



Agriculture Workforce Housing Facilitation Team

Meeting: Tuesday, May 27, 2014

Facilitator: Theresa Wingard, OHCS Operations and Policy Analyst

Members Present:

Anzhela DePlois, DOR	John McCulley, CFG & BMG	Maria Elena Castro M., OHA
Brett Sheehan, CASA	Karen Shawcross, Bienstar	Natasha Detweiler, OHCS
Claudia Cantu, CASA	Kathleen Kincade, OSHA	Shay Kahl, Simplicity Homes
Fernando Gutierrez, DOE	Kim Travis, OHCS	Shelly Wilkins-Ehenger, MCHA
Ian Tolleson, OFB	Laurie Hoefler, LSO	Sherryl Gleason, USDA
Jean Godfrey, CFG	Marc Overbeck, OHPR	

Mission: Federal, state, local, and non-governmental leadership working together to improve Housing and economic opportunities for farmworkers

Introductions – New members: Brett Sheehan, Fernando Gutierrez, Kim Travis, Shelly Wilkins-Ehenger

Sub-Committee reports:

- Alignment and Streamlining: **Claudia Cantu** – Ian is Chair for this committee but Claudia will be reporting. OHCS is doing everything to streamline environmental process. The sub-committee is reviewing this process with HUD and OHCS. Claudia will contact Doug Carlson and report back at the next meeting.

The committee is also working on the Market Study. RD and OHCS have been successful in coming to an agreement on a way to mesh the two studies. It was noted that advertising might be the only thing that can be combined. Doug Carlson is working with Carole Dickas, Program Manager for the HOME program, to determine if there is a way for the HOME program to use RDs document. HOME requires additional information than what is collected by RD. It was noted that the main issue really involves timing of when the market study is submitted by each agency.

- Needs and Research: **Natasha Detweiler** – The survey has been completed and sent out to the Ag groups. So far, only a few responses have been received. There was no deadline for the survey but Natasha will suggest Stephanie add one when she sends the survey reminder. Jacob, with DOA, is working on the mapping project. There will be an update at the next meeting

Program statistics to be used for county assessments – January minutes indicate each team member would provide a list of the resources they offer to address the needs in Marion County. Should team members be reviewing their programs for this information?

Discussion:

- Need to identify where the unmet need is.
- The mapping is to identify unmet need.
- **After mapping, what is the next step?**
 - Determining what housing individuals provide.
 - What housing do other agencies provide
 - When you aren't able to help a person you need to provide him or her with another resource. We need to know what other agencies can provide.
 - The natural step is for each agency to share the type of housing they have available and the needs they've seen in Marion County.
 - Is the next step to determine what is needed or is it to determine what tools are needed to address the needs?
 - One of the pieces is to determine what farmworkers think. Where do they want to live?
- We have some compelling information in the mapping and list of registered camps but we don't have a picture of all of the information together.
- We are still in the gathering stage. At some point, we need to compile the information so we can analyze it.
- The survey asks Ag groups what they see as the highest demand of housing locally, the type of housing needed and what barriers they identify.
- There are two different points of view – farmworker and grower.
- **Has there ever been a determination that there is a shortage of housing?**
 - The Alice Larson study does provide some information that can be used as a guide to the number of farmworkers and dependents and where they are located throughout the state.
- Anecdotally, growers say there is a shortage of labor not housing.
- It's more about where the workers are located, the work, the housing and transportation as factors that make it difficult to connect workers with employment
- On farm is more prohibitive due to regulatory hoops
- Growers know their workers even if they are seasonal. They do everything they can to help the workers get to their farms.
- **How do we bring workers to Oregon?**
 - The Farm Bureau is considering RV hookups. California allows hookups for RVs. Oregon statute would need to be revised to allow hookups.
- In the Willamette Valley, the variety of crops allows farmworkers to work continuously within a 50-mile radius.
- Housing and labor are linked together. Growers who have adequate housing usually do not have issues with labor.
- There is a need to address workers who are not working all of the time and have difficulty paying for housing and utilities. The workers cannot afford to live in the community if they are not working.
- We need to identify issues soon and address them before the problems become bigger.
- **Who is spearheading the Marion County pilot?**
 - The Needs and Research sub-committee is doing the mapping and survey but the entire group made the decision to focus on the resources needed for Marion County as a pilot. Resources from each team member's agency will be added to the mapping to create a complete picture of the needs for Marion County.
- **What should the rest of the group be doing while the Needs and Research sub-committee is working on the crop mapping and survey?**
 - Team members will review the resources they provide for Marion County and send their list to Theresa.

- **Have Ag employers been invited to this meeting to determine what they see as the need?**
 - There may be some on the e-mail list for this meeting. Fernando will provide Theresa with contact information for Ag groups in Marion County to add to the e-mail list. They may be asked to present at a future meeting.
- There is a value in the balance between perspectives and needs in this group. There are benefits for both community based and good, clean, migrant housing.
- There is a range of quality of housing in Oregon. The Gorge has some of the best migrant housing. It would be beneficial to hear from a grower who has successfully provided high quality housing.

Mapping connection between agencies and agency roles/Laurie Hoefler – The goal is to share where each agency fits in supporting farmworker housing, the connections between agencies, assessing needs, and addressing the gaps. Laurie drew a chart which included categories for migrant on farm, migrant off farm, community based subsidized, unsubsidized and homeownership with subtopics for jobs, provision/access, affordability, good quality/condition, and support services. Team members added their organization to the chart, showing the areas they cover. Laurie will incorporate everyone's information and make the table available to the group when it's complete.

Team observations of resources chart:

- There appears to be an overlap of services. Is this a positive or negative factor?
- How would a migrant worker know who to contact with so many choices?
- OHCS' Farmworker Housing Finance Center webpage provides a list of resources for farmworkers.
 - The website is a housing finance page and only a resource for farmworkers if they end up there by chance; it's not intended to be a go to resource for farmworkers.
- There is a clear gap under the unsubsidized category.
- **How do we move the unsubsidized workers to subsidized housing?**
- There should be a way to use the OHCS Agriculture Workforce tax credit to develop unsubsidized housing.

New/current member recruitment: CASA has worked to bring new and returning members to the meeting. The following groups were mentioned in January as possible members: AgriPac, ConAgra, winegrowers, Onion Association and Eastern Oregon/Idaho Vegetable Association. Everyone was encouraged to contact anyone they thought should be attending and/or provide the contact information to Theresa.

Fair Housing and the agriculture workforce: Are there fair housing concerns for agriculture workforce housing?

- Workers generally do not contact FHCO but instead call Legal Aid and the law center when there are issues.
- Legal Aid of Oregon rarely hears complaints but notes that any complaints received have been around family status e.g. migrant housing where families are not allowed.
- Regulatory burdens may keep growers from providing housing for workers.
- There needs to be a way to meet both fair housing laws and OSHA laws
- Per OSHA:
 - ALH camps must provide separate, private sleeping areas for unrelated persons of each gender and for each family unit. OSHA rules also require privacy or separation for occupants if common-use bathing facilities or toilet facilities are used by both genders in the same building; and, if sleeping areas are adjacent to common use cooking and eating areas. Camps that are only set up for male workers often must provide additional facilities if they hire a female worker or house family units.

- Additionally, OSHA has per person square footage requirements when an area is used for food preparation as well as sleeping (100 sq. per occupant including children over two years of age.) This requirement has been in effect since 1976.
- Regulatory requirements keep some growers from providing housing for a more diverse workforce and for worker's families.
- However, there are already ways to meet both fair housing laws and OSHA rules.

Guest Speakers: Erious Johnson, Jr. Director of Civil Rights for DOJ met with OHCS. He is mandated to connect with migrant workers. Mr. Johnson was invited to attend the AWHFT meetings and was provided with a contact list for this group. The team was encouraged to provide Theresa contact information for any potential speakers.

Agriculture Workforce Housing Tax Credit OARs: The deadline for this group to provide input prior to the public hearing is the end of this week. There will be an opportunity to make comments at the public hearing as well. CASA stated concerns about the draft showing that OHCS is considering making reserve accounts non-eligible. This will make a substantial difference in the dollar amount used when applying for the credit. The team will send any comments in writing to Theresa or Don Herman.

Information Sharing:

LAO: What is the structure of OHCS?

OHCS' transition planning is on the OHCS website. Theresa will send the team a link to the page.

LAO: What is the timeline involving this group – There is a discussion of an oversight group. Theresa will research to determine if there is any movement on this subject.

NOFA: One goal is to meet the needs of OHCS and the federal government for funding allocations. **How does OHCS assess needs and distribute money?** The NOFA requires a market study to show the need. CASA is the only group who surveys workers directly. The NOFA and the jurisdictions Consolidated Plan should call out farmworkers as a priority population for funding as they do seniors and other groups.

CASA: Pilot in lieu of taxes - Owners of farmworker housing are required by statute to submit claims for tax exemption along with a letter from OSHA and the Fire Marshall. The letters certify that the property meets inspection criteria in order to receive the state farmworker housing tax credit exemption. OSHA does not inspect community based housing, only on farm housing. Local tax assessors are denying projects that do not have a letter from OSHA. OSHA's Assistant Director is working to find a resolution for those projects that were denied this year. This is a county-by-county issue. CASA is taking the lead on changing statutory language this next legislative session but needs support from other groups to make it happen.

OSHA: OSHA makes annual and random inspections of migrant camps. There is an annual registration requirement. Those camps that are already registered must send in a form stating they are in compliance. OSHA will investigate any reported concerns related to migrant camps.

OED: The Department of Labor named Oregon as one of the top five states in the country as having one of the highest numbers of estimated migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs). This designation is based on OED's quarterly report to DOL of services and migrant workers registered to look for work. This is the first time Oregon has been on the list. OED now has the ability to provide more year round full time outreach workers. At a meeting of over 50 Ag employers, the employers stated they do not access the Oregon Employment Department system when looking for workers because the system does not classify workers by skill. Ag employers are not only seeking labor but also looking for workers with specific skills

Action Items:

- Members will provide Theresa with:
 - a list with resources they provide for Marion County
 - contact information for presenters
 - potential new member contact information
- Laurie will construct the agency resource chart
- Theresa will research the status of the advisory committees
- Fernando will provide Theresa with contact information for Marion County Ag employers
- OHCS transition planning link: http://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/Pages/do_transition_planning.aspx

Next Meeting:

Thursday, July 24, 2014, 10:00-12:00
OHCS, Room 124A