

**Racine CoC Board Meeting**  
**Continuum of Care for the City & County of Racine, WI-502**

Location: HOPES Center, 521 – 6th Street, Racine, WI 53403 and virtual

Date: Monday, February 10, 2024 Time:10:30 am – 12:00 pm

1.Meeting was called to order at 10:33 am by Robert Held Vander Wyst (Bob)

2. Attendance:

Staff: Teresa Reinders

LC Members:

Gai Lorenzen- Community Member

Liz Powell-Racine Community Foundation

Kathy Snyder-Racine Revitalization Partnership

Scott Metzel-Hopes Center

Melissa Taggart-HALO

Robert Held Vander Wyst-Legal Action of Wisconsin

Pam Handrow-Bethany Apartments

Barb Farrar- LGBT Center of Southeastern WI

Shebria Small-Safe Haven of Racine County

Justin Kasdorf-Center for Veterans Issues

Jeanette Brown- Safe Haven of Racine County

Matthew Buterbaugh- Hospitality Center

3. Approval of the Agenda

Motion by Pam Handrow to approve February agenda ( 2<sup>nd</sup> Liz Powell) - MSP unanimous vote

4. Approval of Minutes from December 9, 2024

Motion by Pam Handrow to approve December meeting Minutes (2<sup>nd</sup> Gai Lorenzen) - MSP unanimous vote

5. Budget (Gai)-

We completed the February 1, 2024 – January 31, 2025 contract. Gai and Melissa will be sorting out expenses and match to close out the grant.

Because we do not have a complete budget for the new contract, the only allowable expenses will be staff, which is primarily Teresa, and CoC operating expenses such as the website. Teresa was approved to attend the BOS CoC Conference prior to the start date of this conference so those expenses will also be paid. This contract is for more money than the last one.

6. Rapid Rehousing Concerns (Gai)

Gai stated that ESG CoC funds require match. There is no match required for leasing expenses funded by the CoC NOFO, but ESG rental assistance requires match at 100%. CoC non-leasing expenses requires a 25% match. RRH programs are having issues finding habitable units and issues getting the clients stable by the end of the 24 months the program runs. LSS reported having issues with finding match in addition to client housing stability issues. Agencies have

opted not to reapply due to these issues, and the total number of units in the CoC has decreased. Gai asks for input from the other RRH programs.

HOPES Center (Scott) stated that there are challenges with operating RRH programs and using the Housing first model. He stated the major issues are getting clients stable by the 24 months and rents being too high. Many agencies are downsizing their programs. Hopes had picked up RRH programs in the past from Bethany and CVI program. Then scaled back over the years. The major issue is with match, high security deposits and other costs that are not reimbursed. HOPES Board of Directors made a decision to phase out the EHH funded RRH project this year.

SAFE Haven (Jeanette) agrees with Scott. There are challenges in the RRH rental market, but it is not as bad as it was several months ago. Recently dealing with clients who have multiple evictions and LLs asking for multiple security deposits. A few landlords wanted 3 times security deposit. In the past the main focus was ongoing stabilization of clients through case management and getting the clients resources. Currently, efforts are directed at system navigation support including life skills coaching, connecting to other services, and motivating them. Returns to homelessness. Returns to 24 months have increased due to clients not achieving full housing stability. They are also having to pay expenses the grants do not reimburse.

The City of Racine has contacted Jeanette regarding RRH for FY23 and FY24 funds that were allocated to LSS. They were unable to secure match and will not be operating a program. There is approximately \$41,000 for FY23, and \$43,000 for 24. There is also some confusion regarding the expiration date of the funds. Jeanette will follow-up with LSS and City of Racine.

HALO (Melissa) HALO operates a RRH security deposit program with State HAP. Up to 2x security deposit can be provided. The program is exempt from CE as it does not provide rental assistance. Clients who utilize this program have a source of income or subsidy to pay the rent.

There are fewer beds right now for RRH so clients may remain in shelter or street, and on CE list for extended period of time.

Safe Haven operates a youth RRH project. If there are no youth on CE within specified CoC timeframe, the next prioritized individual regardless of age will be referred. CVI's SSVF operates RRH for veterans. SSVF works with individuals on the CE list, and those who are not.

There are fewer options from street and shelter to housing, which increases the length of homelessness for clients. Liz asked if it would be helpful to contact other CoCs to see what they are doing regarding these issues. Teresa attends meetings with the other CoCs and they are having the same issues. Teresa and Gai are also on a national CoC elist, and are seeing the same concerns being discussed. It is a national concern.

#### 7. Collaborative Applicant Process Updates (Bob, Gai, Barb)

There was a meeting with Racine County. We were unable to "pin down" what role the County wants to take on. Not clear that they understand that the role of CA is related to the

NOFO application and not the operation of the CoC. There were a lot of questions, and perhaps our responses will help to clear this up for future meetings.

Gai states we will need to revise the Governance Charter to clearly state roles of CA and CoC. These changes must be voted on by the entire CoC. A MOU will be drafted, and will need to be approved by this group as well as the County Board.

Pam – Is there a difference between the board and leadership council? We have some inconsistency. Clarified that the Governance Charter states Board, and going forward we will use Board rather than Leadership Council. We were in a transition phase when Leadership Council began being used, but now that we have fully completed the CoC transition and have an elected board, it should be Board.

Liz – Is there a plan B if it does not work out with the County?

Gai stated that under current CoC operating protocol HALO continues until replaced. However, this cannot go on forever. The biggest part of the role is applying for the collaborative NOFA application and Planning grant. Teresa has been doing this, along with Iraida, Scott and Gai. Additionally, many others have contributed by providing information and feed back. We plan to meet again with the County in March. We are optimistic that this will all be worked out, but that it will take time.

The new Planning grant started Feb 1. Due to not having a new CA, HUD is issuing the contract to HALO and will amend later to County.

#### 8. 501c3 Discussion (Bob)

Bob stated LAW is attempting to find a volunteer attorney to help us with the 501(c)3

#### 9. Federal Administration Changes (Teresa)

Teresa has been in contact with many agencies regarding changes we are hearing about. Conversations are taking place in the community, including United Way and Racine Community Foundation. A new HUD Secretary has been identified. At the current time the focus appears to be on housing and not homelessness. HUD awards may be rescinded, and new contracts issued.

Teresa needs answers to the questions she sent out previously in an email to everyone. The questions were-How many services will be impacted/ How many leases will be impacted? How long can your program continue without Federal funding?

She is working with the other 3 CoCs in the State, and they are putting together information to give to legislature to educate them on how it would impact each of the 4 CoCs in the State.

Gai asked if anyone had heard more about the Equal Access Rule and elimination of DEI. Teresa said she is not aware of anything further than what has been posted. We have not been told “to do” or “not to do” something at this point.

#### 10. New Business

Bob stated we will discuss the meeting schedule for the year at the March meeting.

Iraida will send out a new meeting invite when she returns.

#### 11. Teresa moved to adjourn meeting. Kathy 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion

Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting: March 10, 2025, at 10:30am