

**State Agency Meeting to Discuss Homelessness Prevention and Rapid
Re-Housing Funding
DHR – 2 Peachtree Street, 29th Floor
April 29, 2009 at 2:00 PM**

State Agency Staff in Attendance:

Santrissa Carter	DHR – TANF
Charley Bliss	DHR- MHDDAD
Jeff Blankenship	DHR – Community Services Program
Claire Williams	DHR- TANF
Shaisia Khan	DHR – TANF
Betty Ricks	DHR – TANF
Donna Gunter	DHR – TANF
Ann Carter	DHR – TANF
Sharlene Herron	DHR – TANF
Jean Gibson	DHR – TANF
Kim Grier	DHR – Division of Aging Services
Mary Shuman	DHR – Adult Mental Health
Lisa Flag	DHR – Public Health – Legal
Jon Anderson	DHR – Office of Family Independence
Andrea Harper	DOL
Don Watt	DCA – Office of Special Housing Initiatives
John Bassett	DCA – State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless
Jacalyn Baker	DCA – State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless
Lindsey Stillman	DCA – State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless
Janice Haker	Bright from the Start – Head Start Collaborative
Adrienne Weldon	Georgia Family Connection Partnership
Ebony Harris*	DHR – Independent Living

Additional Attendees:

Charles Sterne	United Way – Emergency Food and Shelter Program
Lorraine Daniels	Georgia Community Action Association
Yvonne Thomas	Fulton Atlanta CAA
Vanessa Rush	Partnership for Community Action
Mohammed Saleem	Partnership for Community Action

*via Conference Call

Introductions

Overview of HPRP

Lindsey Stillman of DCA presented a brief overview of the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP) funded through ARRA. Participants were given a 2-page summary of the HPRP program. The State of Georgia will receive just over \$33M in funding for homeless prevention and rapid re-housing, with \$14M of that going to 11 entitlements, with the remaining \$19M going to the Balance of State, which will be administered by DCA. At this point in time, DCA is committed to spending the \$19M in the Balance of State, but will be challenged to find providers and partners in some of the rural areas.

Target populations are those individuals and families who are about to become homeless or are already homeless, have income that is less than 50% of area median income, have no subsequent housing identified, and lack resources for housing. Persons being discharged from hospitals and institutions may be eligible participants, but HPRP funds are not for discharge programs. Funding can be used for rental assistance, utility payments, deposits, moving expenses, hotel/motel for up to 30 days, in-home case management, amongst other uses. HPRP money cannot be used for mortgage assistance, consumer debt, childcare, car repairs, furniture, etc.

All of the HPRP money through DCA will go to sub-grantees, who will provide the direct financial assistance and case management to their clients. Awarding funding to sub-grantees will be a competitive process, to the extent possible. DCA recognizes that we will need to be flexible and work with other entities and agencies, not just those who would normally qualify for HUD grants. Data and outcomes must be entered into Pathways, the State's homeless management information system (HMIS).

DCA's timeline at present is to make our Substantial Amendment available by April 30, which will be open for public comment for 12 days. The Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan must be submitted to HUD on or before May 18th. DCA will be fine-tuning and structuring the program over the summer. Planning around DCA's application process will be occurring over the next 2-3 weeks, with a Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) to be released on or about May 19th. All of the HPRP funds must be committed by September 30th.

Other State Agency ARRA Funding

DHR – Community Services Block Grant (Jeff Blankenship)

The Community Services Program at DHR will be receiving a block grant of \$26.8M for 24 eligible entities, of which 99% must be given out. The money must go to Community Action Agencies. The grant requires a commitment and emphasis on job creation and retention, and some of the funding can be used for housing and homeless prevention, as well as supportive services. Typically agencies only provide up to 3 months of assistance. As a group, they have decided to focus on two main areas 1) housing and homelessness and 2) supported employment. Applicants must submit a detailed plan, which can be tailored to local needs. If services are offered, outcomes must

be reported on through the Community Action network database. As far as CSBG knows, mortgage assistance is eligible. They may see a different target population among agencies, such as youth aging out of foster care – however, there is the potential for a great deal of overlap in the populations served. CSBG funding through ARRA can pay for direct assistance and services. Most CAA agencies will expand their current programs. Funding must be spent within two years. CAA agencies will have a standardized set of outcomes and will use their current data collection system – Compass – to collect the data.

DHR – TANF (Donna Gunter)

Funding for TANF through ARRA will work differently than other programs. TANF will be a drawdown. States can apply for 80% of increased spending, be it through case assistance, employment, or non-recurring short-term benefits. There is a quarter by quarter 20% match. The State must spend above last year's levels to get 80% back. Other entities outside of the State can provide match. TANF is looking at finances presently, and will probably start looking at subsidized employment. Will most likely steer away from rental assistance since CSBG and HPRP can pay for those items. The hope is that they can look at what types of services are not funded with the other programs and see where they can fill the gaps. They will also look at how to connect TANF recipients with other available funding. They suggest collaborating with agencies that have housing and focus themselves on employment, such as work supplies and transportation. A lot of people receiving TANF are “doubled up,” but they have no data on that.

United Way – Emergency Food and Shelter Program (Charles Sterne)

EFSP money comes through FEMA, with allocations made to local jurisdictions throughout the State. They will receive an additional \$3.2M in stimulus money, which can be used for 1 month's rent, mortgage, utility assistance, food assistance, or vouchers. Non-citizens are eligible for this assistance. The money must be spent by the end of 2009. United Way expects the stimulus funds to be out in Atlanta within 1-2 months, which may also be true for the rest of the State. Forty-nine (49) counties in the State did not receive a direct award (Balance of State). The State Set-aside Committee will be meeting next week to reallocate the funds, which will be done through a formula. Every county has a local Board of some sort, however, United Way has just recently gotten the contacts for each. United Way of Atlanta will be putting their RFP on their website and advertising in the Atlanta Journal Constitution – however this is just for the Metro Atlanta EFSP. Other boards will advertise differently. The Metro Atlanta applications will be due on May 15th. There is no expectation that persons assisted with their rent or mortgage can maintain their housing beyond the 30 days assisted. United Way will be required to submit a separate report for EFSP stimulus funding.

Department of Labor (Andrea Harper)

The Department of Labor received “numerous pots” of funding, most to do what they already do. They will increase training money for adults, youth, and dislocated workers, and there will be money for people who have lost jobs for work that has gone overseas. Funding exists for their summer job employment program for youth ages 14-

24. The program will likely be from May 1 through September 30th. Through State legislation, extension of unemployment benefits for an extra 13 weeks allows benefits up to 79 weeks. Their programs will be heavily geared toward helping those who have lost jobs or have no job history to get training to become self-sufficient. Youth Build is funded directly from the United States Department of Labor.

Head Start (Janice Haker)

Head Start is receiving \$1B (in the U.S.) to expand Head Start, part of which will increase the number of Head Start slots in areas of need. Each program will develop their own application. Money will also expand Early Head Start for children aged 0-3 years. Georgia presently has 1,800 Early Head Start slots, and they hope to increase that number. The RFP is not out yet. Homeless families should be referred to Head Start as State-funded Georgia Pre-K could hold homeless slots for childcare. Homelessness is one of 10 priorities of the Head Start Act of 2007.

Division of Aging (Kim Grier)

The Division of Aging will be receiving money for congregate and home-delivered meals, with more of that funding going toward congregate meals. There are 12 Area Agencies on Aging, and one “gateway” phone number for screening eligibility for meals and other services. It is unknown at this time if transportation to get people to congregate meal sites will be an eligible expense. Eligible individuals must be at least age 60, and they especially target low income, vulnerable individuals.

Potential Collaborations - Brainstorming, Ideas, Needs, etc.

- We need to think through eligible populations for each program and if there are populations that are a better fit for certain problems. Don't want to serve the same population with each funding source.
- It would be helpful to have an understanding on eligibility requirements for each program. A consumer may not be eligible for one program, but could be eligible for another.
- A standardized or central referral form was suggested.
- Family Connection staff mentioned that they have a newsletter and email list of every family connection in the state if necessary.
- Make sure direct service staff have information on each program to be able to refer participants to other eligible services. For example, if someone is in a training program, make sure their housing is taken care of, and if not, refer that individual to another agency that can help with housing. Need some type of brochure or information source on programs. This is similar to what is being discussed through the Interagency Homeless Coordination Council subcommittee.
- DHR-Mental Health did not receive any stimulus money, but hopes that some of the money will be able to assist consumers apply for SSI and SSDI.
- Agencies hope to collaborate around program design despite the challenges of having very different timelines
- We may be able to create a viable, long-term program if at the end of this funding we can show good outcomes, such as housing stability and the ability to hold a job.

- It was suggested that localities become involved in the planning process to make these sure programs work. We should identify “our stars” and ask them to come to meetings as they may have ideas on how to proceed. Three cities, Gainesville, Rome, and Dalton, were identified as communities that might assist in this process.
- It was suggested that we need to ensure that HPRP grantees and Community Action Agencies (receiving CSBG) work together and with other entities to develop programs, and collaborate on the “nuts and bolts” to catch folks who may fall through the cracks and not duplicate services.
- How can we expedite services and collaboration so that individuals do not have to run from place to place to receive services they need?
- What opportunities exist for sharing Agency data
- The Community Action Agencies have standardized case management training, and could encourage collaboration with DCA sub-grantees.
- The Community Action Agencies may be able to help get information out on programs, especially in the non-entitlement areas.

Other Comments, Questions, and Suggestions

- Will there be any new Section 8 vouchers? No one has heard about any new vouchers. Existing Section 8 waiting lists will be an issue. Some give priority to homeless individuals.
- Can HPRP money provide on-site services for agencies with Shelter + Care grants? We hope to get more guidance from HUD on this. Funds may be able to be used to temporarily house individuals before they are placed in Shelter + Care.
- Could some of the Rapid Re-housing funds be used more on the “Housing First” lines, so that persons don’t have to stay in shelters or prove compliance before admission to Shelter + Care or other programs?

Next Steps

- As each agency moves forward with plans, RFPs, etc. please make sure to circulate information to other agencies so that we all know where we are in the process.
- A list of participants and notes will be sent out as soon as possible following this meeting.
- We will try to convene another meeting with community leaders in Dalton within the next few weeks, possibly in mid-May.