

**Lee County Continuum of Care (CoC)
Governing Board Meeting**
May 15, 2020 1:00 p.m.
Lee County Human and Veteran Services
2440 Thompson St., Fort Myers, FL 33901
Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Matt Visaggio, Visaggio and Company
Janet Bartos, Lee County Homeless Coalition
Heidi Shoriak, Lee Health
Adina Bridges
Linda Hafner, United Way
Tony, Saint Vincent DePaul
Justin, Saint Vincent DePaul
Danyale Kinney, United Way
Blossom, VA covering for Lou Richardson
Fred Richards, Goodwill
Daleen O'Dell
Sharon Rozier
Joe Paterno
Scott Eller, CASL
Tony C., Salvation Army

**Lee County Human
and Veteran Services**

Staff Present: Jeannie Sutton
Kim Hustad
Tim Gillmore
Roger Mercado
Clare Dennehy
Christine Sebastian

Others Present:

I. Call to Order

- a. Ms. Jeannie Sutton called the meeting to order.
Ms. Sutton stated they do not have a quorum, no items on the agenda to be voted on.

- b. Members absent with and without excuse

Public Comment – None

II. CoC/HUD COVID-19 Updates – Jeannie Sutton and Janet Bartos

Ms. Janet Bartos was sending out agency operational changes daily since March 17, free meals, food pantries, now that reopening getting more updates, some to point out are additional showers, Fort Myers Rescue Mission, Salvation Army, Affordable Homeownership Foundation received funding to help with rental assistance laid off or furloughed due to COVID. Sending out CDC and HUD guidance as needed when updated. Ms. Sutton showed table with CARES funding about 4.3 million received award notices ESG, CDBG, CSBG, LIHEAP, anticipate state ESG, regular allocations, received updated grant agreements for HUD CoC contracts, to be executed soon. HUD allowed us to update grant agreements to extend contract period and various flexibilities to stay in compliance. Primary focus is on homeless prevention and immediate needs for those that are homeless and this will continue to be the focus.

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III. 2019 HUD CoC System Performance Measure Comparisons – Jeannie Sutton

Ms. Sutton went over system performance measures recently published by the state of Florida, comparing other CoCs in Florida, working on getting it into a user-friendly format.

CoC scoring document- summarizes the scores that the CoC received. Total application score was slightly lower than median score, we expect our score to improve due to implementation of coordinated entry. Next year's competitive score should be higher. Project application scores were affected by consolidated application; Salvation Army's tier 2 was not funded. A question was asked if that affects amount of funding, Ms. Sutton responded that HMIS, PIT count, and performance and strategic planning scores affect our funding, tier 2 funding is dependent on our score in relation to the median score. The 2020 competition score should be better; our score in the past has been in the 140 range; some issues affected our 2019 score- reporting issues. HUD has extended deadlines for many reports, we have coordinated entry and we are more organized. HUD has not posted the NOFA for 2020 competition, there has been a lot of push to renew funded applications as-is. A process will start if 2020 NOFA is published.

Comment box: Ms. Daleen O'Dell inquired why the Point-in-Time score was so low, Ms. Sutton responded it was because the report was submitted after the deadline.

IV. 2020 HUD Annual Action Plan Consultation – Clare Dennehy

Ms. Dennehy stated Lee County is in the process of preparing the 2020 HUD Annual Action Plan. ESG funds on this plan are related to the work of the CoC. Last year, it was discussed continued-use of ESG funds for rapid rehousing. Eligible uses of ESG funds are rapid rehousing, outreach, shelter operations, and HMIS.

Ms. Dennehy asked: how would you prefer funds be used?

Annual allocation is approximately \$250,000. Ms. Rozier asked, where are the shortfalls? Ms. Bartos responded rapid rehousing.

Ms. Sutton asked Ms. Bartos to talk about efforts for gaps analysis that have been worked on and how it was done by Lee County consultant throughout the year. Ms. Bartos had a resource committee meeting and discussed some of the gaps and noticed an increase in the number of seniors that have become homeless in the past several years, so senior housing needed to be looked at. Last year's system design clinic, at the time Salvation Army had a lot of money for family housing that wasn't able to be used so some of it was reallocated for individual housing. Not quite sure if that's still a need to have more individual housing instead of family housing. There were gaps in every system but the consultant brought up the need for more mental health programs. Ms. Sutton said because of the timing of the competition and the allocation of funds, there is a delay in the impact seen by the funding for the individual rapid rehousing beds and the people being housed as a result of it. There is at least a year delay. Ms. Sutton asked if there is anything related to COVID that is a new/emerging need for individuals that would be eligible under our current funding sources. Temporary things are not eligible at this time. Ms. Bartos responded prevention services and rental assistance and Ms. Rozier agreed. Ms. Sutton said ESG Cares funds will be used for prevention and rapid re-housing; Florida Housing Coalition is going to help us in the planning process. We will have meetings with this Board as well as other members of the community to get a clear picture that we are using the funds to best address the needs. A question was asked what is meant by prevention. Ms. Sutton said it would be for past due rent, very short-term rental assistance, anything to ensure the household remains in the current housing unit they are in. Ms. Rozier asked Ms. Bartos in regards to seniors, why the rise and are they renters or homeowners. Ms. Bartos responded seniors that worked all of their lives and lived paycheck to paycheck and never able to save and now only receiving Social

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Security and not able to find affordable housing. Ms. Bartos said she has been getting phone calls with people requesting assistance with car insurance and gas cards. Ms. Sutton mentioned that has come up in homeless diversion discussions, an example is license reinstatement and car insurance; good idea for diversion funds. Ms. Hafner asked about Cares money coming into the community for rent and utility assistance, will that money be considered prevention money and this money be considered toward emergency shelter and rapid re-housing. Ms. Sutton said the plan was to split it; half for prevention and half for rapid re-housing. It was asked if we are adding interim shelter stays into rapid re-housing. Ms. Sutton explained it was straight from the by name list and into housing. Ms. Sebastian asked if Ms. Hafner was referring to using some money for temporary hotel stays. Ms. Hafner questioned putting all of the money into rapid re-housing because of the time to get into rapid re-housing. Ms. Sutton brought up short-term case management for those on the streets waiting for housing to keep them engaged and get their immediate needs met. We have focused on working with the non-profit/faith-based community for help with short-term case management. Grace Church's volunteer team already doing homeless outreach participated in a training to help with the short-term case management for those waiting on the by name list, volunteers will continue to work with the client and be a point of contact for needed services while they are on the street. Scott brought up reallocating housing for families but properties have restrictive covenants to house clients with mental health issues. He inquired whether the discussion was regarding temporarily homeless clients due to the impact of COVID or chronic homeless individuals. Ms. Sebastian mentioned there are a lot of clients on the coordinated entry case load and could use more CASL beds to send clients. Mr. Eller with CASL inquired whether he could increase capacity from single occupancy to shared units since the rooms have enough space. Ms. Sebastian stated the chronically homeless are getting assistance before others on the wait with short-term needs. Ms. Sutton will inquire with Deanna Gilkerson regarding restrictions in the CoC funding for shared units. Cares funds and regular ESG funds are not enough for shelter and this is why so much focus is placed in rapid re-housing and case management. Mr. Tony C. brought up restrictions and hesitations of landlords with those difficult to house to loosen restrictions increase deposit and pay up to four months rent upfront to lessen the risk to the landlord.

Ms. Dennehy asked what strategies should be included in the street outreach efforts? Ms. Bartos suggested blessing bags to engage the clients. Mr. Eller mentioned different teams and programs use for outreach. The SOAR program was mentioned but Ms. Sebastian said the there isn't enough time for a case manager and should be a separate job.

Ms. Denney asked what programs could make transition to permanent housing easier. SOAR, peer mentorship was mentioned, as well as staying in touch with case manager using technology, and support with life skills to transition from living on the street.

V. Virtual CoC Trainings – Jeannie Sutton

Ms. Sutton stated the planned trainings by Florida Housing Coalition will now be virtual due to COVID. Ms. Bartos listed the scheduled trainings: COVID-19 Implications for Outreach and Shelter, Housing Navigation and Financial Assistance, Case Management Essentials Part 1, Case Management Part 2 Planning and Documentation. The information has been sent out and will be sent out again for registration.

VI. Agency Updates

Ms. Sutton asked if anyone had any updates or outstanding needs. We have been working with State Disaster Management Office for needs such as masks, mattresses, volunteer groups. Food crates have

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been used as outreach tools. Ms. Bridges said the FACT and CAT teams are still going out into the community and into homes. Mr. Richards said Goodwill has been operating since the start of the pandemic with community resource centers serving 1,300 individuals per week, up from 300-600 per week.

VII. Adjourn
Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting:
Meeting minutes and agenda are posted on our website:
<https://www.leegov.com/dhs/funding/coc>