

Minutes of the Evaluation and Resource Allocation Committee  
of the Board to Promote Self Sufficiency

November 18, 2016 10-11:30am, DCRS Executive Conference Room

**ATTENDEES:** Jennifer Corcoran (staff), Michelle Hippert (staff), Stan Levi (Chair), Catherine Wellman (staff)

**ABSENT:** Dee Athey, Craig Cummings, Cristiana Mercer Rigby, Joe Willmott

**Approval of the minutes from the October meeting**

Minutes from the October 4, 2016 meeting were approved without amendments.

**Data Review**

A review of the AHAR (Annual Homeless Assessment Report) was completed. The AHAR is used by Congress to request funding for homeless services. Participation and good data quality also help to boost our score on the CoC Consolidated Application. The report covers a full Federal fiscal year as well as looking specifically at four points in time – October, January, April, and July – and as such provides more comprehensive data than we are able to gather in the Point-In-Time count. It is broken down into “shells” looking at singles and at families who are in emergency, transitional, and permanent housing beds, as well as the subset of Veterans.

Information on demographics, prior living situation, length of stay in emergency shelter, and destinations were identified as key topic areas.

**Shell 3.1 – Demographics.**

This report shows where different subpopulations of people experiencing homelessness are being sheltered. In Federal Fiscal Year 16, 164 families and 115 individuals accessed emergency shelter, 10 families and 3 individuals accessed transitional housing, and 20 families and 48 individuals accessed Permanent Supportive Housing. Approximately half of the families accessing emergency shelter and Permanent Supportive Housing contained an adult with a disability. Just over half the individuals accessing emergency shelter and 90% of individuals utilizing Permanent Supportive Housing have a disability. Veterans were most represented among families in transitional housing.

**Shell 4.1 – Prior living situation**

This report reflects where a household was living before entering residential services. Households tended to access emergency shelter from a variety of settings, including from rented housing; households tended

to access Permanent Supportive Housing from emergency shelter. The movement of some households directly from their own housing to shelter prompted a discussion on the way data could be used to shape a local prevention program. A preliminary review has suggested that major medical concerns and housing voucher loss are common denominators of Howard County households who are most likely to end up living in a place not meant for human habitation rather than finding other solutions once their own housing is lost. A concern was raised that some families appear to be entering Permanent Supportive Housing from living with family or friends rather than from the street or from shelter, which is inconsistent with the intent of the program. However, most of this data was entered many years ago and is of questionable accuracy.

#### Exhibit 4.1 – Length of Stay

A question was asked about whether there are limits on how long someone can remain in shelter. Best practice is no longer than 90 days. Howard County has set a goal that no one remains in shelter longer than six months. The Services Coordinator should review the needs of households who stay longer to better understand system needs; the current understanding is that households with significant somatic health concerns are becoming “stuck” in shelter.

#### Exit Destinations

While the AHAR does not contain data on exit destinations, this data along with that on the amount of time households remain in programs and the prior living situations of households was identified as important tools in community planning and will thus be reviewed at a later date.

Following review of these specific data items, a general discussion was held regarding the overall success of households who enter Howard County homeless services with few resources and supports. The value of Housing First was explored, as well as the quality of case management at partner agencies. These issues will be covered in the context of the site visit discussion to be held at the December 6 meeting.

Minutes submitted by Jennifer Corcoran, CSHS Services Coordinator