

**STATE OF OREGON  
ENDING HOMELESSNESS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**July 16, 2010**

**10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**Department of Human Services  
500 Summer St. NE Salem, OR 97301**

**Members Present:** Rick Crager, Martin Burrows, Dona Bolt, Marisha Johnson, Jean Lasater, Mitch Sparks (for Val Conely at the VA), Trell Anderson, Michael Ward, Carolyn Storr (for Mitch Morrow, Dept of Corrections), David Leslie, Susan Ban, Sophia McDonald (for Ann Williams, SVDP), Janet Byrd, Sally Erickson, Margaret Carter, Annette Evans, Marci McMurphy, Sharon Miller, Cindy Pasko

Guests: Melani Calvin, Ann Brown

OHCS Staff: Pegge McGuire, Lisa Joyce, Michele Johnson, Coleen Trogden

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Rick Crager calls the July 16, 2010 meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

**II. Approval of minutes for April 30, 2010 EHAC Meeting**

**Motion** – David Leslie moves the motion

**Seconds** – Michael Ward

Meeting minutes **approved**

**III. New Business:**

- a.** New members: Trell Anderson representing Public Housing Authorities and Sharon Miller representing Community Action Agencies were introduced.
- b.** New Business: Reports on state funding outlooks for homelessness programs. Agency representatives provided information on current biennium cuts and proposed 2011-13 state budgets that impact homelessness. Agencies have submitted concepts packages to the governor's office:
  - OHCS: Lisa Joyce described OHCS concepts submitted to the governor's office:
    - A request to remove the 5% administrative limit on programs linked to the Oregon Housing Fund.
    - Oregon Affordable Housing Tax Credits: innovative concept to improve tax credit program in this economy. Trying to monetize the credit and sell it to anyone in order to leverage funding from the private sector. Credit financial tool is designed as a one year proposal to invest funds in developing affordable housing.
    - Farm worker housing tax credit program. Definition of farmworker has not kept pace with industry definitions.
    - Expanding access to housing in rural Oregon: In order to address the pressures of finding affordable housing in some regions due to the presence of strong retirement communities, OHCS proposes to establish some "exception counties". Coastal communities, for example, could have a higher eligible income levels to allow service workers the ability to afford housing.
    - Trust Fund loan and grant resources – housekeeping and administrative corrections on to the Trust Fund.
    - Public purpose statutes – clarifies where public purpose charge funds should be deposited (has recently been pulled by the Department)
    - Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force – revise statute to address responsibility of funding.
    - EHAC's codification is not going forward per request from Governor's office. We were established by Executive Order and the department will have a conversation with the next governor about the future of EHAC.
    - Oregon Volunteers (part of OHCS) is also not going forward per request from the governor.

OHCS budget due August 1<sup>st</sup>. Details are contained in attached budget document. The state is facing a large deficit in current biennium, so there is limited chance of extra funding.

Some highlights of OHCS' requested budget:

- Affordable housing and homeless relief – continue to preserve affordable housing projects with expiring federal subsidies across the state.
- Expiring tax use credits – State-financed projects financed in early 90s. This is a priority for department.
- Homelessness relief – \$20.1 million to expand Emergency Housing Account. Funding has remained flat since 1995 despite increase in homeless.
- Housing Plus (PSH) \$18.6 million to continue permanent supportive housing development.
- \$3 million to free up existing affordable housing by providing funding to support families residing in affordable rental housing to help them gain homeownership. The result will be available affordable rental housing for new families.
- \$300,000 requested to support EHAC and ICHH.

By mid-October, the governor will contact agencies to review his recommended budgets for release in December. The newly-elected governor will put together a new recommended budget for 2011-13. Last time there was a change in administration, it was a seamless process.

EDUCATION: Dona Bolt reported that her budget for homeless students is entirely federally funded. They received \$1.5 million in ARRA last year and their regular budget has not been reduced too much. Has some unspent ARRA funding and will use it to hold regional symposiums beginning in October to bring together homeless liaisons and community partners working homeless youth and families.

The non-ARRA allocation of approx \$666,000 from McKinney-Vento goes mostly to 55 school districts organized under 8 Consortiums. Dept. of Education will release new homeless student numbers in September. This was a pilot year for pre-school count of pre-school students and the department won't use those numbers this year.

DHS: Margaret Carter reported that DHS will be willing to pay a portion of the over-sampling of undercounted populations for hunger instability. This is survey done in partnership with the Interagency Council on Hunger and Homelessness. There is a \$176 million budget gap for DHS in current biennium. They are conducting public forums to get input to prioritize services.

COMMISSION ON CHILDREN FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES: Jean Lasater reported that reductions to the General Fund resulted in a cut of four positions including her position, which coordinates services to homeless and runaway youth. Eight counties receive funds (\$900,000 for the biennium), which created a system of care for homeless and runaway youth in the state. A team has been created to develop recommendations to the Commission on options to potentially move the program to another state agency or non-profit organization. Over the past 2 years, a network of providers, training and technical assistance has been developed to provide support and intervention specifically with this population.

EHAC members recommended advocacy on behalf of preserving the runaway youth system. Trell asked if EHAC can take a position on homeless issues in the state budget. Rick agreed to work on recommendation for the Commission's cuts and to begin a memorandum on budget issues to circulate to EHAC members. David suggested an Action Alert type of communication to get budget information out to the community as the budget process continues. Lisa reported that the numbers of unaccompanied youth increased in the last homeless count. Rick will work with the Commission and Jean to discuss the possible future of the program.

EMPLOYMENT: Nothing in the budget directly impacts housing and homelessness, but Oregon is one of the few states whose unemployment insurance (UI) trust funds is not bankrupt. However, many people are reaching the end of their UI and estimates are that by October 2010, 5,000-10,000 people per month will reach the end of their UI. This will impact ending homelessness efforts.

Primarily all federally funded, the department used ARRA funds to staff call centers and those funds will be expended next year.

CORRECTIONS: The department submitted a grant to strengthen targeted pre-release and post-release

services to 273 veterans. Unfortunately, it did not get funded.

**CITY OF PORTLAND:** Sally Erickson reported that the city maintained support for its ending homelessness initiative and received \$1 million one-time only funding for emergency housing for homeless. Multnomah County added some new resources to maintain a year round family shelter instead of just a winter shelter and to fund services to homeless families in east Multnomah County.

Sally reported on the National Alliance to End Homelessness Conference which was just held in DC. Sally reported that the message from the federal government is to continue to house the most vulnerable populations; create collaborations with DHS agencies; and that communities should set goals that no one should be homeless for more than 20 days and that shelter recidivism should be less than 5%.

Communities should plan special strategies to house unaccompanied youth and to count those youth, including youth up to 24 yrs. of age. Barbara Poppe, the new ED of the USICH, reported on the new federal plan to end homelessness – integration of programs needs to happen on the state level, not just on the federal level. HUD Secretary Shawn Donovan spoke and HUD’s four goals in ending homelessness: Finish the work of ending chronic homelessness; work with the VA to end veteran’s homelessness in 5 years; end homelessness for families within 10 years and finally to get to a path to end all homelessness.

**HOUSING ALLIANCE PRIORITIES FOR 2011:** Janet Byrd reported that the latest revenue forecast slowed down the finalization of the Housing Alliance’s (HA) legislation priorities, but they will be finalized in Sept/Oct.

The Alliance’s top priority is to maintain existing resources in housing – including the doc recording fees passed in the last session; Increase the Emergency Housing Account, (EHA) which is flexible funds for agencies and thus very important; support preservation of existing housing, especially with attached rent subsidies; support OHCS’s request for additional funding for the Housing Plus program; continue to protect manufactured home parks and provide information on tenant rights in foreclosed properties. The HA will also support faith communities’ efforts to classify violence against homeless people as hate crimes. The HA may also move to codify EHAC.

**ADDICTIONS AND MENTAL HEALTH:** Marisha Johnson from DHS reported that she administers the PATH program, which provides funding to homeless people with mental illness. Oregon’s 2010 funding increased from \$545,000 (2009) to \$599,000 and they anticipate an increase in funds in 2011. Six counties currently receive funding (Deschutes, Jackson, Lane, Multnomah and Washington Counties). DHS will issue an RFP next year for the funds. County Mental Health providers are eligible to apply for the funding.

### III. **Reports:**

**a. GOVERNOR’S REENTRY PROGRAM:** Pegge McGuire reported that the Governor’s Reentry program was established 3 years ago as a response to the increasing number of people who return to their communities from prison and jail. The Reentry Council seeks to make that transition successful and reduce recidivism.

Reentry Council and area subcommittees meet to establish programs and collaborations with systems of care. Some examples are:

- Established three one-stop pilot projects so that parolees could schedule meetings with parole officers and therapeutic providers
- Parolees leave with 30-day supply of medications.
- Transitional housing template with wrap around services was created for use by local communities.
- OHCS has developed a tenant guarantee program for landlords that will focus on reentry clients to improve their housing options.
- Developing a legislative proposal that would guarantee limit of risk for landlord and employer to encourage them to rent or hire recently released clients. This is modeled on successful programs in other states.
- Implementing a “Ban the Box” law that restricts questions on employment applications about past convictions for jobs where that should not be an issue. This prevents screening out on initial applications, but could invite discussions later in the hiring process.
- Consideration of a “Second Chance” certificate issued by state or parole to certify that an individual has completed specific steps to be a successful member of society.
- Will participate in Neighborhood Partnership training about how to improve messaging in order to change

the public discussion on this population.

-The Rural Oregon Continuum of Care (ROCC) is undertaking a discharge planning process. The council will review the report to recommend that state agencies adopt guiding principles for discharge to supportive networks.

-The Department of Corrections will identify who needs identification upon entry into the institution. It will begin the process of obtaining state ID, such as birth certificates so that inmates will have ID upon release. In a small pilot project, DOC will take people to DMV prior to release to get ID cards.

**b. IMPROVING HOMELESS DATA:** Ann Brown, from ROCC, reported how the balance of state is working to improve the HMIS system. OHCS is working to implement HUD-required new data standards. The ROCC will increase training across the state to improve data quality; bring in non-governmental providers (shelters) into HMIS. They are working with other programs to come into the HMIS system and establish a statewide HMIS workgroup. The challenge is the differing definitions of homelessness across agencies. The new HEARTH ACT will change the definition of homelessness and the federal plan to end homelessness is working to have common definitions. The GAO recently issued a report entitled "Homelessness: A Common Vocabulary Could Help Agencies Collaborate and Collect More Consistent Data". The annual homeless report (AHAR) is sent to congress yearly and used nationally for homeless data. We are working to improve the data and increase participation in order to improve the final report.

**c. SSI/SSD BENEFIT SPECIALISTS PROGRAM:** Susan Ban reported on the Lane County Action Plan to improve benefit applications for SSI/SSD and decrease the length of time for approval. Because the application for disability benefits is complicated and difficult to navigate, a training model called SOAR has been implemented in many states to improve the success of benefits enrollment. Lane County participated in an OHCS pilot program to train benefits specialists in four CAP agencies, using one-time only ARRA funds. Melani Calvin was contracted by OHCS to provide onsite SOAR-based training of benefit specialists, provide additional follow-up technical assistance, and help to establish essential relationships with local Social Security offices and DDS.

Benefits Specialists were trained at CAPs serving Lane, Coos and Curry, Douglas and Josephine, Klamath and Lake Counties. The specialists will work with homeless and those at-risk of homelessness to apply for and rapidly receive SSI/SSD benefits.

This program is based on a Portland program that successfully assisted 225 homeless or recently homeless individuals receive an average of \$674/mo disability payments plus health care coverage. This is critically important to the individual and brings in millions of federal dollars to the community.

The SOAR program has technical assistance staff in Seattle and offers free train-the-trainer programs to agency staff. They request that the state identify a lead agency or body that could help coordinate and plan additional SOAR programs.

Susan announced that Lane County is able to send one additional community staff to a SOAR train-the-trainer program in Seattle. She was asked by SOAR to obtain a resolution from EHAC approving the training. Rick clarified that EHAC doesn't have the authority to approve sending people to the training. After discussion and further clarification by EHAC members, the motion approved was that EHAC endorse the Lane Co Action Plan and encourage all communities across Oregon to get training that incorporates the benefits specialists' model into their ending homeless initiatives.

**d.** Discussion on Washington County's 10-year plan was postponed to future meeting for lack of time.

**e. INTERFAITH SUMMIT ON HOMELESS YOUTH AND FAMILIES:** Kevin Feeney and David Leslie from Ecumenical Ministries reported on the Inter-Faith Summit held in June. Over 250 people attended from around the state. Information was presented ranging from how to create a shelter space in churches to policy issues around ending homelessness. There was good press coverage of the event. EMO will follow up, including working with other systems of care and advocacy organizations. Local communities have indicated that they want to replicate this event on a smaller scale in their communities. David thanked the many people from EHAC who participated in the summit.

EHAC Adjourned at 12:05pm.

