January 11, 2024 Continuum of Care meeting minutes

The January 2024 meeting, which took place virtually, via a Zoom conference call, was called to order and began at 11:02 am. The minutes from the November meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved.

Kim started the meeting by announcing that Marie Scanell, former director of the Food Bank, had passed away recently. There was a moment of silence for Marie.

The Committee heard requests from three organizations for letters of support:

Community Hope requested a letter of support for their SSVF program for veterans and their families. This program includes hands-on case management to help with keeping or obtaining housing, finding a job, getting healthcare, and more. It also includes temporary financial assistance to help with moving costs, downpayment assistance, rental assistance, and legal fees for non-criminal matters. The letter of support was approved.

Soldier On requested a letter of support for their SSVF program, as well. Their program provides rental assistance and tenant incentives ($1,200 of goods once they move in), and has a bi-monthly veterans meeting to discuss services. They 35 staff members in NJ and can respond quickly to emergencies. The letter of support was approved.

Volunteers of America (VOA) requested a letter of support for a grant from the DCA. These funds will be used at Agape House, which has been in Somerville for over 35 years. The building needs rehabilitation and to address life, health, and safety issues for residents. Upgrades include: replacing the fire escapes, waterproofing the basement, upgrading lighting, installing drainage in the driveway, upgrading the kitchen, replacing the playground, and replacing windows in the family housing portion of the building. The letter of support was approved.

Katelyn from Monarch gave an update on the Point in Time Count, which is less than 2 weeks away. It will be held on January 24, asking where people slept on the night of January 23. Monarch will continue to hold trainings on Tuesdays and Thursdays until the event. Emergency shelter and transitional housing providers are urged to make sure their information in HMIS is correct or fill out surveys and make sure they are entered into Survey Monkey. Agencies that see unsheltered clients should make sure they are counted. Shelter Summary Forms should also be filled out and sent in – these forms confirm the information that goes into Survey Monkey. Ed Prior previously sent out a document with agency ID information for Survey Monkey. The deadline for data is February 5.

A few quick reminders/announcements were made:

* January is Muslim Heritage Month.
* The Somerset County People of Color Employee Resource Group has created their Juneteenth Project, which will collect food and money for the Franklin Township Food Bank.
* There will be an in-person social/networking event in April that might also include some training.

Kim also reminded the Committee that the Executive Committee is looking for more members and that the full CoC Committee needs a Chair/Vice-Chair. In addition, she suggested that changes be made to the CoC By-Laws to memorialize the fact that the Community Development director will preside over meetings in the absence of a Chair. The Committee approved these changes.

Anyone with an interest in serving on the Homelessness Trust Fund Committee should contact Kim Cowart.

Agency announcements will be sent via e-mail after the meeting and, as such, are incorporated as part of the minutes.

The meeting adjourned at 12:06 pm.

Attendees:

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| Jeremy Hirsch | Joanne Hala |
| Kim Cowart  Ed Prior  Ana Diaz Lopez  Carolyn Solon | Heather Pullen  Dameon Stackhouse  Linda Rapacki  Derek Smith |
| Lisa Federico  Paul Grzella  Heather Bielefeldt | Jennifer Guyette  Mike Frost  Stephanie Billitz |
| Ola Olorode | Jay Weintraub |
| Susie Suter | Sadikie Mckenzie-Jenkins |
| Heradine Lacrete | Lashonda Dumas |
| Jillian Cullen | Jenn Stivers |
| Jeff Phillips  Alyssa Martini | Maria Marnell  Ihinosen Akhagba |
| Marion Cooper | Steve Nagel |
| Janet Boetticher | Carrie Ferraro |
| Corey Panati  Katelyn Ravensbergen  Ashley Ferreira  Kayla Ellis  Mark Avery  Dan Hohman  Phyllis Menendez  Sarah Chelli | Antoinette Ray  Christine Esposito  Sofia Bandeira  Tamika Levels-Hood  Rheanah Johnson  Rita Mirabelli  Cody Curatolo  Rodrenae Foster |