

**HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
1.26.22 @ City Hall and Zoom 3:00 PM**

MARCIE WHITAKER, SUBCOMMITTEE CO-CHAIR, Housing Director, City of Pensacola
MEREDITH REEVES, SUBCOMMITTEE CO-CHAIR, Escambia County Division Manager

In Attendance: Marcie Whitaker, Meredith Reeves, Lawrence Powell, Connie Bookman, John Johnson, Mike King, Donna Jacobi-Pruett, Melissa Johnson, Vinnie Whibbs, Avalon “Mal” Mallory, Fran Jones, Lisa Bernau, Martika Baker, Rick Dye

DISCUSSION

Welcome

Marcie welcomes everyone to the meeting, and says there is a full agenda today.

ARPA/I-10 Encampment Review

Lawrence Powell gives an update on the funding and the current state of moving the people from the 1-10 Encampment. Three organizations have gotten funding thus far: REAP (50 for Maxwell Respite Center), Dream Center (5 beds), and Bright Bridge (30 beds). All three of these organizations are working to get beds available for these people, however it may be an extended timeline of 30-45 days. Jan 31 is the deadline for those at the encampment to vacate, then there will be a two week time frame to clean and sanitize the area. Items left behind will be stored at the North End of the encampment for 30 days with a security guard, and they can come back and claim their items if they choose to.

As a temporary fix, REAP will put a large tent that will hold about 40 people at their property. (This is the land that Pathways for Change owns- it currently has portable toilets, fence, handwashing stations, yard crew, etc.) All of these people have agreed to accept services. Opening Doors and Melissa/Vinnie are also looking at securing 10 hotel rooms for those who do not have a bed at Red Roof Inn by University Mall; these people could still receive case management and later transition to REAP or Dream Center when space opens. By Friday, he believes they will have identified those who want to receive services and take one of these options, and those who do not. There will also be transportation assistance coordinated with Opening Doors. Milk & Honey will be assisting with transportation as well. Back portion of The Lodges can be reserved for women and children. Lawrence also suggests adding heating elements to the tents.

Goal is to serve the people currently under the bridge, not to create a new influx of people at the temporary encampments. Rick had questions on resources for permanent housing needs vs. transitional, temporary shelters.

HUD Voucher Update

Marcie gave an update: The City of Pensacola was awarded 35 vouchers from HUD to help those on verge of homelessness. They partnered with CoC and they've had 32 referrals, have housed 4 people, they have 16 families looking for housing, 8 in the application process, and 4 who found other solutions. They currently have about 7 vouchers available

for those who may be referred to the City via Opening Doors. Voucher also allows for some furniture shopping for living room sets and bedroom sets from American Freight.

VA also makes referrals for housing vouchers to the City, there are about 5-10 of those vouchers available at any given time.

The State of Florida has gotten HOME ARPA funds for tenant-based rental assistance and affordable rental development. Want to keep an eye on it to see how it can apply locally. The County also has some funding for homeless initiatives.

Data Collection

Point in Time (PIT)/Housing Inventory Count data—handout

Meredith has included a 2020 PIT count for HUD for some preliminary data that she would like to use to decide where to concentrate efforts and resources. This may give us insight into what some of the needs are, such as helping those who face chronic homelessness. One of the issues they have had with data is getting real-time or live data.

John has also included some new data. This year they are going paper surveys as well as the Hyperion App. Last count, our unsheltered population was 484 and that doesn't include sheltered numbers (Waterfront, HER foundation, etc). They had fewer than 100 people who didn't want to participate in the survey, so they plan on combining data with the data in HMIS. They really extended their street outreach time, doing about 15 campsites in both counties, Navarre, Century, and rural SRC. Overall a good outreach effort from volunteers and staff.

Available beds have significantly decreased, possibly due to COVID, or some organizations closing or re-naming themselves. John suspects we will have more families that are homeless than the previous year, and they will definitely have more individuals.

Homeless Housing Survey

Meredith also attached a Homeless Housing Survey to send out to partners, meant for one survey per project per agency. Beds/units reported should be dedicated to serving homeless persons and if your project is mixed income, should only report on beds/units DEDICATED to homeless.

Mike says that the capacity at Waterfront has diminished by about half due to new safety regulations. John mentioned that organizations need to prepare for what might happen if there is a COVID outbreak, and Melissa mentioned making quarantine areas in nearby facility.

Data Indicators (goal to identify 2 core indicators and 2-5 contributing indicators to track)- for next meeting!

- Increase # of beds/units for Extremely Low Income households or other targeted populations (need to determine existing counts)
- Increase participation of landlords in HUD Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program
- Reduce length of stay in emergency/transitional/permanent supportive housing (encourage households to move through housing continuum)---*note: high performing COC targets are less than 5% recidivism or decrease of 20% or more from prior year*
 - John suggests we may see an increase in this area due to the struggles we are facing with affordable housing and permanent housing solutions.
- Increased participation in HMIS or other database system for accurate tracking of real time unit availability
- Reduce average length of time homeless
- Increase HMIS bed participation rate in existing homeless housing (currently 52.67% participation rate)

At the next meeting, the Committee will start with a discussion on these indicators.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 4:00 PM, next meeting Feb 23 at 3:00 at City Hall