



Housing Assistance & Models Workgroup Meeting Minutes January 12th, 2009

Items Relevant to Other Workgroups

- None at this meeting

Attendees

- Sally Harrison, MSHDA, Co-Chair
- Michele Wildman, Co-Chair
- Janet Irrer, MSHDA
- Kathy French, MSHDA
- Christine Miller, MSHDA
- Shanna Cherubini, Child and Family Services
- John Peterson, CSH
- Christine Sickle, Serenity Center
- Suzanne Gaffney, Northwest Community Action Agency
- Pat Caruso, DHS
- Holly Pomranka, Berrien County
- Jim Yarbough, DOC
- Beverlee DeJonge, Housing Resource Center, Allegan
- Stacey Vandenberg, West Michigan Therapy, Inc., Muskegon
- Deborah Hendren, Community Housing Network, Troy
- Nicholas Armit, PPA
- Daniel Fitzpatrick, PPA

Discussion Items

Please note that the Action Plan has been updated and includes an updated action item numbering system. These minutes refer to the previous numbering system as this is how the action items were referred to in the meeting.

Sally opened the meeting with a request for volunteers from the group to act as a Community Co-Chair as Michele Wildman has become a MSHDA employee. This matter is to be addressed at a later date.

Group members then introduced themselves and Sally provided a brief overview of the previous meeting. It was stated that minutes were very thorough and helpful.

At the previous meeting the group was able to work through the remaining action items within the HA&M Strategic Plan. Between the last meeting and today's meeting the intent was for the group members responsible for specific action item implementation to come up with timelines and deliverables for the implementation of the action items. This meeting was designed to review those timelines and deliverables. Some of that work was completed and some will need to still be completed in time for the Action Plan to be discussed at the next DRT meeting on January 21, 2009.

- *Those responsible for all of the outstanding action item timelines and outcomes are to have these completed and sent to Nick Armit by Tuesday, January 20, so that Nick can update the Action Plan in time for the DRT meeting.*
- Sally has handed responsibility for her action items to Christine Miller.

The review of the Strategies and respective Action items began and included a discussion of further points relevant to each Action item.

Strategy #1: Promote transition to “Housing First” orientation by community-based agencies and homeless service providers.

- 1a and 1b:
 - Pat Caruso has not had the opportunity to connect with Joe or Stacey, but it will be done in time to have something for the DRT.
 - Janet: There’s a non-profit group in the SW part of the state buying property and then leasing it back out (foreclosed property)...is that part of this?
 - Pat: That was brought up in our support services workgroup and it will be addressed in here.
 - Sally: So as we are referring information to other groups we will be referred information too? Yes.
 - Sally: This talks about housing models, but there has to be some kind of service component. Could this group look at existing resources that offer support for supportive housing whether it be ESG money or service components?
 - Pat: That was my hope...to come up with the support dollars that are out there, the service agencies that provide them, how to tap into them and how to tap into, for instance, Kent County’s project where they are combining resources. Spell that out for everyone.
 - Christine: Lighthouse has something going on in Pontiac, a lease-to-purchase option (Pat is aware of this already with Keystone Place in St. Joe).
 - Sally: Neighborhood stabilization money is in use now, in Muskegon and elsewhere. Maybe this group should look at ways to collect that information, not that you necessarily know everything, but you could look at how you could collect it. This could also tie in with housing resource centers.
 - Shanna Cherubini asked to be part of 1a and 1b.
- 1c, 1d, and 1e:
 - Holly will have these in time for the DRT meeting as well.
 - Holly: Would have to occur after 1a.
 - Regardless of what the models are, though, you have to consider how you want to implement (training statewide, doing something at the summit, something online, etc.).
 - Janet stated that almost all of what this group is doing should be available on the Web site.
 - Sally: MSHDA has looked at this in the last few years in a regional approach. It would be interesting for you to see if that kind of model works as there are areas of the state where housing still isn’t happening, where they do not have the capacity to come after those grants.
 - Janet agreed to be the MSHDA person on this.

Strategy #2: Increase access to existing affordable housing opportunities, in both urban and rural areas, for homeless populations through state-local partnership, planning, and prioritization.

■ 1a and 1b:

- Jim: One of the key elements of what we are trying to do here is based upon an anticipated revision in MSHDA's policies implementing HUD regulations. We are expecting a new draft of policy from a subgroup around the end of January; Jackie Blankenchip and Bradley Wescott are working on that. This deals with how to deal with people with criminal backgrounds—what about people currently engaged in prohibitive behavior, do you build in any kind of flexibility in the policy for these persons?
- Sally: One of the issues that came up this week was adult criminal males who had been chronically homeless, but had been on our tenant-based rental assistance program for close to two years, had been good tenants, but were denied for HART Voucher because of their past.
- Jim: Policies should look more at the current risk of the individual, not prior circumstances.
- Sally: I think you are on the right track, we just need to hurry up and get it done; otherwise people will look at where we are now and act on that. We have to get the policy changed. I am glad you guys are involved in this.
- Stacey: How many areas that are actually putting out TBRA's or housing choice vouchers have examples of where MPRI or ex-offenders were in TBRA and what was their success rate? We have some field tests for why or why not they were accepted that I could forward to you if that would be helpful. It has to do a little with training and the interpretation of housing policies. *(Stacey to join group)*
- Sally: I think it would help if Janet put out a request to all of our TBRA grantees for data on this particular issue. I would even extend it to find out how many people have poor credit or other things that might have been barriers to getting them into a HART voucher. How many have been denied if they have applied and for what reasons, and are they still stably housed? Check for all, not just the chronic population.
- Janet: We will start working on 1b once we have the policy from Jim.

■ 2a (combined with strategy 2 Action Item 1a) and 2b:

- Jim: We cannot work on this until the policy alteration from 1a is settled.

■ 3a:

- Pat: Nothing really to report at this point; it's an ongoing struggle and walls keep being hit; but progress is being made. We will get something out to report before the DRT meeting.

Strategy #3: Expand housing opportunities for homeless and at-risk populations through creation of working partnerships with property owners, landlords, and developers linked to local plans for implementation.

■ 1a:

- Janet: Once we get the AmeriCorps working on this, some of this might start to come together.
- Sally: This is where we partner up with the service group. Once they have their plan we look to see where we can marry the housing and the services.
- This is a category where the Keystone Place is buying their properties and where it should come into play. Talking about creating new funding opportunities through local collaboratives (information on Keystone Place to be sent to Sally and/or Janet).
- Janet: 1A and 1F are similar so I can take the lead on this.

■ 1c:

- John: I got three of these done, but not this one. But I do have a major question regarding this. The action is to look at getting project-based vouchers into MSHDA subsidized units that are experiencing vacancies, but that doesn't work.
- Sally: That is one of the things that Michele is here to do work on and the problem is that you can't do vouchers going backwards (there's a three-year cutoff). Vouchers have to be competitively selected and that creates problems here. Michele is working with Steve Latham here at MSHDA and looking at this as a tool, putting project vouchers into developments that are no older than three years old and make them project-based vouchers. Michele, maybe you can help John with this as John is right, there is a problem here.
- John: So should we kill this, assign it to Michele?
- Michele: It looks like it could be an outcome later (in the Strategic Plan) when we talk about addressing barriers. Not sure that this warrants its own subcategory.
- ***1c is to be moved to Strategy 4, Action item 2a and is to be an outcome of that Action Item.***

■ 1d:

- Holly: I do have the list of the USDAs and local PHAs. I do have to get with the other committee members on this.
- Kathy is going to help Holly with this, because she has a background in it.
- ***1d to be merged with Strategy 3, Action Item 3a.***

■ 1f:

- Janet: This will be easy to take care of. It is connected to 1a but we should keep it separate because they are distinct.
- Jim to lead.

■ 1g:

- Janet needs to follow up with Ellen, who hasn't been at meetings for a while.
- ***1g is to be moved to Strategy 3, Action Item 3d and is to be an outcome of that Action Item.***

Strategy #4: Promote collaboration among supportive housing partners, including service agencies, developers, and property management companies.

- 2a:
 - Michelle took lead on Strategy 4.
 - Michelle spoke with Gary about needing to develop a mechanism/survey of sorts to be sent out to the portfolio of people who support housing services, developers, and managers. From that, there are some with whom we might want more in-depth discussions and then have some kind of forum to help showcase exemplary partnerships.
 - Should touch base with Paul Byron, who is doing related work.
- 2b:
 - Due to the strong link to 6, it was decided that 2b can be eliminated.

Strategy #5: Develop a common definition of supportive housing that meets the needs of a broad constituency.

- Strategy 5 has already been discussed so the group skipped it. The definition will be presented to the DRT.
 - Pat to present something more formal to the DRT and run 1c past the DRT for comment.

Strategy #6: MSHDA and the Michigan Affordable Housing Community should be responsive to local communities and provide a wide array of supportive housing options that support personal choice.

- 1a:
 - Christine: This was discussed Thursday morning (see Action Plan for Outcomes) and we want to define resources available to communities, because a lot of places are not sure what to utilize. We want to finish that (on the Web site) by the end of March and update it yearly.
 - Sally: Change wording in Action Plan from HAP to “housing choice vouchers.”
- 1c:
 - Christine: We had talked about having a pool of funds available at MSHDA to support programs funded through us. The goal has been re-worded but I want to check that the new wording is okay (see Action Plan). We want to develop parameters and guidelines for this funding.
 - Sally: This is good.
- 2a:
 - John: 2a is a complement to 1a. 2a shows how the resources can be used using examples of projects that exist. Between now and the end of March we would develop a template for how projects would be developed, and actual projects would be profiled that would show how the real estate was structured, the supportive housing component, any particular things of interest in those projects, and the contact information. Also, an FAQ section. We would put that on the MSHDA Web site and any other public Web sites.
 - Michele: The process sounds similar to Strategy 4, 2A. We might want to connect them in some fashion (but keep distinct).

- 2b:
 - John: By next October (in advance of the homeless summit) we will do an assessment of what the needs are for supportive housing through the CoCs and the campaign network. We will also fully involve the disability resource folks and get a good picture of the level of need that exists, what has been done, what has been successful, and what needs to be done. Have that at the forefront of when the planning is done at MSHDA and in our local communities. This would be published and presented at the Homeless Summit and at the Affordable Housing Conference.
- 3a and 3b:
 - Sally: At the last meeting, one was moved out and one was eliminated, so they do not need to be discussed.

Table 1: Strategy Timelines and Outcomes to be Completed
Housing Assistance and Models Workgroup

Action Item	Outcome Responsibility
<i>Strategy #1: Promote transition to “Housing First” orientation by community-based agencies and homeless service providers.</i>	
1a, 1b	Pat Caruso to provide timelines and outcomes to Nick Armit by Tuesday, January 20th
1c, 1d, 1e	Holly Pomranka to provide timelines and outcomes to Nick Armit by Tuesday, January 20th
<i>Strategy #3: Expand housing opportunities for homeless and at-risk populations through creation of working partnerships with property owners, landlords, and developers linked to local plans for implementation.</i>	
1a	Janet Irrer to follow up on timelines and deliverables for this action item
1c	John Peterson to provide timelines and outcomes to Nick Armit by Tuesday, January 20th
1f	Janet Irrer to provide timelines and outcomes to Nick Armit by Tuesday, January 20th

Tasks Completed

- Reviewed all strategies.
 - Revised action items for timelines and outcomes.
 - Outstanding assignments to be completed by Friday, January 16 and passed to Nick Armit at PPA.

Tasks Assigned

See “Strategy Timelines and Outcomes to be Completed” (Table 1 above).

Concluding Comments

Sally discussed having an additional face-to-face overall workgroup meeting where the HA&M workgroup gets together and all of the workgroups meet up in April or early May. People agreed that this was a good idea although April 22 would not be a good date.

Next Meeting

- February 9th, 2009 @ 1:00 p.m.
 - This will be a conference call, number to be provided later.
 - Nick will send handouts by e-mail.
 - If you know you are unable to make the call please let Nick know beforehand (narmit@publicpolicy.com).