Governor’s Council on Homelessness

JBE 16-22



NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

The next meeting of the Governor’s Council on Homelessness is scheduled for:

**Thursday November 17, 2022**

**10:00 AM to 12:00 NOON**

900 North Third Street Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Governor’s Office Press RM 4th floor

AGENDA

1. Roll Call
2. Speaker : Maxwell Ciardullo Discussion on HR194 & Issues on Rising Number of Homelessness Individuals
3. Update / Discussion Regarding Executive Order
4. CDBG – DR Updates
5. PIT – Data Updates
6. Other Business
7. Public comment

For more information, or if you have a disability and require a reasonable accommodation to fully participate in this event, please contact Jessica Norman, Assistant to the Chairman, prior to the meeting day via email: [jnorman@lhc.la.gov](mailto:jnorman@lhc.la.gov) or telephone (225) 763-8625 to discuss your accessibility needs.

Governor’s Council on Homelessness

Quarterly Meeting

11/17/2022

The quarterly meeting of the Governor’s Council on Homelessness met on 11/17/2022 at 900 North Third Street Baton Rouge, LA 70802 Governor’s Office Press RM 4th floor. Ms. Winona Connor, chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:08am.

1. Roll Call

**Members Present**: Winona Connor, Mr. Chip Coulter, Ms. Amanda Larkins, Martha Kegal, Gordon Levine, Darhlene Major

**Members Absent:** Antigua Hunter,Laura Hasenstien, Larry Williams, Dylan Wagespeck, Leslie Glover

**Recording Secretary**: Jessica Norman

**Guest:** Carrie Patterson, Jessica Norman, Evan Alvarez, Maxwell Ciardullo

1. **Speaker : Maxwell Ciardullo Discussion on HR194 & Issues on Rising Number of Homelessness Individuals**

Maxwell Ciardullo the Director of Policy & Communications at the Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center which is a statewide civil rights non-profit. His organization was founded to combat housing discrimination and segregation.

* He has attorneys on staff who work with individuals who are victims of discrimination to purse justice, along with foreclosure prevention councilors, and eviction defense support teams in Orleans and Jefferson Parish.
* He expressed that ARCH requested a partnering to allocate ARP money not yet distributed, seeking explicit use for affordable housing and homelessness services to have conversations with legislature about possibilities.
* Jason Hughes LA State Representative will carry Resolution along with data to present in front of the House of Appropriations committee before next session to educate these making decisions.
* LHC conducted public hearings to study issues of increased homelessness and request comments/data from stakeholder organizations on 6 topics.
* The Six topics discussed are

1. Annual PIT Count
2. Homeless Services Providers capacity,
3. Shelter beds counts & availability of affordable housing in community
4. Factors increasing family homelessness across state
5. Information concerning number of children enrolled in public schools experiencing homelessness in the state and
6. Information concerning housing stability and how interacts with others items the states spends money on such as health care, incarceration, foster care etc. and other funding sources that can be used to fund the problem.

The floor was opened for questions.

Chip asked what were preliminary findings regarding funding? Maxwell advised most of the state relies entirely on federal government to fund homelessness and he hopes through advocating the state put aside its own money towards this important problem understanding a one-time investment will service tons for a long time. More conversation continued one time investment for rapid rehousing, housing stock from storm damage, and limited or no remaining subsidy.

1. **Updates to the Executive Order**

Gordon discussed rewrite of the Executive Order stating the idea was originated by previous staff leadership of United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. The current Governor’s Council on Homelessness is an informative body that meets infrequently and not active body with working components. Additionally, there are many people who have relevant information, authority, expertise or valuable input who should be at the table for statewide conversations on homelessness who are not included in the existing Governors Order. The council is constituted by an Executive Order which means it exists on the bases of the order and can be rescinded by this Governor but must be renewed by any subsequent Governors. This makes the current council fundamentally not secure. He explained, Homelessness is rising and the most effective tools of combating homeless is more effective coordination between people doing the work, and administrators of agency who fund and coordinate. This rewrite fundamentally reimagines the GCH which is an Executive Ordered created body designed to provide information to its members, to the governors as a permanent legislatively created body pulling in expertise from all groups mentioned and has permanent tasking to report out, investigate, and recommend action to its members, COC’s, Governor’s Office and Legislature on how to prevent and end homelessness. Gordon continued stating the new model would likely resemble the Federal model being created by the US Interagency Council. It established LA Interagency Council on Homelessness in the office of the Governor in the authority of the Legislature defining homelessness explicitly in accordance with the Federal Government ruled definition which includes people fleeing domestic violence. It defines the duties of the Council in four steps…

* Advising Governor, Legislature, and local governments as appropriate, on causes, identifying and analyzing challenges
* Accessing factors that contribute to rates of homelessness in individual communities at state levels
* Tasks Council with proposing action, policies, and approaches to address those challenges, barriers and factors
* Submitting annual reports to Governor on the state of homelessness in LA and any updates of statewide plan to end homelessness including language reflecting the report now goes to Governor and Legislation

The second biggest change will be a drastic increase in number and expanded different kinds of individuals on the council. It’s constituted of leaders of departments with invested interest to ending homelessness. This rewrite is expansive. It retains all of the existing departmental interest, Commissioner of Administration, Chair of Senate Health and Welfare Committee, Chair of the House Health and Welfare Committee, Representatives of Legislature and includes organizations actively working, one rep from each COC, Executive Director of LA Network Data Services Coalition, Executive Director of LA Coalition of Domestic Violence, also six people nominated by COC who have significant academic or professional expertise in housing or services for people experiencing homelessness with a focus in a diversity of areas included street outreach, emergency shelter, Rapid Rehousing, Permanent supportive housing, mental health and substance abuse orders, LGBTQ+ homelessness, racial and ethnic disparities homelessness, veterans homelessness, chronic homelessness of domestic violence. Three of whom appointed by Chair of Health and Welfare committee and three appointed by Chair of House Committee legislatively appointed by proposed CoC’s. Finally, it provides for at least two people with lived experience of homelessness representing as many as possible of those subpopulations. These two will be individuals who have lived experience, and expertise of Youth, Veterans, Chronic, LGBTQ+ Homelessness and survivors of Domestic Violence appointed by CoC’s and Executive Director of LHC. This council will elect its Chairs and officers from its own membership and has authority to appoint subcommittees with implicit intent with preexisting homelessness working group which has been an ad hoc body composed of LHC, reps of COC’s and other service providers with interest in homelessness.

The floor was opened for questioning. Chip asked if other states were doing this with similar organizations and is it established by Executive Order or done in the statues, likewise are other states focused on policy or as in new proposal action oriented? Gordon advised there are three different models historically and do not seem to be strongly geography tied. One does not have coordinating body around homelessness, the one LA currently has is council appointed by executive order and the one being proposed. Gordon also highlighted the model being proposed is model the states are looking to adopt or is being strongly promoted by federal government because it is the model most effective and has highest level body including everyone whose primary duty is to do the work on a day to day basis and has common level of direct investment in implementation. Chip further questioned are states following this model receiving more federal funding than others not using it? Gordon explained COC dollars are performance based and primarily receive funds based on how well working and coordinate with the sixteen other entities. No direct tie but definite correlation due to his work with prior organization. Further conversation followed regarding CoC’s receiving federal dollars for changes to the new EO.

A Motion was moved by Gordon to approve substance of revision and intent of the revision to replace the current GCH with a legislatively created LA Interagency Council on Homelessness to follow by submitting to Governor’s Office as soon as possible for Governors approval and then proceed as quickly as feasible to identify a Sponsor and Author at the Legislature for inclusion in the upcoming limited session. It was seconded by Chip. The roll call vote was taken with all I’s passing the motion. Chairman Winona stated she would submit the information to the Governor’s office and move forward accordingly. Gordon offered support with efforts. Chip and Darhlene also suggested the earlier the better likelihood of success to give Rep Hughes resolution for ultimate goal of receiving funding. Chair stated she would include in request.

1. **CDBG-DR Updates**

Chairman Winona highlighted the importance of the devastation caused by the 2020-2021 hurricanes that impacted the state. The federal funding has come down, LHC will be working to implement programs in Lake Charles region to support these efforts. FEMA is pulling trailers out in February currently about one thousand people still living in those trailers in the Lake Charles region, of those five hundred are homeowners. LHC creating solutions to make certain they have valid housing options available. Five hundred million dollars of CBDG funding will be used to provide RRH assistance. Also additional funding used for supportive services. Clients will also be referred to programs currently running in the region. She stated we are still in recovery mode after two years. LHC has a good plan and will duplicate that in the Houma/Terrebonne region with hurricane IDA participants.

1. **PIT (Point In Time) – Data Updates**

Chair introduced Carrie Patterson to report PIT- data. Carrie led the conversation regarding PIT data updates informing the council members of an unofficial breakdown of the annual count. She advised that PIT count is an activity occurring all over the United States once a year where communities spend tremendous amounts of efforts to get an actual literal head count of people experiencing homelessness on a given night. In 2022 the BOSCOC had PIT count occur during the last week of February. She provided a document of the Balance of State regions broken down by rows. She stated BOSCOC services 22 parishes of State which roughly half of the state. The totals were 776 in BR Region. She also informed the higher numbers are due to including people who are experiencing homelessness that were sheltered in FEMA disaster shelters in BOS region. This is the first time ever those number have been included. Matthew noted the totals support an increase in homelessness. Carrie explained yes a definite increase in homelessness which is a trend that is being carried through every community in United States. Matthew questioned a 200 person increase in less than 10 months in Baton Rouge area. Carrie explained Baton Rouge has more resources to improve data collection and identify trends. The best location is the One Stop drop in center which houses a variety of service providers and coordinated entry access point for Baton Rouge region. She advised on each Tuesday a daily count is done and they hit a max which is what they generally expect to see. Winona stated ESG Cares Act funding has now ended and is an attributing factor to increased numbers. Ending in August, BR region had over three hundred people housed whose rental assistance ended. Also in New Orleans we had similar numbers. Some clients were linked to other resources if available but many may find themselves back in a homeless situation. The program ending due to 20.6 million dollars NCS and RRH activities across the state funding running out. Martha noted numbers would be worse if LHC and local government had not done the extraordinary jobs with pandemic resources. Gordon also added LHC won the NCHSHA’S 2021 Excellent in Homelessness Services Award for Covid-19 pandemic response. Major nationally recognized barriers to these numbers being higher. He also praised the COC’s, LHC and everybody on the ground. Martha again advised the numbers for Orleans and Jefferson Parish are down by one thousand people for 2022 due to states efforts assisting with Covid-19 resources. The hotel project combined with the Covid-19 RRH was remarkably successful despite the enormous pressures pushing people into homelessness, we managed to keep tons from suffering.

Martha questioned how was it determined individuals are literal homeless?

Carries answered it does not include clients who have reached out for homeless prevention resources. Numbers came from client self-locator, many verified by third party sources and these numbers were pulled for client self-report data service point. Carries continued stating numbers are not final and have not heard back from HUD currently. HUD is interested in having further conversations due to the inclusion of clients living in FEMA trailers to give a factual depiction of homelessness in state. More discussion was had regarding PIT counts.

1. **Other Business**

American Rescue Plan - state submitted plan to HUD in October currently waiting for approval. Once approved a series of NOFA’s will be issued for applicants to apply. The eligible activities submitted in the plan were development of None Congregate Shelter, Tenant Based Rental Assistance, development of affordable housing, supportive services and monies for operating cost, and capacity building. How do we help agencies become ready to apply for federal and state funding? Some agencies expressed interest but don’t have everything in order to submit an application for funding. A series of capacity building presentations and seminars with professionals coming to teach class are in the plans to assist with preparation for agency development. Louisiana rural communities have struggled receiving adequate help for people facing eviction, homeless prevention and ending homelessness hopeful to bridge the gap with this plan.

Cares Act Funding - The state has received 2.6 million dollars, currently 97% expended. The deadline for expenditures in September 2023, the need was great and the use of the money was necessary. The state is wrapping up final invoices will fill gaps and planning to help shelters in coastal areas become disaster ready to remain open in times of disaster.

Chip noted recent activity by the Baton Rouge Metro Council regarding homelessness passed a resolution – “Modified” but is active and live right now. Metro Council and the Mayors’ office is creating a council to address homelessness is Baton Rouge. He was optimistic to have GHC representation on the council. Carrie suggested contacting Marline Pitman to see how plans have been updated.

Chip also noted Darryl Adams of Jackson has been informed of GHC and sits on Appropriations. Adams expressed he would love to assist the Council with needs.

Finally the schedule for upcoming meetings will be the 2nd Thursday in March, June, September, and December. We will also have working group items as they come up.

Chairman Winona adjourned the meeting at 11:57am.