

**Continuum of Care Meeting**  
**October 20, 2022 @ 9AM**  
**via Zoom**

PRESENT: Marge McGinley, Carol Clark, Pamela Moore, Dawne Belfon, Janelle Johnson, Stephen Scheuren, Nicole Gambardello, Rhoda Walls, Tim Hurley, Shauna Kane, Anthony Mazakas, Kevin Dowd, Malukah Morris, Whitney Stewart, Mecca Mitchell, Kim Scott, Abees Clotter, Louis Tedesco, Brandon Markowski, Maureen Fahey, Cinthia Gonzalez, Mary Pettrow, Lila Myers, Dawn Harvey, Donald Brown, Pat Booker, Janelle Johnson, Evelyn Rosado, Jenny Allen, Mark Harding, Corey Panati, Claudine Archer, Rachel Morgan, Robert Wright, Kent Pipes, Macoma Williams, Laurie Bowden, Toni Porreca, Ashni Mathew, Patricia Zimmerman, Fana Wray-Hopkins, Nia Perry, Vivienne Stewart, Arielle Levin, Nicole Simmons-Graham, Monica Rego, Jennifer Hiros, Jaclyn Robinson, Patricia Lake.

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 AM by Marge McGinley.

2. Approval of August's Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the August 18, 2022 meeting were moved to approve by Louis Tedesco, with recommended changes, seconded by Mark Harding. Motion carried.

3. Spotlight Presentation – Exhale Women's Fellowship, Inc. – Carol Clark

30 Scott Street Riverside NJ 08075 609-332-2133

Carol Clark stated Exhale Women's Fellowship, Inc. is a faith-based organization, founded in 2009, providing emergency shelter to women fleeing domestic violence and renters facing sudden or illegal evictions. Exhale Women's Fellowship Inc.'s two-fold mission is to help women in crisis and help empower them to achieve self-sufficiency. Exhale Women's Fellowship, Inc. is a new member of the New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence, enabling the organization the ability to provide more services to clients.

Pamela Moore, Exhale Women's Fellowship, Inc.'s Domestic Violence Coordinator, stated most clients are from underserved communities. Exhale Womens' Fellowship Inc., receives referrals from Burlington County Housing Hub; Burlington County Social Services; God Squad; Women's Opportunity Center; 211 Hotline; and more. Clients are placed in motels and offered weekly case management services. Other supportive services offered to clients are bible study; workforce development;

mentoring mobile advocacy; emotional support, and employment counseling. All program participation is voluntary.

Tim Hurley inquired if mothers with children are welcomed at Exhale Women's Fellowship, Inc. Carol Clark responded yes, Exhale Women's Fellowship, Inc. has many clients with children.

Rachel Morgan, Burlington County's Department of Human Service's Crisis Intervention Team Coordinator, inquired about Exhale Women's Fellowship, Inc.'s relationship with local police departments regarding referrals. Carol Clark responded Exhale Women's Fellowship, Inc. has received referrals, but not regularly.

Rachel Morgan stated she conducts a De-escalation training course with local police departments and inquired if Exhale Women's Fellowship, Inc. would like to be included in the training sessions, making local authorities aware of the services Exhale Women's Fellowship Inc. provides. Carol Clark responded Exhale Women's Fellowship, Inc. would contact Rachel Morgan.

4. HMIS – Cinthia Gonzalez stated the last round of Site Administrator training started Wednesday, October 19, 2022, and will be held every Wednesday at 10 AM. HMIS General User training will be held on October 27, 2022, at 10 AM, and HMIS PATH training sessions will be held on October 28, 2022, at 10 AM. Cinthia Gonzalez reminded everyone that all training videos can be found on the HMIS Youtube channel. The tip sheet can be found on the HMIS website, located on the Awards home page. Should someone need additional information, or need one-on-one assistance, please feel free to contact Cinthia Gonzalez at [cgonzalez@njhmfa.gov](mailto:cgonzalez@njhmfa.gov).
5. Veterans Sub-Committee – Mark Harding reported that the subcommittee met on October 19, 2022. The September Sub-Committee was canceled due to Mark Harding's absence. Mark Harding stated six (6) new veterans have been identified since the last meeting. Since the last Veterans Sub-Committee, 2 veterans have been housed. Mark Harding reported The Veterans Sub-Committee has met two (2) of the four (4) benchmarks in ending veteran homelessness. Effective October 20, 2022, Mark Harding stated he will be stepping down as Chairperson of the Veterans Sub-Committee. Mark Harding reported that Corey Panati will be assuming responsibilities for Soldier On in Burlington County next month. Mark Harding stated Corey Panati had been with Soldier On for five (5) years in Burlington County and will continue to serve The Veterans Sub-Committee in Burlington County. Mark Harding stated if anyone is interested in Chairing the Veteran Sub-Committee,

please contact Mark Harding at [mharding@wesoldieron.org](mailto:mharding@wesoldieron.org) so a vote may be held within the Veteran Sub-Committee, otherwise, Corey Panati will assume Chairperson of the Veterans Sub-Committee at the next Continuum of Care meeting.

Mark Harding stated he has been part of the Continuum of Care for over seven years and witnessed the progress made with the veteran homeless population and the Burlington County homeless population. Mark Harding thanked everyone for the knowledge, experience, and partnerships he has gained over the years.

6. Providence House – Mary Pettrow stated Providence House is currently renovating its main safe house. Providence House received County funding to renovate larger bedrooms into smaller trauma-informed family single units. The residents have been temporarily housed in hotels during the renovations and the hotline has been transferred to the Westampton location. The demolition is complete, supplies are delivered, and permits are moving forward. Construction is expected to be completed in the next few months.

Mary Pettrow reported Providence House is currently housing 57 individuals in 6 hotels within Burlington County. Mary Pettrow reported nights of shelter have risen since 2019. In 2019, Providence House reported 5,283 nights of shelter for the year. The nights of shelter count from January to September of 2022 are 14,155.

Mary Pettrow reported that 9 individuals moved out of the hotels, 8 moved into safe housing, and 1 individual's destination was unknown.

7. Board of Social Services – Lila Myers stated as of October 3, 2022, The Board of Social Services modified their office hours to 8 AM-4:30 PM. Lila Myers stated the new office hours coordinate with the services of the Housing Hub, while also allowing staff members time at the end of the day to assess client information and give clients more access to resources. Lila Myers stated waivers are still being accepted via telephonic signatures thru the end of the year.

Lila Myers stated there has been an overall increase in applications to The Board of Social Services, especially in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applications.

Lila Myers reported The Board of Social Services continues to experience staffing shortages.

The Board of Social Services is preparing for the upcoming Code Blue season.

8. Housing Hub – Mecca Mitchell reported that the Housing Hub is open from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. The building remains appointment preferred.

Mecca Mitchell reported that the Housing Hub has been experiencing: a high influx of walk-in individuals, back rent assistance, and security deposit assistance; noting the walk-in clients are from the Board of Social Services, some of whom are recently homeless due to eviction.

Mecca Mitchell reported on the Housing Hub's statistics for September 2022. The Housing Hub incurred 2 mental health emergencies; 384 emergency shelter referrals; 116 rental assistance referrals; 40 security deposit referrals, and 50 housing referrals. The Housing Hub's response time may be a bit slower due to diminished funds, as well as repeat callers asking for their applications to be resubmitted.

Mecca Mitchell stated the referral process remains the same; the Housing Hub should be contacted at the following:

[housinghub@co.burlington.nj.us](mailto:housinghub@co.burlington.nj.us)

## 9. Community Development and Housing

a. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Jennifer Hiros stated the 2023 Pre-Application Guide Package is presently in the draft stage and will be available in the next few weeks. One of the proposed changes to the 2023 guide is allowing all townships to apply for Community Development Block Grant funding every year, making it more competitive while soliciting bigger projects that address a greater need. Jennifer Hiros stated this proposed change is more manageable, due to the size and diversity of Burlington County. Applications will be scored and ranked using the approved scoring rubric.

Jennifer Hiros stated when the 2023 Pre-Application Guide is approved, an announcement will be made and the guide will be posted on the Community Development website.

b. CARES ACT Funding– Jennifer Hiros reported that projects are progressing, and projects continue to spend down. Jennifer Hiros stated that there are no concerns at this time.

c. HOME-American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) – Jennifer Hiros stated The Division of Community Development and Housing is in the process of recruiting a new Grant Analyst to replace Timothy Howard. In the interim, Jennifer Hiros is overseeing the HOME program.

Jennifer Hiros reported that the draft of the HOME-ARP Plan is being prepared for the public comment period. During the public comment period, a public hearing will be conducted. Once that component is complete, The Division of Community Development and Housing will submit the plan to HUD for its comment and decision. The Division of Community Development and Housing

will be able to make a Substantial Amendment to the 2021 Annual Plan, allowing the Division of Community Development and Housing to solicit bids on proposed projects.

Kent Pipes stated he read a Notice of Intent to Release Funds published in the Burlington County Times on Wednesday, October 19, 2022, regarding a senior feeding site and Code Blue homeless shelter located in Edgewater Park, NJ. Kent Pipes asked Jennifer Hiros what was the source of the funding for this project.

Jennifer Hiros stated that this project was funded through a combination of Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act III (CARES ACT III) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars. Jennifer Hiros stated the project is in the public comment stage, due to the relocation of the project. The project is now located on land owned by Edgewater Park. A new environmental study was conducted at the new site, creating the public comment period.

Kent Pipes inquired if this new senior feeding site/Code Blue shelter in Edgewater Park would replace existing Code Blue shelters in the county or be a supplemental shelter. Jennifer Hiros stated the facility would mainly operate as a senior feeding site and act as a supplemental shelter, accommodating Code Blue overflow. Jennifer Hiros stated this facility would be Burlington County's dedicated Code Blue overflow facility.

Tim Hurley inquired if Burlington County has plans for a homeless shelter. Jennifer Hiros stated there is an application for CDBG dollars for a non-congregate shelter. The application is in process and has not been ratified by HUD at this time.

Kent Pipes stated in November 2022, The Burlington County Board of Commissioners approved a resolution authorizing a bond issue of \$3,000,000.00, and there is also more than \$750,000.00 in the Homeless Trust Fund, which has not been spent over the last four (4) years. Kent Pipes asked Jennifer Hiros if any of these funds are appropriated to build the proposed homeless shelter in Burlington County or any other shelter. Jennifer Hiros stated The Division of Community Development and Housing does not have governance over those dollars.

#### 10. Rapid Rehousing

A new form is available to assist all the agencies in providing a Rapid Rehousing report to the CoC. The form should be submitted five days before the CoC meeting and should report for the preceding two months.

- a. BCCAP – Monica Rego reported 57 individuals/families working on Division of Community Affairs (DCA) applications; 3 pending move-in; 11 households pending approval; 9 families searching for affordable housing.
- b. Christian Caring Center – Monica Rego reported 7 households searching for affordable housing; 3 households pending move-in with 7 families; discharged 8 individuals and 12 families into housing, totaling 37 individuals last month. One household was discharged for non-compliance.
- c. Village Resources-ICM – Monica Rego stated Village Resources had 5 households working on DCA applications; 4 households pending DCA approval; 11 searching for affordable housing; 2 pending move-in; 2 discharged into housing.
- d. Belmont Homes – Monica Rego reported 26 households, and 29 families searching for affordable housing.

11. Continuum of Care Updates

- a. Governance Board – Monica Rego stated the Governance Board did not conduct their last meeting, due to the deadline for the HUD McKinney-Vento Notice of Funds Opportunity (NOFO) competition.
- b. Social Services for the Homeless Update- Monica Rego reported that social service agencies continue to provide services to the homeless. The Division of Community Development and Housing is reviewing the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter report before submitting it to the Division of Family Development (DFD).  
The CoC Collaborative Application and Exhibit 2's have been submitted to HUD for review. Monica Rego thanked those who applied and participated.  
Monica Rego stated that the Annex A for FY2023 is currently being drafted for DFD. The Division of Community Development and Housing is partnering with Monarch Housing to begin the discussion on the upcoming Point in Time count in January 2023.
- c. Data Quality and Coordinated Assessment – Jaclyn Robinson reported that the Data Quality and Coordinated Assessment workgroup met on Tuesday, October 18, 2022. Jaclyn Robinson stated that Data Quality and Coordinated Assessment workgroups are essential to HMIS users within the county. Jaclyn Robinson stated data quality continues to improve with assistance from New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA) in preparation for the upcoming Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA) and Systems Performance Measures Reports. Jaclyn Robinson reported that 5 consumers were removed from the Housing Prioritization list, and 4 into permanent housing. The next meeting will be on December 20, 2022.

12. Discussion – Nicole Simmons-Graham, who works with HUD McKinney-Vento students, reported three issues clients are experiencing. The first issue clients are reporting: parents of students report they applied for the Rapid Rehousing voucher program and want to check the status of their voucher, but can not recall the agency through which they applied. The DCA advised Nicole Simmons-Graham that, without an agency name, there was no way to check the status of a client's voucher. The second issue Nicole Simmons-Graham stated clients encounter: clients who were approved for Rapid Rehousing vouchers, but have no proof of voucher when needed for proof of acceptance. Nicole Simmons-Graham stated some clients were told they needed to qualify on their own for housing for approval, negating the need for a voucher. Lastly, Nicole Simmons-Graham stated recently two families receiving Covid Relief Assistance were evicted when the Covid Relief Assistance was discontinued by the landlord, however, the clients were not notified until eviction.
- Jennifer Hiros responded regarding Covid Relief Assistance stating some of the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) funds from DCA were Covid-related. These funds were used as stabilization funds for back mortgage payments and utilities and to differ to a source for back rent for those who qualified. These funds are not an ongoing subsidy, it is a one-time payment to make the client stabilized.
- Jennifer Hiros stated the Housing Hub has worked with vouchers that were available and has access to lists of those who were approved and waitlisted. Jennifer Hiros stated Nicole Simmons-Graham can check the names of her clients against the Housing Hub's lists with the caveat that there are other voucher programs other than the one Nicole-Simmons Graham was referring to.
- Mecca Mitchell stated that there is an issue with confusion with funding among clients. Mecca Mitchell reports many clients apply for funding, but do not understand what funding they are applying for or through which agency. Mecca Mitchell stated that, regarding the possible wrongful eviction of families, they may have been funded by DCA.
- Nicole Simmons-Graham inquired about Public Housing in Burlington County and their waitlist.
- Mecca Mitchell stated each Public Housing Authority has its waitlist with prioritizations, as well as the Continuum of Care's Housing Prioritization list. Mecca Mitchell reported there are also affordable market-rate units available within the county, however, they are not subsidized.

Jennifer Hiros stated The Division of Community Development and Housing will send Nicole Simmon-Graham the list of Public Housing Authorities in Burlington County.

Fana Wray-Hopkins of South Jersey Legal Services stated landlords or agencies can not require clients with a voucher the need to qualify on their own; it is a pretext against discriminating against the voucher. This creates an unnecessary impediment for the client.

Nicole Simmons-Graham stated that the lack of proof of voucher at the time of rental is the main issue. Mecca Mitchell stated that, though the Rapid Rehousing program allows for up to 12 months of rental assistance, it is not guaranteed.

Brandon Markowski of DCA stated their office gives their Rapid Rehousing portion letters to the client, landlord, and a third party, if involved.

Jennifer Hiros suggested DCA be the spotlight speaker at the December Continuum of Care meeting. Those in attendance, as well as members of the Continuum of Care, should submit questions for the Department of Community Affairs to Monica Rego at [mrego@co.burlingotn.nj.us](mailto:mrego@co.burlingotn.nj.us) by November 15, 2022.

Donald Brown stated Burlington City Public Housing Authority conducted their open applications a few months ago. Donald Brown stated both Burlington City and Florence Township have a waitlist.

Arielle Levin of the Florence Public Housing Authority stated their open applications will be held on November 16, 2022, from 9 AM – 12 PM.

Claudine Archer of the Beloved Project reminded everyone that Thursday is “Senior Day” and The Beloved Project is hosting the Beloved Boutique on Black Friday. Should anyone know of a family, please send them shopping at the Boutique on Black Friday. The Beloved Project 1105 Sunset Rd, Suite E-F Burlington, NJ 08016.

Kent Pipes stated, this spring, the Salt & Light Company will complete renovations to a state-funded 20-year subsidized Section-8 apartment complex for domestic violence survivors in Pemberton Borough.

There were no further comments.

### 13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 am.



*Respectfully Submitted*

PL/MR

cc: JLH  
MM