

**Minutes of the February 21, 2017 meeting of
Somerville-Arlington Homeless Providers Group**

1. See attached *sign in sheet* for attendees. A round of introductions was made.

2. City award of the two 2013 and 2014 CoC Planning Grants to Simtech with Joyce Tavon as sub-contractor – Scope and hours allotted are described in the two RFQs (previously sent by email to providers' list). Consultant activities will be reviewed at an upcoming providers' meeting. Heidi Gold from Simtech was in attendance and was introduced. Heidi described data presentation and coordinated entry support that Simtech will provide, including allowing providers to securely share client information and provide appropriate referrals. Joyce Tavon will provide system planning, NOFA application support and other CoC guidance.

3. HMIS Agreement with Simtech and allocation of costs to CoC agencies – Simtech's Professional Services Agreement was circulated for review. Lisa Davidson, as staff to the CoC's HMIS lead agency described the CoC's current relationship with Simtech as HMIS services provider. Simtech normalizes data from all providers in order to de-duplicate and prepare CAPER, AHAR, System Performance Measures, PIT and HIC reports. Simtech will improve data quality reports and APRs (getting missing data below 10%). CoC will be provided with information to help set and reinforce policies and procedures. Simtech will extract data from HMIS to answer questions like what populations are missing, what populations have increased in terms of experiencing homelessness.

Somerville CoC does not have an HMIS grant from HUD; instead, the cost is distributed among providers based on the percentage of CoC NOFA allocation they receive. Individual programs can list an HMIS line item on their NOFA applications to pay this cost, or can use match money or program income.

Providers discussed Section 4.2 of the Simtech HMIS contract which would limit disclosure of contract information including pricing. It was agreed that Section 4.2 should be deleted from the agreement. A motion to approve the agreement, with that change, was made by Antoinette Delmonico and seconded by Rita Shaw. The motion passed with a vote of 8-0.

Heidi Gold left the meeting. It was mentioned that charges for HMIS to be paid by provider agencies that have not participated could be introduced.

Itemization of the HMIS charges was reviewed. A motion to approve the itemization was made by Rita Shaw and seconded by Antoinette Delmonico. The motion passed with a vote of 7-0-1, with Lisa Davidson abstaining.

4. HCA summary of programs

Rita Shaw gave a presentation about Housing Corporation of Arlington's projects and programs.

HCA currently operates 93 units with affordable rents. Many of the tenants work and/or on SSI or SSDI. They have some tenants that were previously homeless and were referred by SHC. Some tenants use MRVP vouchers or Section 8 vouchers. The projects have multiple project-based subsidies.

HCA has 48 new units in the pipeline to be completed over the next two years. They have more than 1,000 households on their waiting list. Clients must keep their applications current and HCA purges the list occasionally to remove applicants who no longer qualify or who have moved on. Household income must be less than 60% AMI. Preferences: households experiencing emergencies such as homelessness, persons experiencing domestic violence, and veterans. Next, up to a 70% Arlington resident preference. For instance, if no Arlington resident is experiencing an emergency, then a non-Arlington household experiencing an emergency is offered the unit next. Units are allocated, with these preferences, through a lottery process. Each project has a written plan with requirements for tenant selection etc. that are dependent on the funding source. Households must be able to afford unit rent. Tenants are usually referred by SHC. HCA receives referrals for homeless veterans.

At the time of the meeting, HCA had 2 units available, and 5 units typically become available per year.

HCA works with local agencies, churches, the town of Arlington, food pantry and the Council on Aging to connect clients with needed resources. About 2-4 families per week are referred to their homelessness prevention programs, and HCA helps about 20-30 families per year through this program.

5. NOFA debriefing

Handouts with a summary of our CoC's 2016 NOFA application scoring were provided. Kelly Donato reviewed a February 9th HUD webinar regarding NOFA scoring. Some feedback received--CoCs scored well if:

- They had reallocated TH and SSO programs,
- Homelessness rate had been reduced,
- PSH units stayed stable or increased (Somerville saw a decrease—3 units),
- Providers are housing chronically homeless individuals/households.

HUD wants each CoC to make changes each year to meet these goals.

With regard to NOFAs going forward, HUD is trying to get a more consistent schedule, which this year may include registration in March, publishing the NOFA in May, application due date in August with awards in December. The GIW will be different and more streamlined this year.

HUD stressed the importance of:

- Reducing homelessness,
- Monitoring programs,
- Reallocation,
- Reducing barriers,
- Targeting to those with highest need,
- Strong outreach,
- Coordinated Entry.

From our 2016 application, Sections 3 and 4 need the most improvement. When the NOFA is issued, questions will be shared with all providers to get input for best answers.

With regard to the PIT count, new sites were added to our route. 2 homeless persons were counted in areas added. Historically the Somerville unsheltered PIT count has remained fairly steady. The last two years it went up, partly perhaps due to mild weather.

6. Volunteers of America of Mass.'s grant explanation and support letter

VOA representatives were unable to attend the meeting to present for this agenda item. They are seeking a letter of support. The draft letter will either be sent by email for a vote, or VOA will attend the March meeting.

7. Unaccompanied Youth Count

A training for the 2017 Unaccompanied Youth Count will be held at the College of the Holy Cross on March 9th. Across Massachusetts, surveys of unaccompanied youth will be taken for two weeks between May 1st and May 14th. Count organizers will utilize Youth Ambassadors for planning and outreach.

Youth and youth partner agencies including Wayside, Just-A-Start, Teen Empowerment and JRI have provided oversight to Youth Ambassadors in past counts. In the past, \$50 gift cards have been provided to Youth Ambassadors who spend 5 hours on the count, and organizers have held a pizza party for ambassadors and other participating youth. There is an emphasis on including youth and young people in planning, training and implementation of the count: "Nothing about us without us."

During the two weeks of the count itself, youth and young people up to 24 years old without a parent are invited to complete surveys about their status. If they are living with family members who are not a parent, they are considered unaccompanied. Doubled-up youth and young people (not counted by the HUD PIT) are counted by the State count.

Data collected by the count is used to conduct advocacy and to request increased funding for programs that address youth homelessness.

The Somerville-Arlington CoC Youth Committee is tasked with developing new and creative ways to conduct outreach this year and in the future.

The Welcome Project has worked with the Mystic Tenants Association and youth with regard to the Books of Hope and may come to a CoC meeting to present about their programs.

8. Committee Reports (or additional volunteers)

A list of committee membership was sent by email, and additional committee members were suggested and added.

The HMIS committee sent out a Point-In-Time report; please reply to Lisa Davidson if you have input to provide.

The Homelessness Resource Guide is being updated.

9. Agency Updates

Rita Shaw from HCA provided information about an opportunity for African-American adults born in the U.S. and living in Arlington to participate in a paid research study regarding mental health needs. Contact Rita for more information.

Luciana Quintanilha from City of Somerville Health and Human Services reported that 5-7 people have at times been sleeping at the police station. There have been past meetings at the police station regarding needs of homeless persons. Patty Contente, a youth specialist at Health and Human Services who heads up the Office of Community Outreach and Harm Reduction will be invited to a future CoC meeting to discuss this trend.

February is teen dating violence month. Respond is conducting outreach and education.

Antwan Steed from Wayside provided an update about new additional space for the ShortStop program at 10 High Street, adjacent to the current space on North Street, that will allow participating youth more room including additional single rooms. Their bed count (9) will not change.

Penny Snyder from City of Somerville Health and Human Services announce that ESG RFP has been released and proposals are due on March 1st at or before 11:30am.

Susan Hegel announced that the State is working on amending MA rental housing regulations and the amendments may include a priority for homeless persons.

Next meeting is 3/21 at 2:00 at SHC.

Somerville-Arlington Homeless Providers Group
 Sign-In Sheet
 February 21, 2017
 Somerville Homeless Coalition Conference Room, 1 Davis Square

Please print clearly

Name	Agency	Email (if we don't have)	Phone (if we don't have)
1. Shannon Bennett	SHA	shannonb@sha- web.org	617 625 1152 x 323
2. Jan Hallett	HCA	phallett	781-859-5211
3. Peter Shaw	HCA		781 859 - 5164
4. Antwan Steed	Wayside		617-776-3377
5. Heidi Gole	Simple Solutions		
6. Antoinette Delmonico	Just A Start		617.494.6444 x 336
7. Lisa Davidson	SHC		617-494-6444
8. Penny Sneyder	C. J. Souza		
9. Kelly Dmato	City of Somerville		
10. Heidi Burbidge	"		
11. Jennifer Wolter	Respond		
12. Susan Hegel	CSLS		
13. Laura Wein	Arlington Planning		
14. Julie Wayman	" "		
15. Heather Hernandez	AYCC Town of Arlington		
16. Netra Darai	CCAB		
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			