

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS

Quarterly Meeting

JULY 18, 2019

The quarterly meeting of the **Governor's Council on Homelessness** met on Thursday, July 18, 2019 in Committee Room #1 at the Louisiana Housing Corporation located at 2415 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Ms. Winona Connor, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. Introductions were made and the roll was called and recorded by Ms. Terry Hale, the recording secretary.

I. Roll Call:

Members Present: Ms. Winona Connor, Mr. Bruce Parker, Mr. Chip Coulter, Ms. Amanda Larkins, Ms. Martha Kegel, and Ms. Tewabetch (T) Negatu (replacing Ms. Kia Sims).

Members Absent: Ms. Michell Brown, Ms. Antiqua Hunter, Dr. Leslie Grover, Mr. Joshua Hollins, Mr. Joey Strickland, and Mr. Dylan Waguespack.

Staff Present: Mr. Gordon Levine, Continuum of Care Manager, and Ms. Terry Hale, recording secretary.

Ms. Connor introduced Mr. Gordon Levine, Louisiana Balance of State Continuum of Care (LA BOSCO) manager, who gave an update on HUD's funding Year 2019 Continuum of Care Program (FY 2019 CoC Program) Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). He noted how the Governor's Council on Homelessness has participated in the past. He gave a brief description of the CoC Program and noted that every year almost all renewal projects through the COC program are re-funded by HUD, but requires accountability.

Mr. Levine went on to explain that the NOFA, project applications are due to the LA BOSCO on August 27 and have to be submitted to HUD by September 30. He asked for 3 volunteers from the GCH to help with the LA BOSCO Scoring Committee that will review the 5 – 10 project applicants. He will schedule a training for 4 hours on either September 3rd, 4th or 5th. Volunteers were acknowledged.

Mr. Levine provided information about the COC program funding and its dispersion across Louisiana. Several council members mentioned areas to get connected with the COC program across the state. Other funding sources mentioned: United Way, Social Security for Veteran Families (SSVF), GPR Program, SAMBA, LDH, to name a few.

It was noted that there are two bottlenecks to homelessness:

- 1- Shortage of affordable housing units.
- 2- Not enough funding to go around.

Several Council Members mentioned various ways to tackle homelessness: Rapid Re-Housing, Rapid Resolution or Diversion.

Mr. Chip Coulter noted that Governor Edwards is truly interested in homelessness. There is a need to get with Homeless Coalition Group and find homes. It was noted the abundance of funding connected with disaster at the initial response, but there needs to be long term mitigation. He added that the government is concerned about disasters, but need to find more funding to help.

Ms. Connor went over the stages of the action plan written for the 2016 Floods:

- 1 – Hotel
- 2 – Mobile Housing Units (MHU)
- 3 – Double up situation
- 4 – Homeless

Mr. Levine mentioned that there is now a concentrated effort at reaching out to CoC's to make sure population is included.

Mr. Levine noted that for the first time ever since Louisiana started counting in 2012, homelessness rose statewide. Almost everywhere else in the country it has shrunk, but in LA it has risen in part because of the ongoing disaster problems. He related that the primary driver is a severe shortage of affordable housing and a severe shortage of rental voucher funding.

It was mentioned that short term Rent Assistance makes a difference.

Ms. Connor gave updated information concerning the storm called "Barry". In efforts to ensure that the homeless were off the street during storm, monies were given to homeless programs across Baton Rouge and Lake Charles to put people in hotels during storm. However, she noted that plans for disaster needs to be worked out during blue sky days. The storm was a dry run. Extra monies were available to take care of the homeless during this particular storm, but plans need to be implemented to have reserve monies for future disasters.

Mr. Coulter added that his department DCFS was responsible for mass sheltering during disasters and the local programs were responsible for opening shelters.

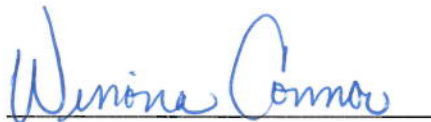
Ms. Connor gave an update on the Emergency Solutions Grant Homeless Prevention funds vote recommendation from the October 2017 meeting for diversion for prisons. START Corporation picked up the project and now works with those discharging from prison in 14 days. The ESG funds help with rental assistance and provide diversion tactics so there will not be a reentry into prison.

Ms. Connor informed the council of the new program to extend youth age to 21 to house after coming out of foster care. DCFS - LHC has put up HOME money for 25-30 youth currently. There is a potential to increase funding.

Mr. Coulter added that the DCFS agency is to be re-arranged due to new federal law. Family First Prevention Act put into effect by President Trump – biggest overhaul in 60 years. Focuses on prevention of children going into foster care. Louisiana will be one of 5 states that will pilot the program thus making it one of the country's leaders. The Casey Foundation is sponsoring it.

Ms. Connor thanked the council for their attendance and discussed that the next meeting of Thursday, October 17, 2019 could possibly be at another location to offer availability to others to attend

With no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.



Winona Connor, Chairman



Terry Hale, Recording Secretary