**Governor’s Council on Homelessness**

**February 15, 2018**

The Governor’s Council on Homelessness meeting was rescheduled from January 18, 2018, due to inclement weather. The council met on Thursday, February 15, 2018, in Committee Room #2 of the Louisiana Housing Corporation Building located at 2415 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Ms. Nicole Sweazy, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:38 a.m. Introductions were made and the roll was recorded by Ms. Gay Owens, the recording secretary.

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**Members Present:** Ms. Nicole Sweazy, Mr. Jacques Ambers, Ms. Michell Brown, Mr. Chip Coulter, Ms. Alex Juan, Ms. Angela Patterson (representing Ms. Martha Kegel) and Ms. Kia Sims

**Members Absent:** Ms. Leslie Grover, Mr. Joshua Hollins, Mr. Bruce Parker, Mr. Dylan Waguespack and Ms. Antiqua Hunter

**Staff Present:** Mr. Gordon Levine, Continuum of Care Manager and Ms. Gay Owens, recording secretary

**Visitors Present:** Ms. Jacqueline Porter of the Louisiana Department of Health – Office of Behavioral Health and Mr. Brett Waits of the Department of Children and Family Services

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A quorum was announced present and the meeting was opened for business.

Ms. Sweazy asked the council to review the minutes from the last meeting of October 19, 2017. Mr. Chip Coulter offered a motion to accept the minutes; seconded by Ms. Alex Juan. Without discussion or objection, the minutes were voted on and approved, as written.

Mr. Levine discussed the Continuum of Care (COC) and the Balance of State Continuum of Care (BOSCOC) programs within the state. He thanked the council for their participation and dedication in overseeing the rating and raking of the state projects that were awarded funding. The council discussed current situations of homelessness in the metropolitan areas of the state, including the advancement of potential housing projects to provide safe and affordable housing for homeless citizens. Discussion ensued about city and parish procedures to provide shelter for the homeless during freezing temperatures.

Ms. Porter presented information about two key programs: Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) and SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) administered by the Social Security Administration. These programs are designed to assist adults with serious mental illnesses and/or co-occurring substance use disorders while facing homelessness. Ms. Porter discussed the application and funding process for housing assistance to qualified adults. After discussion of funding for the PATH program, the council recommended submitting a letter to the Louisiana Department of Health requesting a structural change making PATH funds available to the COC. Ms. Sweazy moved, seconded by Ms. Juan, without objection or discussion, the motion carried. Ms. Sweazy will produce a draft letter and submit it to the council for approval. This action could also give communities the ability to provide funding to hire a SOAR case manager to gather complete, relevant information and submit quality applications. The next funding round will be due in July 2018.

The 2018 Hunger and Homelessness Week is scheduled for November 10-18, 2018. The council discussed various fundraisers to assist with homelessness, having all proceeds going to shelters.

The Point-In-Time count, held on January 22, 2018, is a United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) mandated count of sheltered and unsheltered individuals in each COC receiving federal funding to aid the homeless. The Louisiana Services Network Data Consortium (LSNDC) was involved with the survey by providing needed forms and observation tools to conduct the effort with the final results forthcoming. The last six years have marked a decline in homelessness and the figure continues to drop each year. For future development, a statistician will be hired to assist with the count.

The coordinated entry implementation, a mandate from HUD, deadline was January 23, 2018. The coordinated entry system is a centralized process designed to collect participant intake, assessment, and provision of referrals. It establishes a common process to provide equal access for all individuals and families who request assistance through the homeless system. Ms. Sweazy discussed the color-coded map of the state of Louisiana with each COC identified and labeled. Mr. Levine discussed a new funding opportunity to assist homeless youth, ages 16-24 years of age, with housing. The BOSCOC reported 31 homeless youth in its’ annual count. The grant could be a valuable tool for homeless youth who are living on the street, in shelters or doubling up with friends or relatives.

With no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:27 p.m.