



Racine Leadership Council
Minutes
January 25, 2021, 12:30 – 1:30 pm
Meeting via Zoom

11 Voting Members Present:

1. Gai Lorenzen – HALO, *Leadership Council Chair*
2. Teresa Reinders – Racine CoC staff (*Non-voting member*)
3. Pam Handrow – Bethany Apartments/Women’s Resource Center of Racine
4. Francisca Lassa – Wisconsin Legal Action
5. Kim Leslie – Ascension Hospital
6. Amy Mael – Zablocki VA Medical Center
7. Scott Metzel – HOPES Center
8. Ed Miller – Racine Revitalization Partnership
9. Carol Pagan – Community Representative
10. Liz Powell – Racine Community Foundation
11. Shebria Small – SAFE Haven of Racine
12. Iraida Vazquez – Institute for Community Alliances

Absent: Barb Farrar – LGBT Center of SE Wisconsin; Jacob Mauer – Racine Police Department

1. Approval of June Minutes

- a. Pam Handrow *moves to approve*, second, discussion, vote.
- b. 11 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain.
- c. Motion approved.

2. Announcements

- a. WI HMIS Advisory Board – Gai resigned from the statewide Board effective after the November meeting, and Cristalina (Nina) Thillemann was elected by the Advisory Board to represent the Racine CoC.
- b. Racine CoC HMIS Committee - Cristalina (Nina) Thillemann is the new committee chair.

3. Updates

- a. **Point-in-Time Night** (Scott Metzel PIT Committee Chair):

Because of COVID, we are using existing street outreach teams instead of bringing in volunteers. Three teams will be out Wednesday covering the area East of I-94. The area West of I-94 will be covered on Saturday, and Monday. We don't see any major problems counting the unsheltered. We are using experienced teams who know where to look and how to cover area to ensure there is no duplication.

For the sheltered count, for Halo and SAFE Haven and the other HMS users it's going to be the same as it always is in HMIS when you close out for the Point-in-Time. Iraida has sent an aggregate form for reporting to Pam for Bethany and WRC to cover the ones that are not HMIS. It is basically the same procedure as we did last year. The closing Iraida wants the data in from the shelters ran and cleaned up by February 12, 2021.

We on track for PIT, there won't be any major changes for us, except for the fact that we won't be having large scale community participation, but otherwise our methodologies

will remain basically the same. And we'll be doing the night of count in two parts, East and West of the I. But even as we go West of the I, we're going to keep the Wednesday night date and ask, "Where were you on that date," so we actually will be asking that question, to see that for the night of count date, and that's the update I can take any questions if there are any.

b. **ESG-CV**

1. **City-**

These funds were part of the CARES Act. There were two rounds. The city round one funding was allocated to Lutheran Social Services to do prevention work, and round two was allocated through the CoC process. Three of the shelters in the city of Racine were provided funds to do some repair work much needed repairs, Halo ventilation work, WRC electrical work, and SAFE Haven to have some structural work done to the foundation.

We were also provided some funds to do some vouchers and other expenses, but it was primarily allocated for the shelters and LSS received a large allocation for rapid rehousing.

A note on the CDC moratorium. HUD has taken the position that persons who are being evicted cannot be assisted right now with ESG-CV prevention funds. HUD considers the CDC moratorium a resource. There is a narrow group of people who are still eligible and could be served right now. Those are individuals who for some reason don't fit the moratorium or in one of those reasons would be that they are being evicted for a reason other than non-payment. So, those individuals could be helped. And then there are individuals for one reason or another who don't meet all the criteria they need to be checked off for the CDC moratorium. Right now, prevention is basically at a standstill until the CDC moratorium ends. The concern is that when it does, and that we're going to be bombarded with people being invested, and people are going to owe substantial amounts of money and those funds will be expended very quickly. There are some other prevention rental assistance monies coming through the Treasury Department but those are going to communities of 200,000 or more and so neither the county nor the city is going to be eligible for those funds. (Racine County Population estimate as of 7/01/2019 is 196,311. We were 3,689 short of receiving funds at the County level (source: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/racinecountywisconsin/PST045219?>)

2. **State**

Round 1: The State used a needs-based allocation. Racine CoC received around \$300,000, distributed through the lead agency HALO. The agencies met amended their current ESG contracts. There was some funding in there for prevention motel vouchers. Little funding for Rapid Rehousing. We will move some money around because to get our money we have to have spent 75% of round one funds. It is going to be difficult to spend 75% of round one based on the amount of money that we allocated to prevention, which has been basically at a halt since the first CDC moratorium and other moratoriums.

Round 2: The State received 19 million and set aside 7 million for a competitive application. Which were due last Friday. They're going through those nouns



scoring them. There were several applications submitted in Racine County entities. And hopefully, they'll all get funded or funded in part. And then there will also be a needs-based allocation that again will be distributed the same way as round one through the lead agency.

c. **COVID Changes to standards and CE prioritization**

Just an update the leadership council that we have made changes to both the housing, and the prevention coordinated entry standards and HUDs recommendation to consider various COVID risk factors to make sure that those at the greatest risk, were being prioritized, the highest for both prevention and rapid rehousing.

d. **Agency Operations**

HALO (Gai Lorenzen): Still operating between the motels, and at reduced capacity in the shelter, because the COVID rate has been going down. Will do another increase at the shelter either this week or next week. The main goal is to make sure that we are sheltering anybody who is literally homeless we're also going to be making some adjustments to our intake procedures. There is definitely a gap between people who are on the street and people who are in that 14 days and likely to become homeless that we need to address. Those individuals who we would not expect those 14 days to expect for Street Outreach to be screening so we're going to try to address that gap. The County's Here to Help program is trying to address that as well.

HOPES Center of Racine (Scott Metzel): We were still maintaining. In the summer we brought all of our staff back into the office but then when the surge started in the fall, we split our staff up again into two teams that don't meet each other. We have two people in the office one day two people in it the other day. We've been compartmentalizing our staff, which isn't very the most efficient or effective way to do things but at least it, it means that the whole agency doesn't go down under quarantine if somebody gets exposed.

For **Street Outreach**, at the beginning of COVID, we reduced our street outreach teams from three to two people just to reduce the number of people who are potentially exposed. The teams are also isolated so they don't meet each other anymore; we used to sort of meet and interact with each other. We didn't take new Street Outreach volunteers at all in 2020 and we're still not doing that yet. Which means we have had fewer teams, but then we extended the hours on to the teams that are there so they just do more hours on the street they have more to cover, but that's basically how we've been dealing with it is by reducing the number of people who will meet together and can be exposed to reduce risk.

Women's Resource Center & Bethany (Pam Handrow): WRC remains fully functional. There have been a couple of extra deep cleanings and we continue to provide services. We did receive some funding to permit us to increase our technology, and our phone system and our security system and that was done on kind of the very first week of January so that's good now allows us to do more virtually with those who are there, and it also makes it easier for families in the shelter for school time.

COVID has impacted **Bethany**, to a certain extent, we still have a couple of apartments open because people are moving in or out. There may be an emergence of people coming back in shelter because they're not going to permanent situations, they're going with family members or, unfortunately, occasionally back to abusers. We're making sure that people

who are clearly in domestic violence situations are sheltered using the motel vouchers to add space and even to accommodate some circumstances that might be better served off-site, case management off site includes case management, bringing food to people and motels on food cards. For the most part, we've survived. There have had some staff illnesses, COVID and non-COVID, that have impacted our ability to have the shelter open 24 hours a day but the phones being answered, and people are being served.

Legal Action of WI (Francisca Lassa): We are compartmentalizing people. We only have two people in at a time. We learned the hard way, when one of the offices had to close because they all linked to each other, somehow, so most of the most everybody is actually working from home so it's only a few people that are onsite. We aren't doing walk ins, but if we have to meet with you will still. Staff have figured out how to get signatures without having people have to come in to sign. Housing cases are down, but we expected to see more come through, even if it is just to describe the moratorium to people.

We are still seeing section eight people are getting terminated, which is higher than normal, and we're not really seeing a lot of unemployment cases. We are seeing 28-day notices and criminal notices.

- e. **CoC Competition** – No word yet probably March or April
- 4. **Executive Director's Report** (on file with minutes)
- 5. **Discussion/Advisory**
 - a. **Additional Leadership Council Members** – discussion on how to proceed solicitation of new members for the Leadership Council.
 - b. **Election of officers** – Gai is temporary/interim chair. Officers should be elected now that a Leadership Council has been assembled. Officer descriptions to be provided to Leadership Council. Need timeline to provide officer descriptions, call for nominations and election.
 - c. **Authority of Executive Director to sign MOUs, Letters of Support, etc.** – The Executive Director is an employee of HALO as HALO is the Lead Agency of the CoC and was awarded the Planning Grant. HALO is also the Lead Agency for EHH/ESG, ESG-CV which provides some funding for the position. Day to day supervision is provided by a designated staff at HALO. HALO management staff and the Executive Director are requesting guidelines for when the CoC Executive Director is able to sign letters of support on behalf of the CoC, as well as enter into agreements on behalf of the CoC.

Recommendation of HALO management staff is to authorize CoC Executive Director to have signing authority for any MOU that does not place an obligation on HALO or the CoC or is a confirmation or approval that a document meets Federal regulations and Racine CoC standards and requirements. Further discussion is requested regarding sign on letters and letters of support, as well as contractual agreements that place an obligation on the CoC, or “bind” the CoC to the agreement or a particular position.

DISCUSSION:

Gai: There are items that don't really bind the organization so my recommendation would be as far as those documents she could go ahead and sign those. I think the larger discussion has to do a sign on letters and, like, there was just a sign on letter recently I know in the past the way this was handled if there was going to be a position taken by the



CRC.

Teresa: Most items are MOUs and advocacy positions. The advocacy positions such as the support to the State Health Department advocating for inclusion of Shelter clients and staff in round 1b for vaccines.

Unanimous agreement: As long as there is nothing binding on an MOU, contains financial aspect, or is any statement contrary to the policies and basic values of the CoC, Teresa may sign as Director of the CoC. If there are any questions whether to sign or not, Teresa will send along to the Leadership Council. The process will be: LC members will receive notification of intent to sign a document sans any dissent from the Leadership Council Members. It will be incumbent upon the members to reply and express their disagreement, concerns, or questions. There will be a deadline to respond to Teresa. Once the deadline passes, if no one has expressed disagreement, concerns, or questions, Teresa will act on the document.

6. **Next meeting:** Monday, March 01, 2021 at noon.