

**MINUTES AND MEMORANDA OF A MEETING
OF
LOW BARRIER HOMELESS SHELTER TASK FORCE**

Held: February 28, 2022

A regular meeting of the Low Barrier Homeless Shelter Task Force was held virtually on Monday, February 28, 2022 at 2:30 p.m.

The following individuals were present at the meeting: Tom McGowan, Co-Chair; Jeff Bennett, Co-Chair; Task Force Member, Angela Sutton; Task Force Member, Rachel Johnson-Yates; Task Force Member, J. Jacob Sipe (IHCD Executive Director); Task Force Member, Dr. Chelsea Haring-Cozzi; Task Force Member, Karen Holly; Task Force Member, Rick Alvis; Sherry Seiwert (President Downtown Indy); members of staff from Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority; Dana Reed Wise, Marion County Public Health Department, Rob MacPherson, CICF, and the general public.

Tom McGowan served as Chair of the meeting and upon noting the presence of a quorum, called the meeting to order. LaKesha Triggs served as Secretary.

I. Introduction of Task Force Members

Chairperson McGowan recognized the members of the Task Force.

II. Mission of the Low Barrier Homeless Shelter Task Force created by Senate Enrolled Act 218 (2021)

A. Vision

- Chairperson McGowan discussed the mission of the task force and its primary charge to provide short and long-term housing solutions and building and sustaining such a low barrier shelter.
- People experience homelessness and this shelter should serve as a model in effort to other communities.

B. Plan

- Chairperson McGowan discussed the plan going forward regarding the task force. The task force needs to understand funding and look at short and long term funding sources
- The task force will complete the final report. Once the report is completed, the task force will discuss how this can be actionable.
- The goal was to educate everyone involved and how we can tie the efforts together with an actionable plan.

III. Existing/Ongoing Homeless Studies

A. Indianapolis Community Plan to End Homelessness 2018 – 2023

Chairperson McGowan recognized Dr. Chelsea Haring-Cozzi who presented information regarding the Indianapolis Community Plan to End Homelessness 2018-2023.

- Dr. Haring-Cozzi discussed efforts of collective work of homeless responsive system in Indianapolis
- Background: Indianapolis has a five year strategic plan to end homelessness. It was a very large community involvement. There were 400 stakeholders and 200 of lived experiences
- The plan is still in play and will do a mid point evaluation of the plan: progress, hitting benchmarks, and inclusion of CARES act funding
- There is a community plan that is based on six strategic priorities
 1. Optimizing the crisis response system
 - a. Understanding if there are need crisis response system and people are not served.
 - b. Reducing the length of time spend in shelters or living unsheltered.
 - c. Shelter is not a long term solution. Tt is pathway to housing. They don't stay in shelter for a long period of time.
 2. Expanding permanent housing choices
 - a. People to leave shelter and enter in
 - b. Identify what is existing in the rental market
 - c. Get more landlords to participate
 - d. Build more affordable housing
 - e. There are 471 units in the pipeline scheduled to come in line to supportive housing choices between now and 2023.
 3. Robust supportive services
 - a. Support people through the housing process and help people in housing stability
 - b. Navigation to get people into housing
 - c. Case management and mental health support, improve employment option
 4. Continue to enhance collective impact
 - a. Collaboratively move strategies forward
 - b. Track performance and have needs assessment
 5. Understanding homeless and how it changes based on population
 - a. Make sure that any intervention has racial equity and have equitable access to housing
 6. There is work happening in Indy
 - a. Working more with Indianapolis housing agency about housing vouchers
 - b. Still need vouchers and have a robust housing strategy
 - c. A lot of work to be made to build up supportive service to keep pace on ren
 - d. Annual point in time count
 - i. 1928 people experience homeless on a single night

1. 263 people were living unsheltered.
2. 8-14% are living unsheltered. Most are using sheltered resources

- 2021 data

- 5841 people that accessed a crisis response system. 4667 people who are enrolled in coordinated entry. Some people don't need a housing intervention. 4600 people were brought into coordinate entry. 2100 were housed in coordinate entry process.
- Mid year assessment

- United way of Central Indiana sent a RFP in March. It should be completed by December.

- Chairperson McGowan recognized Rob MacPherson from CICF.

- CICF was looking at racial disparities. The homeless disparity was jumped in. How can we look at resources for permanent supportive housing. Focus on strategy 2 and 3. CICF will raise money to launch a pilot project to have a proven model. Permanent supportive housing solves homeless. It is the wrap around services to keep people housed.
- Goal was raising 4M to see- Horizon House was a first applicant and has been supporting them for 2 years- initial cohort was 120 people to keep them supportively housed
- 98% housing sustainability rate- 10% over national average
- 76% has been to primary care appointment
- 73% of reduction of jail stays
- None had DOC interaction
- About \$7000 per year per person to support someone with supportive housing system
- Horizon House has a proven system to end homelessness with permanent supportive housing.
- What is the number to support this system in a way that is sustainable? 471 units in the pipeline, need about 10M. We would have to draw social workers, navigators, work with healthcare systems. \$5M per year for 5 years which is just for the services piece. This will be a mixed of sources. It is Medicaid reimbursements, philanthropy, and other services.

B. City of Indianapolis Office of Public Health and Safety

Chairperson McGowan recognized Jeff Bennett, Deputy Mayor who presented information regarding the City of Indianapolis Office of Public Health and Safety

- Background
 - Shelter Needs Assessment- Indianapolis is an outlier. There is no municipal run of a homeless system.

- City county council commission Office of public health and safety is undertaking a study that looked at a safe outdoor campsite. Low barrier shelter will be city funded.
 - Low barrier means reduces the barrier to prevent someone from seeking shelter.
 - Some barriers are criminal background, have identification, substance abuse, sobriety
 - Assessment was finished in October of last year. It was presented to council in November.
- System Investments
 - Excess of \$30M investments, \$11M in supportive housing and rapid rehousing
 - Non-congregate shelters; \$15,500,000
 - Downtown Safety and Street Outreach: \$1,500,000
 - Supportive Services: \$825,000 (additional \$6 million pledged)
- System Improvements
 - Reconfiguration of Indianapolis Continuum of Care
 - Shared data system (HMIS) across community partners
 - Coordinated Entry System with common assessment process for housing
 - Professional Blended Street Outreach Team that plugs into overall community network to address needs of unsheltered individuals
 - Housing navigation services and influx of Housing Choice Voucher
- What Gaps Remain?
 1. Increase number of type of shelter beds that are low barrier, which will require a new physical space.
 - Ensure full utilization of current shelter beds
 - Create additional beds that are low-barrier to entry
 - Create additional beds that are specialized
 2. Fund and train staff to appropriately support the feature of a low barrier shelter.
 - 24/7 operation
 - Security: internal and external
 - Staff-to-client ratios
 - Connection to services
 - Housing navigation
 3. Create a navigation center rather than just a low-barrier shelter
 4. Increase availability and access to safe, supportive, and permanent housing
- Timeline/Next Steps

- Mayor sought \$12M in initial funding appropriate to get started on the real estate side.
- Look at potential sites near downtown.
- Looking at potential acquisition dollar amounts to start of program planning and early site design.
- Visited Lafayette. The Lafayette model had a Day center to assist with issues with getting a license, hygiene, health, etc. It is a clearing housing and gives people a place to go.

C. Low Barrier Shelter Assessment Study

Chairperson McGowan recognized Sherry Seiwert, who presented information regarding the Low Barrier Shelter Assessment Study

- Sherry Seiwert discussed short term tactics and longer term tactics on how to increase black and minority owned businesses downtown.
- The study is looking at the unsheltered in the downtown area.
- There are individuals who do not want to create another shelter.
- There are people who don't seek shelter.
- The student consisted of conducting interviews with lived experience individuals and asked why they do not come into a shelter.
- Information has been documented and will be part of the report.
- Deeper dive of budget- what will it cost to operate an engagement center
- A low barrier shelter consists of 50-100 individuals, not families. Individuals who have substance abuse and mental illness are not going to the Wheeler Mission.
- For transitional beds, there is a 90-120 day process for permanent housing.
- Would like to have the facility downtown- trying to find the appropriate site

IV. Downtown Recovery Committee

A. Mission was to address the immediacy of 3 primary objectives

- i. Crime/Safety
- ii. Low Barrier Homeless Shelter
- iii. Bring working population Back Downtown

There are perceptions from the business community and the statehouse in trying to come up with a state of art facility where you have one place.

V. Indiana Housing Community Development Authority (IHCDA)

Chairperson McGowan recognized J. Jacob Sipe, who discussed the following topics:

- The role of IHCDA would be long term role in permanent supportive housing.
- Approximately, 12 years ago, IHCDA began the Indiana permanent support housing institute.
- This institute brings a team approach and creates a pipeline to units and services.
- It has produced 1300 units, just over 300 units in the pipeline in the next 12-24 months
- There are 8 developments in Marion county that are active. In total, there are 16 developments in Indianapolis.

- The institute would start in a few weeks. The institute would allow teams to have direct access to capital funds from IHCD.
- In 2015, there was a study that looked at properties in Evansville. It had high results.
- IHCD will launch a new effort to evaluate permanent supportive housing to see outcomes and understand the gaps of housing insecurity. The report should be completed sometime next year.
- The institute will start in August when IHCD will solicit teams for permanent supportive housing.
- IHCD will develop a request for proposal to fund one or more front end cost (capital or operations) to help build low barrier shelters in the state. In the next couple of months, the RFP will be available.

VI. Open Discussion

- Chairperson McGowan mentioned that at the next meeting, Rick Alvis from the Wheeler Mission will speak.
- The task force will spend some time on other funding sources.
- The goal was to educate the task force on the current state of affairs.

VII. Path Forward

Next Task Force Meeting Location-TBD