staff person, and a manager.
 - ◆ It will be helpful for each of these people to get general training and, therefore, get a grasp on this systems change and process. Because this variety of people will be in attendance, some of the more specific training for each position will be done by webinar.

Concerns about HPRP in the Regions

- BriAnne expressed the desire to do outreach and advertising carefully, since, while they have a significant amount of resources in Grand Rapids, the HPRP funds will not be able to serve everyone.
 - Strategies should be developed for those in central intake about how to have discussions with people that may not be served.
 - It will be important to be careful in advertising this assistance money because the central intake at agencies will be flooded with calls, and it needs to be clear that this money cannot resolve everyone's situation.
- BriAnne also asked if there was a way that the messaging/advertising could be run through the workgroups, or given to those at local level to model local advertising after. This will make sure that everyone is communicating the same message about what these funds can do for people.
 - Janet told BriAnne that she would get her a copy of MSHDA's HPRP advertisement/informational material drafts to look over, and collaborate with BriAnne and the workgroups.
 - Janet will eventually disseminate this material to Jim Yarborough so he can get this HPRP information out to his groups as well.
- There is concern about communication between all of those involved: lead agency and subcontractors, financial person doing the data entry, hired staff persons, frontline staff/housing research specialist, persons actually approving whether a household is getting their payments. Insuring that there is a clear process understood by all of the parties involved is also a concern. The HALO piece will be cut and dry and very similar to all of the other HALO processes, as far as check requests. It was noted that there would not be a need for training in this regard.
- BriAnne discussed that the Grand Rapids Area Coalition to End Homelessness had begun to think differently about which questions to ask and what data to collect from the centralized intakes perspective. They have been building their HPRP plans on information that they have begun to collect and improve on over the last three or four months. It is not just about coordinating shelter placement for 30 days, it is about creating sustainability.
- Vanessa will call BriAnne for input when talking with Barb Ritter on Thursday.
- There is a fear around being audited by the Inspector General and HUD representatives: MSHDA has this same concern and plans to do plenty of documentation training. It is critically important for this process to be clear and standardized; ongoing training will be necessary.
- The National Alliance has recently put out a really good brief on the McKinney-Vento Reauthorization. BriAnne's community is looking at this stimulus as a way to test out some of the changes that will take place once the McKinney-Vento Reauthorization occurs. This legislation is another indication of this big shift. The question remains: how can we use this stimulus money as a tool to practice thinking differently and getting better about providing prevention and rapid re-housing services?
- Each region will need different attention when incorporating the new systems change philosophy. Agencies have had a place in that system and have been comfortable in it and will have to uproot and redesign.

Paul Beiring Discusses Income Requirements

- Q&A specifies that clients in prevention do not pay a portion of their rent.
- All rapid re-housing programs at MSHDA have a policy that clients will pay a portion of their rent (TBRA, HARP and most MSHDA developments are 30% of their income).
 - It was decided that those in re-housing would have to pay part of their income.
 - The goal is to make the procedure as quick as possible. If this process is modeled off of existing TBRA and HARP and procedures for MSHDA developments, there will be a lot of paperwork involved (figuring out deductions, etc.).
 - MSHDA decided to go with a flat rate of 1% of the client's gross annual income.
 - ◆ *Pros:* Able to cut over 20 forms out of the whole process; actually a lower rate when compared to 30% of monthly income (not considering deductions).
 - ◆ *Cons:* On the 30% model, which allows for deductions for certain expenses, a client could, in theory, have enough deductions to wipe the rent payment out completely. This rarely happens.
 - How is this supported while still meeting state requirements?
 - MSHDA tried to use TBRA as a starting point for how HALO and paperwork will be done. TBRA had 47 forms, but this had been cut down to 12. Other programs, like TBRA, may use this model in the future to cut down on form load, if it works well with HPRP.

HPRP Money Open to People Coming Out of Correctional Institutions

- Jim Yarborough asked about what role the Department of Corrections might need to play in this process.
- Those leaving correctional facilities and other institutions are eligible for HPRP funding and they are processed the same way as others. Not much is different, and agents are usually very cooperative.
- Jim is concerned that not all of the regions in the state are as “on top of things” as Stacey and BriAnne's regions.
 - MSHDA's communications division is working on a flyer that informs people that are experiencing homelessness about the HPRP money. These flyers could include an eligibility statement for ex-offenders being released and distributed through the MPRI program.
 - In Paul's experience in the regions, he has not seen a lot of MPRI representation at the Continuums of Care. He would like to encourage this partnership at the Continuum level.
- There will be a meeting this Friday, July 17, where Jackie Blankenship is supposed to make a presentation to all 18 MPRI site coordinators about the changes in MSHDA's screening policies. Jim Yarborough will put Paul on the agenda for this meeting for a brief presentation to share critical information that site coordinators need to know in order to support MSHDA programs. Paul will also encourage these site coordinators to attend the meetings and connect with the Continuums.

Results of Toolkit Subcommittee Meeting (John Peterson, Christine Miller, Stacey Vandenberg and Suzanne Gaffney, along with Nancy McCrohan of PPA, met on June 24.)

- The subgroup talked about getting a list of low income housing tax credit developments by county, or subsidized property.

- Christine was able to get the list internally. While housing search information is available online, it does not include this information, but Christine has started a process to get this new information added. In the meantime, she has a spreadsheet that can be sorted by county and type of population the developments will serve. This will be put out as part of the toolkit.
- Having a matrix that compares this to the TBRA program was also discussed. Janet had Rose put together a document that highlights similarities and differences between the TBRA process and this HPRP process.
- Christine has been working with Janet Irrer and Paul Beiring to get some toolkit items posted on the Web site.
- Integration of this with the weatherization funds with the community action agencies was discussed. Pat Caruso provided contacts for all of the community action agencies. Whether any of these community action agents should be involved in the trainings needs to be determined.

Meeting on the 17th

- The purpose of this meeting will be to convene a committee of members from all of the state workgroups to discuss how all workgroups can work together for HPRP as a whole, and to touch base on the training sessions.
 - By sharing detailed work already done by the workgroups—such as one Employment, Income Supports and Supportive Services’ (EISSS) survey analysis of best practice models across the state—common themes and gaps can be identified.
- Stacey Vandenberg will be at the HPRP meeting on the 17th.

Tasks Assigned

- Janet will start a morning agenda for the trainings and send to Paul Beiring, BriAnne McKee, Pat Caruso and Stacey Vandenberg for input.
- Janet will get BriAnne a copy of MSHDA’s HPRP advertisement/informational material drafts to look over, and will disseminate the material to Jim Yarborough.
- Vanessa will call BriAnne for input when talking with Barb Ritter on Thursday.
- Jim Yarborough will put Paul on the agenda for a meeting with the 18 MPRI site coordinators on Friday July 17.

Next Meeting/Upcoming Events

- August 10, 2009, 1:00 pm