



**Eastern PA CoC Board Meeting**  
**August 19, 2024**  
**10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://zoom.us/j/95780178070?pwd=emtjUy9lelByTndUdng3cGVZT29wQT09>  
 Meeting ID: 957 8017 8070  
 Passcode: 020931

TIME	AGENDA ITEM	PURPOSE
10:00 a.m.	Call to order-Alisa Baratta	
10:00 a.m.	Approval of June and July minutes	
10:05 a.m.	501c3 Update-Alisa Baratta	Review of benchmarks set in the planning document. Finance Committee Recruitment
10:35 a.m.	Coordinated Entry Committee update-Leslie Perryman	1. Conversion to "push system" 2. Housing Assessment Tool 3. <b>VOTE:</b> The board to consider the recommended new CE project to provide funding to CE Access Sites.
11:00 a.m.	NOFO Updates-Leigh Howard	1. VOTE: Should the CoC apply for the CoC Builds (PSH) NOFO? 2. Updates/ info re CoC NOFO
11:30 a.m.	YHSI Update-Brendan Auman	
11:45 a.m.	Meeting Space for Full CoC Meeting	Discussion of capacity needs. Lunch costs: Can the CoC subsidize a portion of the lunch costs? Service fees?
11:50 a.m.	Housing First Training	A brief discussion of previous scope work with Housing First University, which has closed. Are there organizations that you have seen provide high-quality HF training?
12:00 p.m.	Meeting Adjourned	

## 8/19/2024 Eastern PA CoC Board Meeting Minutes

### In Attendance

Alisa Baratta  
Jeff Rich  
Leslie Pennyman  
Carol Thornton

Nick Dennis  
Tiffany Jones  
Brendan Auman  
Leigh Howard

Amanda Riehl  
Antonio Diaz  
George Payne

### Call to order-Alisa Baratta

### Approval of June and July minutes

#### Board Vote

1. The board unanimously voted to approve the June and July minutes.

### Review of benchmarks set in the 501(c)(3). planning document.

Alisa Baratta began by addressing a recent development regarding the Finance Committee. Originally, Lewis Resto had been asked to chair the Finance Committee and also served as the treasurer for the new 501(c)(3). However, Alisa reported that she received Lewis's resignation from the board on Friday. He is retiring and, consequently, will no longer be participating in the committee or holding his previous roles. In response to the vacancy, Carol Thornton volunteered to take on the role of treasurer for the 501(c)(3), noting that she does not currently hold any position on the new board. CoC board was appreciative of this offer but the 501(c)(3) will need to vote on this appointment when they next meet.

### Action Item

- Mary to make a note for the 501(c)(3) board to vote on adding Carol Thornton as treasurer when they next meet.

Additionally, Alisa noted more outreach efforts are needed to recruit members for the Finance Committee. The board members noted their recruitment efforts have not yet yielded results. Brendan Auman reminded the board of a previous discussion about the need for members with risk assessment knowledge. Brendan mentioned SEDA CoG, an organization in Central Pennsylvania known for managing a variety of grants, including federal, state, and local. He suggested that they might be a valuable resource to consider. Jeffrey Rich offered to reach out to his connections at SEDA CoG but requested clarification on what the board wanted to ask. Brendan replied he mentioned SEDA CoG at this time because it might be something the board is looking to add to that committee. The conversation continued and the board agreed the focus is on moving forward with finance-related tasks for the organization. There is a consensus to stay focused on finance-related issues and prioritize financial matters before tackling other tasks from a list prepared by Hailstone.

The committee will continue its efforts to identify suitable candidates for the Finance Committee. Ideally, they would like to identify three to five people for the committee by the end of September. Alisa mentioned Michelle Albright from Valley Youth House, who recently transitioned to their financial management team as an excellent candidate for the finance committee due to her program knowledge and financial expertise.

### Action Item

- Alisa will reach out to Michelle Albright from Valley Youth House, who recently transitioned to their financial management team, to potentially join the finance committee due to her program knowledge and financial expertise. Jeff and Alisa will reach out to any additional candidates that are identified by the committee

Brendan further mentioned the board discussion the previous month about utilizing Hailstone Consulting to provide additional support to the 501c (3) by assisting with filing registration paperwork and creating job descriptions. He is still awaiting their proposal and will present it to the board for an email vote once it is received.

#### **Action Item**

- Brendan Auman will follow up on the proposal from Hailstone to provide business registration and job descriptions for new positions. He plans to present it via email to the board for approval once received.

#### **Coordinated Entry Committee update**

Leslie Perryman provided updates on the housing assessment tool, the timeline for various initiatives, and the push process for housing referrals. The work group is meeting more frequently to ensure that policies, procedures, and training for coordinated entry access site specialists are in place before the upcoming launch.

A key agenda item was a vote on allocating 5% of the Annual Resource Distribution (ARD) funds—totaling \$192,026—towards supporting access sites. This funding is intended to address gaps in financial support and staffing needs at these sites, which are crucial for managing housing problem-solving conversations. The coordinated entry committee recommended distributing the funds through a Request for Information (RFI) to determine how best to allocate the resources, with the goal of supporting at least one access site per RHAB. The non-conflicted board members held a vote on allocating the funding. Jeff Rich made the motion and Brendan Auman seconded the motion.

#### **Board Vote**

2. All were in favor of utilizing 5% of the Annual Resource Distribution (ARD), totaling \$192,026, which was approved by the committee to be designated for coordinated entry.

A discussion also arose regarding the referral process for Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive housing. Alisa shared some situations encountered in the Lehigh Valley with referrals being made to a program that was not in align with the program structure. She and Leslie will continue the conversation after the meeting. Leslie Perryman and Jason Alexandar will Continue discussions on the referral process and address any discrepancies.

#### **Special NOFO Update-CoC Builds**

Leigh Howard provided an update on the recent meeting, which some people were unable to attend, and outlined upcoming developments related to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Continuum of Care called CoC Builds. he NOFO involves a significant funding opportunity of \$175 million nationwide, with expectations to fund approximately 25 projects. Eastern PA CoC can apply for up to \$7.5 million, specifically for Permanent Supportive Housing projects. This funding allows for more flexible eligibility criteria than traditional permanent supportive housing, permitting households that fall into categories 1 (homeless), 2 (imminent risk of homelessness), or 4 (fleeing domestic violence) to qualify. However, households in Category 3 are not eligible.

Questions were raised about potential projects and the review process. Leigh Howard indicated that outreach to partners, such as the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA), would commence once the CoCs' intention to apply was confirmed. HUD emphasized that the projects need to be tangible, with site control achievable within a few months of the award. The timeline for grant applications is due by November, with awards anticipated by May and contracts starting from that point. The review and selection of projects would involve the funding committee, with potential participation from PHFA and Federal Home Loan Bank volunteers. The timeline for the RFP process starts with a release date of August 26, a potential informational webinar for applicants, an application deadline around October 3, and the NOFO deadline on November 21.

The committee held a long discussion of possible partners and the necessary steps moving forward noting that HUD has outlined detailed requirements for applicants emphasizing the need for substantial experience. They expect developers to demonstrate their history with projects serving individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as the qualifications of property managers and service providers involved. Given these requirements, it's crucial for local providers to play a significant role in the projects. The discussion highlighted the importance of engaging local providers before submitting responses to the RFP. To facilitate this, Leigh Howard suggested that two separate webinars be organized: one aimed at CoC providers and members, and another focused on property managers and developers. These webinars would encourage the formation of strong partnerships and ensure that all parties are well-prepared.

A motion was made by Jeffrey Rich to proceed with applying for the NOFO, which was seconded by Brendan Auman. The motion passed unanimously with no further discussion.

Following the vote the budget for DMA's services was discussed, and it was decided to wait until a formal proposal is received. A written vote will be conducted to approve the proposal, but the cost is generally accepted. The budget for DMA's work will likely be sourced from the next planning grant period for 2023.

### **Board Vote**

3. The Board voted unanimously in favor of applying for the CoC Builds NOFO.

### **2024 CoC NOFO Update**

Leigh Howard, DMA, provided an update on the Notice of Funding Opportunity for fiscal year 2024-2025. He noted that there have been minimal updates from HUD, with the key uncertainty being the amount of funding available for new projects. The decision will largely depend on Congressional allocations. Although HUD expects sufficient funds for project renewals, the specifics of new projects and the process for their submission remain unclear. Leigh explained that if there are funds recaptured due to underperformance or voluntary project returns, the CoC will have the opportunity to reallocate these funds for new projects. However, the detailed process for this remains uncertain. On a positive note, the CoC application process will be simplified, eliminating the need for a comprehensive application annually and allowing for more funds to be redirected toward other activities. He also detailed an estimate of the CoC's budget for the year, including the Annual Renewal Demand (ARD) of approximately \$22 million. This includes a competitive tier-one amount of about \$20.5 million, representing 90% of the total funding, and additional funds for bonuses. The CoC has a planning grant opportunity of \$1.14 million but will require additional in-kind match dollars.

Brendan Auman expressed concerns about meeting the required match contributions. Currently, the CoC is struggling to secure in-kind contributions and needs to explore additional cash match opportunities. He clarified that match contributions must be related to planning and not for the operation of existing programs. He suggested looking into potential local resources and members of the RHABs to support these match requirements. Alisa Baratta asked Brendan Auman for clarification on what types of funding can be used as a match for the planning grant. Brendan

explained that eligible match contributions must be related to planning activities, not the operation of HUD-funded programs. Examples include expenses for consulting time, program evaluation, and planning related to the Consolidated Plan. He noted that in-kind contributions must be well-documented with commitment letters, whereas cash match contributions require only tracking and supporting documentation, making them somewhat easier to manage. Brendan indicated that the current focus is on securing match funding for the upcoming fiscal year 2023 and the forthcoming NOFO application for fiscal year 2024.

Leigh Howard concluded by providing an update on the status of the funding application process. He reported that the CoC is eligible to apply for just over \$29 million, though the actual award amount may differ. This total includes tier-one funding, CoC bonuses, and DV bonuses. The NOFO was released on July 31 and applications are due by October 30 at 8 PM. Leigh assured that the CoC is on track to meet these deadlines. Leigh offered to share a link to the CoC's webpage for those interested in reviewing the webinar and other related information. With that, he handed over the meeting to Brendan for the next agenda item.

### **Youth System Improvement Grant (YHSI) Update**

Brendan Auman updated the group on the Youth Homeless Services Improvement (YHSI) Grant. This HUD grant aims to enhance services for youth experiencing homelessness and the systems that interact with them. Both the Eastern and Western Pennsylvania Continuums of Care (CoCs) collaborated on a joint application to address this issue with a comprehensive rural approach. The grant, totaling \$1.4 million, was recently awarded, although the official award letter arrived later than expected. The grant agreement is anticipated by the end of August, with the possibility of extending this timeline if needed. The project will focus on three key areas

- **Planning and Partnerships:** This involves piloting a program in ten communities where youth with lived experience will collaborate with various systems to identify and address gaps in youth homelessness services. A program manager will be hired to support these youth and oversee the program.
- **Data Analysis:** A consultant will be brought on to conduct baseline data analysis and equity evaluations to improve youth-focused coordinated entry systems and overall program quality.
- **Quality Improvement:** The project will include ongoing assessments and improvements to enhance its effectiveness over time.

The next steps involve developing RFPs for selecting pilot communities and hiring the management entity and program manager. Brendan emphasized that the YHSI planning team will draft these RFPs, with some potentially going through the CoC for review. Alisa Baratta inquired whether the board would need to review or vote on the final RFPs, and Brendan suggested that while it might be beneficial for the board to provide final approval, it is not a strict requirement.

Leigh Howard offered to circulate a summary of the project and RFP details to keep everyone informed. He noted that although specific communities were mentioned in the application, the actual selection will occur through an RFP process, allowing any county to apply. The goal is to ensure balanced representation from both CoCs, depending on the competitive applications received.

Brendan concluded by noting that the project will run for 30 months, with regular milestone tracking and semi-annual reports required by HUD to monitor progress. The YHSI planning team, supported by Brendan and Amanda, will lead these efforts, potentially utilizing additional support from DMA's contract hours if needed.

### **File Sharing**

Alisia then asked if we were closer to locating a file-sharing system that all board members could access. Mary noted that there has not been one found that has been compatible with everyone. Brendan Auman noted that they have had some success accessing Google Drive.

### **Action Item**

- Mary will begin setting up a shared Google Drive to store board documents

### **Meeting Space for Full CoC Meeting**

Mary notes she has been planning the next full CoC meeting and has run into some challenges. The last meeting the Coc was at capacity for the room size. With meetings growing larger, finding a suitable space has become a challenge. Many larger venues require the use of their catering services, which adds significantly to the overall cost. Mary noted that we also had feedback from the membership about the cost of the lunch being too much. Alisa inquired about the availability of admin dollars from the Home for Good grant to cover meeting costs. Brendan acknowledged that the funds are somewhat depleted due to recent spending on other initiatives but assured that up to \$1,000 should still be available. Alisa noted that the cost of lunch for 125 people could exceed this amount, potentially reaching around \$3,000. Brendan agreed to check with Kim Amsler for an updated budget and suggested they might be able to cover part of the lunch cost, perhaps reducing it to \$10.00 per person. The committee agreed that for the current meeting, they should aim to limit costs to \$10.00 per person and plan to address funding more comprehensively. Brendan also mentioned that admin funds would be replenished with the next award cycle.

### **Full CoC Meeting Agenda discussion**

In preparation for the upcoming membership meeting, key topics include updating the coordinated entry system, HMIS participation, and the recent rollout of the push system and housing assessment tool. We will gather immediate feedback from users and address HMIS participation levels and ways to encourage more providers to join. There will also be an update on the Housing Problem Solving Committee and a proposal for breakout sessions focused on peer support groups to foster collaboration among service providers.

### **Housing First University**

Leigh Howard shared an update regarding the training contract with Housing First University, which is no longer operational. This contract included provider training, executive staff meetings, and technical assistance. Since only one training was completed before the university closed, there is now a need to find an alternative training provider. Leigh asked for recommendations for high-quality Housing First training, especially those that address both supportive housing and rapid rehousing perspectives. The aim is to put out a RFP to identify a suitable trainer, rather than solely relying on the Corporation for Supportive Housing, which has previously been suggested but might not offer the specific focus needed. He mentioned that organizations like Org Code and individuals such as Suzanne Wagner, who have delivered effective training in the past, are potential candidates for the RFP. He also invited additional suggestions for trainers.

The meeting adjourned with the confirmation of the next meeting date on September 16th and a motion to adjourn.