

# METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



## Human Services & Public Safety Policy Committee

### DRAFT Meeting Notes

**CHAIR: Hon. George Leventhal, Montgomery Council**

**VICE CHAIR: Hon. Phil Mendleson, District of Columbia**

**STAFF CONTACT: Chevelle Glymph, Chief, Health & Substance Abuse, COG**

**Melissa Rivord, Chief, Public Safety Programs, COG**

**April 15, 2011**

#### **1. Call to Order, Introductions, Approval of Minutes, & Announcements**

Chairman Leventhal called the meeting to order and asked the committee to introduce themselves. The meeting began with Mr. Leventhal presenting the work plan to the members, which captured the list of discussion items from the February meeting. Supervisor Gross expressed her concern that the capacity of non-profits to provide the services that local jurisdictions have come to rely on may have been affected by the economic crisis. Ms. Gross recommends adding a report from the nonprofits to the work plan, as the “safety net” they provide may be at risk. Mr. Leventhal suggested PowerPoint presentations or speakers that he has seen, and asked Supervisor Gross if she knew of anyone presenting topics on this issue. Ms. Gross stated that she would explore this. Mr. Leventhal then asked for a motion to adopt the work plan; it was seconded and adopted.

Chair Leventhal presented the Committee with brochure on resources for foreclosures. Sophie Mintier, COG, Department of Community Planning and Services (DCPS) described the brochure, where they were printed and how to use them. The brochures are available through the Capital Area Foreclosure Network (CAFN), which COG co-directs. The brochures are available for homeowners and renters in the NCR and are printed in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin and Amharic. They are currently in the process of distributing them to various organizations and agencies throughout the region. Interested parties can complete the order form Sophie presented at the meeting or on the CAFN website at [www.capitalareaforeclosurenetwork.org](http://www.capitalareaforeclosurenetwork.org).

Paul DesJardin, Director, COG, Department of Community Planning and Services stated that he is the Co-Chair of CAFN, along with Chuck Bean, Non-Profit Roundtable of Greater Washington, and he agreed with Supervisor Gross about bringing someone in from the Non-Profit community. Paul mentioned that Dave Robertson, COG, Executive Director is a member of the 8 Neighbor Group, and two months ago they had a briefing with the CAO committee on this subject as it related to the precarious situation Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae found themselves in. Paul stated that he would be happy to work with Chevelle Glymph and Melissa Rivord and others on this topic.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Annual Wreath Laying Ceremony sponsored by COG Corrections Chief Committee will conclude National Corrections Employees Week on May 7<sup>th</sup>. The Wreath Laying Ceremony honors those who lost their lives in the line of duty. The ceremony will also be followed by an honor guard competition between teams from local jurisdictions. All officials from the region are invited to join the ceremony at the National Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington, DC at 10:00am on May 7<sup>th</sup> to support your local Sheriff's Office and the Department of Corrections.

## **2. Our Changing Region: Highlights from the American Community Survey**

Sophie Mintier, COG DCPS presented information from the American Community Survey, which has replaced the Census Bureau's long form. Until 2010 the Census Bureau was using two different forms to collect information. The short form provided basic demographics and housing statistics and the long form provided more detailed demographic, economic and commuting statistics. There was a major shift beginning in 2010 and the decennial census only provided basic demographic and housing characteristics, population, age, race, housing occupancy, and tenure. There is no longer a long form for the decennial census and no detailed characteristics will be collected.

The Committee was provided a handout, *Our Changing Region*, produced by COG, and Sophie explained what the American Community Survey is and what it provides. ACS is an ongoing survey, first released in 2005, that reports data which provides communities the current information they need to plan investments and services. Information from the survey generates data that help determine how more than \$400 billion in federal and state funds are distributed each year. It provides more current information because it is provided yearly and 3 million households are surveyed annually. The 4 categories of information collected through the ACS are 1) demographics; 2) social characteristics; 3) economic characteristics; and 4) housing characteristics. Ms. Mintier also discussed some of the downfalls of the ACS, which includes a very small sample size compared to the previous long form. The ACS uses periodic estimates to describe the average characteristics over a specific time period, either 1 or 5 years. When working at smaller geographic units, the margin of error for the data is greater and should be taken into account when analyzing data. This can obscure the impact on the region.

*Our Changing Region* is intended to provide a snapshot of the ACS 5 year data for the Washington Metropolitan Region and is based on data collected from January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2009. This is the first 5-year dataset for ACS. They wanted to look at data for every COG jurisdiction, explore it and get familiar with the data. The 1- and 3-year data does not cover the entire COG region. In the future, COG will look at the reliability issues and challenges. One of the strategies will be aggregating smaller geographic units up to larger geographic units. Another way will be establishing an error threshold to decide cut off points if an error is higher than a particular level they will not use the data.

The tables in the report presents the data at the jurisdictional level and the maps show the data at the census tract level. This report is one of many that will be used to analyze the census and ACS products. It will also provide an in depth look at the impact of the recession on the region. The reports in the future will focus on different topics and produce more analysis, including change of time analysis. The report will be provided to the COG Board of Directors and other policy and technical committees and will be on the COG website. Ms. Mintier also provided a

list of topical report ideas and encouraged the committee to provide input if they had topics they wished to have addressed through COG.

### **3. 2011 Homeless Enumeration Report**

Michael Ferrell, Executive Director for Coalition for the Homeless and Chair, COG Homeless Committee discussed the preliminary results for the 2011 Homeless Enumeration and provided a handout. The 2011 Homeless Enumeration is a one day snapshot of the number of homeless sheltered and unsheltered persons in the region. The data is used by local jurisdictions for strategic planning purposes, in order to determine the levels and types of homeless services needed and to gauge if homelessness has increased or decreased over time in jurisdictions.

The count this year was conducted on January 26<sup>th</sup>, and involved 9 local jurisdictions, including the District of Columbia, using the standards and methodologies established by HUD. HUD's national requirement is that all jurisdictions receiving HUD's funding will conduct a point and time count bi-annually during the last 7 days of January. The DMV has agreed to conduct their point and time count annually and have done so since 2011.

Local jurisdictions increase their shelter capacity during the winter months to encourage people who might otherwise sleep on the streets to go into shelters to prevent loss of life to exposure. The street count for unsheltered persons was conducted by jurisdictions between January 27<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Ferrell provided a handout comparing the results from the 2010 and 2001 homeless enumeration. The count for 2011 was 11,988 compared to 11,774 in 2010. The 2% increase in the region's homeless population is contributed to the region's economy and jurisdictions depleting their federal funds for homeless prevention and rapid re-housing. The report also provided a breakdown of single individuals and families with children who are homeless from 2007 to 2011.

Single individuals represented 57% of the homeless count in the 2011 report. Since 2007, people and families increased by 9.5% compared to a 3% decrease in the single adults. The decrease is largely contributed to people being placed in permanent supportive housing which provides them with social services needed to remain housed. The table also gave a breakdown of the family comparison by the number families, adults, and children who are homeless by jurisdiction; 5315 people in families were counted as being homeless this year; 61% of this total was children. Overall, children represented 27% of the total homeless count this year. Since 2001, the total number of homeless children recorded in families ranged from a low of 24.5% in 2008 (2879) to a high of 31% in 2003 (4421). In 2010, the total was 2068, or 26%, of the total homeless count (11,774). Homelessness in the working poor ties to lack of affordable housing for all income levels in the region. There are a large number of homeless individuals and families working every day; 38% of homeless adults in families were employed compared to 20% of single adults; 41% of all adults reported income from employment wages and salaries. This was a 9% decrease from 2010.

Permanent supportive housing is the primary reason for the large decline in single adults. From 2010 to 2011, 963 people were placed into permanent supportive housing. This was largely done with federal funds.

The Committee discussed analysis of data to look at the correlation of the services provided to the number of homeless and the correlation of homeless people coming from the “Rust Belt” for job opportunities; however the PIT study does not engage participants to get further details. The Committee also discussed “living wages”, tent cities, veterans, and homeless children in schools, noting that schools should be incorporated into future discussions of this matter to understand what is being done and what could be done better.

The Homeless Committee will meet on April 27<sup>th</sup> to finalize the report. They will submit the final report to the COG Board in May.

#### 4. The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (**HEARTH**) Act

Ann Marie Oliva, Director, Office of Special Needs Assistant Program, Department of Housing and Urban Development discussed the changes to the HEARTH Act. The HEARTH Act celebrates its 2-year Anniversary on May 20<sup>th</sup>, but regulations are still not out. The HEARTH Act amends and reauthorizes the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act with substantial changes, including:

- A consolidation of HUD’s competitive grant programs;
- The creation of a Rural Housing Stability Program;
- A change in HUD’s definition of homelessness and chronic homelessness;
- A simplified match requirement;
- An increase in prevention resources; and,
- An increase in the emphasis on performance.

On April 20, 2010, HUD published the proposed rule for the definition of homelessness. This proposed rule only addressed the definition of the following terms: "homeless," "homeless individual," "homeless person," and "homeless individual with a disability." The proposed rule clarifies that individuals and families may qualify as homeless under four possible categories, corresponding to the broad categories established by the statutory language in of the McKinney-Vento Act as amended by the HEARTH Act. The definition of "homeless" now includes: (1) people who resided in a shelter or place not meant for human habitation and who are exiting an institution where he or she temporarily resided; (2) people who are losing their housing in 14 days and lack support networks or resources to obtain housing, (3) people who have moved from place to place and are likely to continue to do so because of disability or other barriers, and (4) people who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

HUD will launch a significantly large amount of technical assistance and training on that rule so that all of their grantees and communities will understand the requirements and documents required on homelessness.

The Emergency Solutions Grants Program, the Continuum of Care Program, and the Rural Housing Stability Assistance Program replace the Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Plan, Emergency Shelter Grants Program, Supportive Housing Program, Safe Havens for Homeless Individuals Demonstration Program, and Shelter Plus Care Program.

The HEARTH Act modifies the existing Emergency Shelter Grants and renames it the Emergency Solutions Grants Program ("ESG"). The basic idea behind the ESG is to fund, in addition to traditional shelter and outreach activities, more prevention, rapid re-housing, and emergency shelter activities. Family support services for homeless youth, victim services, and

mental health services are added to the list of eligible services that can be provided in shelters or as part of street outreach. It also expands homelessness prevention activities to include homelessness prevention and rehousing activities—short or medium term housing assistance, housing relocation or stabilization services, housing search, mediation or outreach to property owners, legal services, credit repair, security or utility deposits, utility payments, and assistance with moving costs—for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Under the HEARTH Act, the Shelter Plus Care, Supportive Housing Program, and Moderate Rehabilitation/Single Room Occupancy Programs were consolidated into the Continuum of Care Program. The Continuum of Care Program added 12 eligible categories which includes the following activities: housing search mediation or outreach to property owners; credit repair; provision of security or utility deposits; rental assistance for a final month at a location; assistance with moving costs; and/or other activities that help homeless individuals move immediately into housing or would benefit individuals who have moved into permanent housing in the last 6 months.

There is also a new program called the Rural Housing Stability Assistance Program, which focuses on communities that do not have a HUD presence (typically communities 5000-10000 or less). At present, the bill has not been signed by the President, but this is one of the few programs in HUD that actually got an increase from 1.865 billion in 2010 to 1.905 billion in this appropriation.

The Committee discussed performance metrics for the program and collaboration between HUD and VA.

#### 5. Jurisdictional Roundtable

Dave Robertson reported that the US Center for Disease Control is looking to engage COG in leading the implementation of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the US.

#### 6. Adjournment.