



FAIRFAX-FALLS CHURCH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP'S Continuum of Care Board

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

WHEN: June 26, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

WHERE: Fairfax County Government Center
Conference Rooms 9/10
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order.
2. Approve meeting minutes from 05/22/2024.
3. Presentation and discussion about the Public Schools' Homeless Education Program.
4. Presentation and discussion about a new statewide "Homeless Data Integration Project."



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ATTENDANCE:

Name	Attending (Yes/No)	Name	Attending (Yes/No)
David Meyer, Chair	Yes	Maura Williams	No
Adrienne Hosein	No	Megan Goffney	No
Aimee Garcia	No	Michael Axler	Yes
Ashley McSwain	Yes	Noah Abraham	Yes
Cathy Benn	Yes	Pamela Michell	Yes
Connie Johnson	No	Penelope Rood	Yes
Douglas Dane	Yes	Randy Shusman	Yes
Fatima Khalid	No	Rena Alexander-Lewis	Yes
Janet Kedzie	Yes	Ruth Pearson	Yes
Julie Hendricks	No	Seth Pearson	No
Kameron Wilds	No	Claire Keena	Yes
Lisa Jones	No	Gwenn Minton	Yes

Non-Continuum of Care (CoC) Board Members

Organization	Name	Attending
Housing and Community Development, Fairfax County <i>Office to Prevent and End Homelessness</i>	Thomas Barnett	Yes
	Stephen Knippler	No
	Meghan Heaney	Yes



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I. Call to Order.

- The meeting was called to order by CoC Board Chair David Meyer.

II. Approve Minutes

- CoC Board member, Penelope Rood made the motion to have the prior meeting minutes approved. CoC Board member, Cathy Benn seconded the motion.
- All in Favor- unanimous vote to pass the motion.
- The Minutes for the May 22, 2024, CoC Board Meeting were approved with no objections.

III. Presentation and discussion about the Public Schools' Homeless Education Program

- Kathi Sheffel, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Homeless Liaison, and CoC Board member, Michael Axler, presented the FCPS Homeless Education Program to the CoC Board.
- The Fairfax County Public School Homeless Education Program was developed through the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act which is a federal law that requires every school division to have a designated program/liaison for students who are experiencing homelessness.
- The purpose of this program is to ensure that students in temporary living situations have the resources necessary to obtain a successful education. Schools are responsible for ensuring that homeless students are identified, enrolled, and receive equitable access to high quality education and support services. Consistent and stable enrollment and attendance is critical to ending the cycle of homelessness.
- Kathi Sheffel reported that throughout the Fairfax County Public School system there were 601 unaccompanied minors during this last school year.
- The FCPS Homeless Education program provides services to 200 schools throughout Fairfax County.
- Kathi Sheffel explained that the number of unaccompanied minors that meet their definition of homelessness tends to be higher than what is recorded by homeless services providers in Fairfax County because there are two different definitions of homelessness. One comes from HUD and the other comes from the McKinney-Vento Act.
 - ❖ Schools follow the Department of Education, McKinney Vento definition while homeless services use the HUD definition.
 - ❖ The primary difference between the two is that the Department of Education definition includes families who are doubled up due to hardship.



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The McKinney-Vento Definition of Homeless: The term “homeless children and youths” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes:

- (i) Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals.
- (ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- (iv) Migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

Homeless Unaccompanied Youth is defined in the McKinney-Vento Act as “homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.” This definition can be used to describe youth who are residing with a caregiver who is not a parent or guardian as well as youth who are living without the care of an adult.

- ❖ An unaccompanied youth must fit the definitions of both homeless and unaccompanied in the McKinney-Vento Act to receive assistance under the provisions of law. That is, a homeless unaccompanied youth is a child or youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian AND lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Referrals for families needing assistance

- ❖ Referrals to the FCPS Homeless Education Program come from:
 - Parents/students
 - School staff
 - County/community agencies
 - Shelters
 - Law enforcement
 - Other school divisions
- ❖ Once the FCPS Homeless Education Program is notified, a school social worker connects with the family to identify their needs. The student’s school is notified, and the student is flagged as having homeless status in the FCPS student information system for the full school year. Immediate resources and supports are put into place, including free meals at school, school supplies, transportation assistance, and connections with community resources.



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- CoC Board Member, Ruth Pearson, asked who is not captured by the Education Programs definition of homelessness besides those in Foster Care. Kathi Sheffel stated that a child who is going from the guardian/parent's custody to kinship care.

Rights of Homeless Families

- To attend school regardless of whether they have a permanent address
- School enrollment cannot be denied due to lack of immediate school records
- Transportation services to and from school
- Students can either remain in their original school or attend the local school to where the child is sleeping at night, based on their best interest
- Free breakfast and lunch
- To participate in extracurricular activities and eligible federal state or local programs. Transportation may be available for these activities.

CoC Board Chair, David Meyer, asked how fees are waived or covered for students wanting to participate in extracurricular activities. Kathi Sheffel reported the fees are either waived by the school or there are grants to cover the costs.

Fairfax County Public Schools Supports

- Basic needs assistance and food resources
- Connections to medical care, dental care, and mental health resources
- Tutoring
- Post high school planning
- Educational advocacy
- Collaboration with community programs and services
- Childcare assistance and teen parenting supports
- Coordinating supports/resources from faith-based partners and community groups

Kathi Sheffel reported that this year they had a 90% graduation rate for students experiencing homelessness and 50% of those graduates are going on to a higher education program.

The following pressing needs were presented to the CoC Board Members:

#1: Shelter Needs for homeless high school students

- Households with Unaccompanied Youth (HUY) ages 18-22 are often unable to access current adult shelters, as they are often full and/or prioritize space for vulnerable older adults. These arrangements are also not well suited for high school students due to transportation difficulties and safety concerns.



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- Second Story currently has a program serving HUY; however, the program is underfunded to support these students on an emergency basis while their application is being processed for a longer-term shelter program.
- Recommendation: Additional support for Second Story to build capacity to serve these students with temporary emergency shelter.

CoC Board Chair, David Meyer, asked if there is a way to identify the youth before they turned 18 and had nowhere else to go.

- CoC Board Member, Cathy Benn, reported that Second Story has a homeless youth program for individuals 18-22 years old and provides housing for students who are in this age range and still in High School. This program ends 45 days after their graduation. Second Story used to have a Transitional Living Program, but it is no longer funded. This program did not have a high school requirement. Housing assistance is provided through rooms to rent (which are harder to obtain in this current economy). Second Story has applied for this grant again this year after losing it 2 years ago.
- Kathi Sheffel reported that capacity itself is a problem. There are not enough existing programs to provide services. In addition, services take time to get into place and may not be immediate, which results in these young adults and unaccompanied youth being out on the streets while the services are being put into place.

#2: After-hours staffing for families in crisis

- Many families learn they have no place to stay for the night at the end of the day, when Coordinated Service Planning (CSP) and other support agencies are closed for the day or weekend. These families often reach out to FCPS in the early evening hours when other agencies are closed. At times, these families are stranded in a school building with no place to go.
- Recommendation: After-hours staffing for families, outside of current CSP hours. Looking for one number to call after hours.

#3: Increased access to transportation

- Public transportation in Fairfax County is limited and often does not have routes near public schools or homeless shelters. This creates barriers that prevent the County's homeless families from accessing needed services such as supplemental food pantries, medical and dental care, and other supports
- Recommendation: Review and expand current transportation options in Fairfax County, prioritizing access to the needs of homeless families (shelters, food pantries, community resources, schools, etc.)



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- Contact Information: FCPS Homeless Education Program/571-423-4332
homeless@fcps.edu

The floor was opened for questions:

CoC Board Member, Ashley McSwain, asked what transportation solutions could be developed while working on changing transportation routes because that is a timely step.

Kathi Sheffel reported that they have used Uber and other driving services, but it is a short-term solution and does not allow for the families to become independent on their own.

CoC Board Member Michael Axler spoke on conversations that are already occurring within the transportation department. He mentioned that it was recently reported that there are county transportation services that are being underutilized and could be only slightly altered to extend into higher need concentration areas. Making small incremental changes.

Deputy Director, OPEH, Tom Barnett thanked Kathi Sheffel and Micheal Axler for their presentation. He stated that it was important for those who do not work in homeless services daily to have this information because it helps the CoC to frame and work towards their goals.

IV. Presentation and discussion about a new statewide “Homeless Data Integration Project” (HDIP).

Nikki Thomas-Campbell, OPEH Information Systems Manager, presented the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Homeless Data Integration Project.

Background on Local HMIS

- CoC Board approves the HMIS Vendor/product and the HMIS Lead
- CoC Board approves CoC participation in HDIP

What is HMIS?

HMIS is the Homeless Management Information System

- Local information technology system
- Collects client level data
- Collects data on the provisions of housing and services to individuals and families at risk of and experiencing homelessness.

Is HMIS required?



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The HEARTH Act, enacted into law on May 20, 2009, requires that all communities have an HMIS with the capacity to collect unduplicated counts of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

What are HMIS Data Standards?

The HMIS Data Standards provide communities with baseline data collection requirements developed by HUD, HHS, and VA.

Is HMIS Data Bound by HIPAA?

Data on homeless services, while protected, is generally not considered “protected health information” (or PHI), especially if the service provider is not also a health care provider, and therefore is not covered under HIPAA.

When was the Fairfax/Falls Church CoC HMIS created?

- In 2001-2003 the proposal was sent out
- Collaborative community requirements development and partner implementation
- Licensing and system administration staffing through Fairfax County annual budget process

How does the CoC Participate in HMIS Decisions?

HMIS Committee

- Approved by previous CoC Board
- Managed by CoC HMIS Staff
- Every participating agency has 1-5 members
 - Super users-staff with Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) for HMIS
- Four Subcommittees-that meet every 2 months
- Steering Committee-meets monthly

What is HDIP?

Virginia Homeless Data Integration Project

- State-level data repository
- Receives uploads from local HMIS data
- Platform to share data between CoCs
- VA DHCD is the system administrator
- VA provides licenses and administrative costs

Similar to local HMIS



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- Governance documents
- Steering committee
- Agency and user agreements
- Client privacy notices
- Data sharing agreements from the CoC

Goal of HDIP

- Establishment of a homeless data integration warehouse that allows state policy makers, DHCD, and other stakeholders (specifically, CoCs and Local Planning Groups (LPGs)) the ability to use comprehensive and timely data to end homelessness

How do we participate in this process

- Virginia HCD HDIP Advisory Committee
- HMIS Steering Committee
 - Regular updates
 - Feedback to HDIP Advisory Committee
- Fairfax County Attorney's Office Review

HDIP Local Participation and Implementation to Date

- June 2020 VA DHCD presentation to full CoC
- Summer of 2022
 - VA DHCD presentation to the Steering Committee
 - Fairfax CoC Board adoption of updated HMIS Notice
- March 2024- Final Documents to HMIS Committee
- June 2024- VA DHCD presentation to HMIS Committee and Agency Leadership

HDIP Fairfax/Falls Church CoC Implementation Final Steps

- Presentation to CoC Board on June 26, 2024
 - Questions and Answers
- Proposed CoC Board Adoption during July meeting
- Individual CoC Partners sign participation agreements
- First Upload

The floor was opened for questions:

- CoC Board Member, Pam Michell, asked who can use this system, who can access the data, and what they are doing about the duplication of clients in the system.



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- Nikki Thomas-Campbell responded that the new system will link clients and match them under one profile. Ms. Thomas-Campbell explained that the system will only have “need to know” information. Users cannot access data on clients that do not overlap between their program and another system. The new system will provide a much clearer picture of the client’s individual homelessness.
- Deputy Director, OPEH, Tom Barnett stated that the new system will provide a more comprehensive view for the state of Virginia and facilitate collaboration across the state for homeless services programs. It will help with tracking and providing a better understanding of an individual’s history of homelessness. Providers will be able to see if the history of homelessness recorded in other jurisdictions provides a client with a chronic homeless status.
- CoC Board Member Noah Abraham stated: regarding privacy, as we are sharing information across CoCs, will the clients know their rights for their data, and can they prohibit their data being shared across different jurisdictions?
- Nikki Thomas-Campbell responded that an updated local HMIS notice will be provided to clients, and it will cover this, and providers will also have a new HDIP notice that should be posted and distributed to clients. A Release of Information is used to send information to other jurisdictions. The notices inform the clients that their data is being collected and placed in the database.
- CoC Board Chair, David Meyer, asked about timing and what the Fairfax County Attorney’s office is currently doing. Nikki Thomas-Campbell responded that the attorney’s office has just approved the final edit.
- CoC Board Chair, David Meyer, asked who the required signatures for Fairfax to join the HDIP are to be. Nikki Thomas-Campbell responded that at this time it is still to be determined.

V. CoC Timing and Implementation of HDIP

Should the CoC Board be meeting throughout the remainder of the summer?

- Nikki Thomas-Campbell stated that the Commonwealth wants this to be rolled out quickly, but Fairfax County has not made any promises to the Commonwealth as to when OPEH is going to roll this out. Some of the other counties in the Commonwealth are part of the pilot and are already participating.
- Nikki Thomas-Campbell reported that Prince William is at about the same place as Fairfax County. OPEH will not be holding anything up as far as the Commonwealth’s implementation of HDIP if the CoC Board does not meet in July and August.

VI. Board Closing Statements



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- CoC Board Chair, David Meyer, stated that there needed to be a decision made on whether the board should continue to meet the rest of the summer.
- CoC Board Member, Claire Keena, stated that she had no objections to holding a board meeting in July and August.
- Deputy Director, OPEH, Tom Barnett, stated that to vote on the HDIP during the August CoC Board meeting a quorum would have to be established.
- Deputy Director, OPEH, Tom Barnett, reported that the Commonwealth just rolled out new laws on board and committee meetings and their ability to meet remotely. The board would have to update its policy and procedures to reflect these new laws that became effective on July 1. This will be discussed further in the next meeting.
- It was proposed that a poll be sent out via email to determine how many CoC Board members will be able to attend the meeting in July to move forward with voting on the CoCs participation in HDIP. It was determined that the poll would not be necessary, and the CoC Board is going to move forward with a meeting on July 24, 2024.
- Deputy Director, OPEH, Tom Barnett, recommended that during the next meeting the CoC Board should discuss other initiatives that the CoC Board should be exploring.