

Georgia**Balance of State Continuum of Care (BoS CoC) Meeting****MEETING MINUTES****March 30, 2015, Forsyth, Georgia****March 31, 2015, Web-based Call****10:00 am – 12:00 Noon**

March 30, 2015, Roberts Chapel
State Offices South at Tift College, 300 Patrol Road, Forsyth, GA

(Same Agenda Repeated) March 31, 2015, Room 178
GA Department of Community Affairs (DCA), 60 Executive Park South NE, Atlanta, GA
Webinar (registration link provided)

Welcome and Introductions

Don Watt (Director, Office of Homeless and Special Needs Housing, DCA, CoC Collaborative Applicant) welcomed everyone at the on-site meeting in Forsyth and called for introductions of the group. Mr. Watt also welcomed everyone and made introductions to stakeholders participating on the call. Mr. Watt briefly reviewed the agenda and then introduced Katie Arce.

Homelessness in the Balance of State Continuum

Katie Arce (Data Analyst, DCA, CoC Collaborative Applicant) discussed homelessness in the BoS CoC and reviewed the results of the 2014 Annual Homeless Assessment Report. Ms. Arce thanked everyone who coordinated or participated in the 2015 Point-in-Time Homeless Count then noted that the data for the 2015 Homeless Count would not be available until May 2015. Twenty-three BoS organizations participated as count coordinators in 2015 (covering 69 BoS counties). Ms. Arce reviewed national data on homelessness, statewide data on homelessness, and homelessness in the Balance of State CoC, and provided a comparison of the three. Ms. Arce then compared Veteran homelessness, chronic homelessness, and homelessness for people experiencing a disability in the Georgia Balance of State CoC as compared to other Balance of State CoCs. Homelessness in Georgia makes up 2.9% of the national homeless population.

In response to a question regarding the process of counting the unsheltered population in counties with no shelter, Ms. Arce discussed the methodology for the BoS CoC. Other discussion from participants of the first meeting focused on Veterans and accessing services from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Atlanta.

HEARTH, CoC Regulations, and HUD Priorities

Don Watt reviewed the HEARTH Act, noting that the Federal requirements are important to review to help frame governance in the Balance of State CoC. Mr. Watt discussed the definition of a CoC, responsibilities of a CoC, responsibilities of a CoC Board, Collaborative Applicant requirements, CoC performance and monitoring under HEARTH, coordinated assessment, written standards, planning, and collaboration.

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Balance of State Continuum of Care Governance

Don Watt then reviewed the Governance Charter for the Balance of State CoC discussing the governance structure for the BoS CoC and progress since the last meeting. Mr. Watt reviewed the Board of Directors, standing committees and related responsibilities, and Committee Members as approved by the Board. Mr. Watt then discussed DCA's role as Collaborative Applicant and related responsibilities. He also reviewed minor updates to the Governance Charter as approved by the Board (following recommendations of the Membership and Rules Committee). There were numerous volunteers for committee work.

Balance of State Continuum of Care Competition

Tina Moore briefly reviewed the funding history for the Balance of State CoC. Ms. Moore then discussed the 2013 and 2014 CoC Competition, funding limitations, tier ranking based on project scoring and ranking, funding reallocations from lower scoring projects to new projects, scoring criteria/priorities, and 2014 BoS CoC awards. Ms. Moore discussed the four new Rapid Re-Housing Project awards as a result of reallocation in 2014, counties covered by these projects, and overarching Federal priorities in regards to project types. Ms. Moore then discussed CoC policy priority considerations around permanent housing (PSH and RRH), strategic resource allocation, ending chronic homelessness, targeting (prioritizing non-dedicated PSH beds for chronically homeless through turnover, and Housing First. There was some discussion regarding tier 2 projects that were not funded, in regards to the next application cycle.

Membership Input

Don Watt reviewed minimum requirements for a Coordinated Assessment System, and solicited membership input in regards to regional systems in place that can be used, barriers that need to be worked through, and other considerations.

Membership input and DCA staff discussion on Coordinated Assessment at the Forsyth meeting included:

- Meeting participants suggested the investigation of United Way's 211 system and government provided phones.
- Another suggestion was to consider a three number system, or to create one that is similar to 211, 911, etc.
- One participant noted that a system for Veterans was going live in Cherokee County soon.
- There was suggestion of a web-based tool, app, or text platform where clients can identify their geographic area and needs prior to a referral to a provider for assistance.
- Suggestions were also made to consider location regionally, and there was discussion about the current centralized process for Southeast Georgia.
- Mr. Watt discussed the possibility of regional networks (through the 5 BoS DCA Super Regions or local coalitions).

Discussion on barriers around Coordinated Assessment needed to be worked through included:

- Prioritization
 - List of who to serve first
 - Development of an assessment tool that would be well developed and allow for data validation
- Coordination of multiple needs of individual
- Technology challenges

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- Using HMIS (Compass Rose) as a reservation system
- The need of real-time inventory for bed availability
- Internal data system and HMIS is a challenge (some providers have to use multiple systems)
- How to get others to use HMIS (non-funded organizations)
 - Eliminate fees
 - Education of benefit
- System changes to the system used by agencies designated to serve victims of domestic violence (ALICE system moves to APRICOT on May 1st, and the data is to be migrated.)
- One participant noted that some homeless individuals are untrusting of the system of care, and it would be good if we could address barriers such as negative perception of people who are homeless
- It was noted that many agencies already use one or more databases for assessment and intake; however the different systems are not consistent with each other in regards to requirements, data, and use of system. They noted that adding another system is going to be difficult, and finding one that is already in place is going to be difficult because there is not a “common denominator” system

Membership input and DCA staff discussion on Coordinated Assessment at the web-based meeting included:

- One of the participants noted the value of regionalized coordination of Coordinated Entry and said that it deserves consideration.

Mr. Watt then discussed current ideas around this system that included a virtual system that can be accessed through a computer or smart phone (for advertising and access); triaging to screen for eligibility, best fit, and resources; initial assessment then full assessment at program entry; the use of program entry referrals for data analysis; alignment and integration with HMIS, Social Serve; other systems of care; and committee work to lead this process.

Leading into the next area of membership input, Mr. Watt and staff discussed the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). There was discussion on current use of HMIS, and input was requesting on how HMIS is working for providers who use the system. The majority of attendees at both meetings noted that the system was working well, valuable, important, and useful for reporting. And one of the participants noted that it can be difficult to navigate at times.

Mr. Watt then asked the members about needs, gaps, and issues that they are experiencing (questions and responses follow for the Forsyth meeting, the web-based meeting, and the follow up survey).

What are the biggest needs in your region/county?

- Shelter
- Transportation
- Local government awareness of homelessness (and the issue of homelessness in their respective local communities)
- The need of policy makers to talk to homeless individuals
- Need beds
 - South Georgia
 - Gwinnett, Rockdale, and Newton Counties (PSH)
 - Dougherty County (PSH)
 - Others
- The need of nonprofit organizations that are willing to do Housing First

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- Landlords are reluctant to lease to nonprofits
 - Tax issue
 - Cherokee County
- Training for landlords (FAQs)
 - Benefits to working with homeless
- “There are no bus systems in our 4 counties so transportation to meet service or "care" needs outside of daytime working hours is difficult. There are no homeless shelters in our 4 counties.”
- Not enough shelter beds, especially for families
- “The need of more permanent supportive housing beds (more than 20 individuals waiting on an active referral list). Some are single mothers with children. In Albany the homeless shelter is overflowing.”

Are there specific challenges for homeless individuals/families in your region/county?

- Difficulty of finding housing and/or employment for individuals with a criminal background
- Difficulty of finding housing for individuals with a previous eviction
- Substance abuse and mental health challenges for many who are experiencing homelessness
- Lack of transportation and limits of public transportation.
- The difficulty of funding limitations and program restrictions for the precariously housed population.
- Child care.
- Landlords willing to work with homeless and low income clients.
- Long waiting lists for permanent supportive housing and the need for permanent supportive housing beds
- Low FMRs that result in difficulty finding safe housing
- No homeless shelter for women and children

Are there particular gaps in services or the system of care?

- None that I am aware of
- The stigmas and perceptions attached to many homeless individuals regarding their homelessness, perceived substance abuse, perceived mental health challenges, and poverty

Don Watt thanked membership for their participation and input. Mr. Watt requested that attendees please provide input through the provided forms (Forsyth) or the follow up survey that would be sent out (all attendees). All BoS membership will be sent a link to a survey so that they can provide formal input and indicate further participation.

The meeting was adjourned.

In attendance:

On-site: Forsyth, Georgia; Monday, March 30, 2015

Organization	Attendee	City or County
Action Ministries	Kelley Henderson	Atlanta / North Georgia
Albany Area CSB (d/b/a Aspire BH & DD)	Ron Braswell	Albany
Battered Women's Shelter	Karen Yawn	Lowndes County
Cherokee County Homeless Veterans (American Legion)	Jim Lindenmayer	Cherokee County
Citizens Against Violence	Debbie Vives	Bulloch County
Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence	Shenna Morris	Gwinnett County
Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Teresa Concannon	Statesboro
Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Malisa Thompson	Monroe
Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Don Watt	Atlanta
Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Katie Arce	Atlanta
Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Tina Moore	Atlanta

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Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Amy Zaremba	Atlanta
Georgia Department of Corrections	Mike Kraft	Atlanta - Statewide
Governor's Office of Transition, Support and Re-Entry	Cynthia Patterson	Macon
Gwinnett County	Shannon Candler	Gwinnett County
Halcyon Home for Battered Women	Chris Marsh	Thomas County
Loaves and Fishes Ministry of Macon	Charles Hines	Macon
Maranatha Outreach	Kenneth Eady	Milledgeville
Maranatha Outreach	Paul Eady	Milledgeville
Phoenix Pass	Marcie Howington	Conyers
Project Community Connections	Jimiyu Evans	Atlanta
River Edge Community Service Board	Cass Hatcher	Macon
State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless	Bill McGahan	Atlanta
The IMPACT Group!	Alice Ramsey	Gwinnett County
The Refuge Domestic Violence Shelter	Betty Dell Williams	Clayton County
Travelers Aid	Marilyn McCreary	Atlanta
Tri-County Protective Agency	Sherell Mansfield	Liberty County
Tri-County Protective Agency	Cynthia Gates	Liberty County
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA Dublin)	Nicole Solomon-Sanders	Dublin
View Point Health	Johnnie Hardy	Gwinnett County
Volunteers of America Southeast	Laronda Eason	West Georgia Counties
Waycross Area for Abused Persons	Jana Benton	Waycross

Web-based Conference Call; Tuesday, March 31, 2015

Organization	Attendee	City or County
Asian American Resource Center	Hye Kim	Gwinnett County
Calvary Refuge Center	Tawana Tarno	Forest Park
Clayton County Community Development	Sule Carpenter	Clayton County
Colquitt County Serenity House Project, Inc.	Rachel Lamas	Colquitt County
CSRA Economic Opportunity Authority	Lynda Barrs	East Georgia Counties
Family Promise of Gwinnett	Lakeisha Cramer	Gwinnett County
Family Promise of Hall County	Lindsey McCarny	Gainesville
Fellowship Deliverance Ministries	Inez Patterson	LaGrange
Fellowship Deliverance Ministries	Dorothy Spearman Clark	LaGrange
Fight Abuse in the Home in Rabun County, Inc.	Lisa Robertshaw	Rabun County
First Step Staffing	Barbara Peters	Atlanta
Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Dave Totten	Atlanta
Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Don Watt	Atlanta
Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Katie Arce	Atlanta
Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Tina Moore	Atlanta
Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Amy Zaremba	Atlanta
Georgia Department of Labor	Ann Shirra	Atlanta
Habersham Homeless Ministries Inc.	JoAnn Kennedy	Habersham County
Homestead Women's Recovery	Jean Cooper	Habersham County
Lawrenceville Housing Authority	Lejla Slowinski	Gwinnett County
Loaves and Fishes Ministry of Macon	Sarah Tapley	Macon
Lookout Mountain Community Services	Tonya Sired	Walker County
Macon-Bibb County EOC, Inc.	Carlton Williams	Macon
McIntosh Trail Community Services Board	Leigh Kight	Spalding County
Men and Women for Human Excellence	Wesley Bryant	Riverdale
National Housing Counseling Agency	Joyce Blanton	Jonesboro
Northwest Georgia Family Crisis Center, Inc.	Kathy Thornton	Whitfield County
Oconee Community Service Board	Michael Blackshear	Milledgeville
Partnership Against Domestic Violence	Susie Brown	Gwinnett County
Rockdale County Emergency Relief	Andrew Peabody	Rockdale County
Salvation Army (Atlanta Metro Area Command)	Melinda Allen	Metro Atlanta Counties
Salvation Army (Gwinnett)	Deborah Wengrow	Gwinnett County
South Georgia Partnership to End Homeless	Dr Ronnie Mathis	Valdosta
Southwest Georgia Community Action Council, Inc.	Denise Sellars	Moultrie
Unison Behavioral Health	Lakeshia Roberts	Waycross
Volunteers of America Southeast	Shanell Johnson	West Georgia Counties

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