

Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH)

MS Teams Virtual Meeting and Teleconference

Monday, September 20, 2021

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Council Attendees:

Mr. Scott Morishige	Chair
Ms. Lila King for	Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS)
Mr. Harold Brackeen III	Administrator of the Homeless Programs Office of DHS
Ms. Allicyn Tasaka for	Director of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)
Mr. Tommy Johnson for	Director of the Department of Public Safety (PSD)
Mr. Francis Keeno for	Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT)
Ms. Cynthia Rezendes for	Chair of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL)
Brigadier Gen. Bruce Oliveira	Department of Defense (DOD)
Ms. Brianna Levy for	Director of the Department of Education (DOE)
Ms. Melissa Lewis for	Department of the Attorney General (AG)
Rep. Ryan Yamane for	Hawaii State House of Representatives
Sen. Joy San Buenaventura for	Hawaii State Senate
Ms. Lori Tshako for	Mayor of the County of Maui
Ms. Ailina Laborte for	Mayor of the City & County of Honolulu
Ms. Ashton Varner for	Mayor of the County of Kauai
Mr. Mark Chandler	U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) Office of Community Planning & Development
Mr. Arthur Minor	Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Mr. Hakim Ouansafi	Executive Director of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority
Ms. Brandee Menino	Continuum of Care for the County of Hawaii
Ms. Laura Thielen	Continuum of Care for the County of Honolulu
Ms. Makana Kamibayashi	Continuum of Care for the County of Kauai
Ms. Maude Cumming	Continuum of Care for the County of Maui
Mr. Dave Rolf	Business Community Representative
Pastor David Kaneshiro	Faith-Based Community Representative

Absent:

Department of Health (DOH); Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA)

Staff:

Mr. Justin Limasa, Homelessness Assistant; Mr. Jason Kasamoto, Homelessness Special Assistant and Public Affairs; Ms. Emma Grochowsky, Homelessness Community Development Specialist; Ms. Erin Yamashiro, Deputy Attorney General; Ms. Anya Schumacher, Social Work Student; Ms. Haunani Reid, Social Work Student; Ms. Jenivy Teruo, Social Work Student; Ms. Tehya Nichols, Social Work Student

Special Guests:

Ms. Katy Miller (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness); Ms. Judy Mohr-Peterson (DHS Med-QUEST Division); Ms. Heather Lyons (Corporation for Supportive Housing)

- I. **Call to Order. Taking of the Roll.** Roll was taken and there was a quorum established with 24 out of 27 members. The meeting was called to order at 10:11 a.m. by the Chair.

Chair Morishige welcomed everyone and reviewed several general housekeeping items related to the virtual teleconference platform. Attendees were asked to keep their device on 'mute' unless speaking, and members were asked to notify staff when leaving the meeting. The Chair explained that voting will be conducted via a general voice vote unless otherwise specified, and

members should vote verbally or using the chat feature. The Chair reminded attendees that the meeting will be recorded and will be available at <http://homelessness.hawaii.gov>.

- II. **Overview and Approval of Agenda.** The Chair presented the agenda for review and requested a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Hirota moved and Ms. Tshako seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

The Chair called the question. The motion passed unanimously.

- III. **Approval of Minutes.** The Chair reminded members that the June 21, 2020, meeting minutes were available electronically. The Chair provided time for members to review the minutes and asked if there were any additions or corrections.

Ms. Rezentes moved and Mr. Ouansafi seconded to approve the minutes as presented. Seeing no additions or corrections at this time, the Chair called the question. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Menino joined the meeting at 10:15 a.m. Quorum was updated to reflect 25 out of 27 members present.

- IV. **Public Testimony.** Chair Morishige opened the floor to public testimony. There was none.

- V. **New Business.**

- a. **Discussion and update regarding the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) development of a new federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, including an overview of current federal efforts to increase housing inventory, address racial inequity, and respond to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Presentation by Ms. Katy Miller, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness.

USICH is in the process of updating the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. USICH is hosting a series of listening sessions with community stakeholders across the country to inform the plan, which will focus on evidence-based practices (including Housing First), continuation of strategies that are working, emphasis on racial equity, evolving best practices (including lessons learned in the pandemic), and opportunities to address the greater need and aligning with local priorities.

Ms. Miller stated that there have been many changes since the last plan was written, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the greater emerging nexus between housing and health, and the growing number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Ms. Miller noted that 2020 was the first year that there were more people living unsheltered than people living in sheltered situations nationwide. In addition, the impact of racial injustice and inequity, the poorer housing and health outcomes of people of color and highly vulnerable people, and the unprecedented amount of federal funding available for homelessness will all be factored into the new plan. Overall, there is \$1.9T in ARPA funding for housing instability and homelessness, and it is critical that local governments and providers make the best use of this funding.

Ms. Miller stated that HUD and USICH have launched a new national initiative called House America, which calls on tribal leaders, mayors, governors, and other local governments to push for the creation of more affordable housing. Many communities have signed on so far.

Question and Answer

Ms. Tsuhako asked whether USICH's new plan has considered the potential influx of people entering homelessness due to the ending of eviction moratoria across the country, and how other communities are handling this.

- Ms. Miller responded that local governments across the country will be struggling with the challenges of the ending of the eviction moratoria in the months to come. The City of Seattle alone has approximately 60,000 households who are still behind on rent.

Ms. Tsuhako added that the lack of affordable housing has created another challenge when trying to keep people from losing their homes or helping those who are homeless move into housing.

- Ms. Miller agreed and added that affordable housing, to be effective, must be truly affordable to people experiencing homelessness and accessible to them.

Mr. Roversi asked whether ARPA funds would be able to be used for vertical construction. Kauai County needs more structures, rather than more rental assistance or subsidies.

- Ms. Miller stated that HOME-ARP funds can be used for construction and acquisition, noting that a link to a list of ARPA funding programs is available on the USICH website at <https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/a-guide-to-american-rescue-plan-funding-that-impacts-people-experiencing-homelessness>.

The Chair stated that the "village" model of communal housing has become more prevalent in Hawaii and on the West Coast and wondered whether this type of housing would be incorporated into the new Federal Strategic Plan. In addition, the Chair asked whether USICH would be addressing this alternative type of housing.

- Ms. Miller stated that HUD and USICH have maintained that housing must look like housing, and that federally funded housing projects must meet Housing Quality Standards (HQS). Many communities have experimented with this type of housing and have used local or private funds to support these projects.

The Chair asked Ms. Miller to expand on USICH's plans to host listening sessions for community stakeholders, particularly among people with lived expertise of homelessness.

- Ms. Miller stated that USICH has begun the process of setting up a listening session with people with lived expertise on Kauai, and welcomed other partners to reach out if they know of or belong to any groups or coalitions of people with lived expertise. If anyone is unable to participate in a listening session, public feedback is being solicited on the USICH website at <http://usich.gov/fsp>.

VI. **Continuing Business.**

- a. **Discussion and possible action regarding revisions to the Hawaii State Framework to Address Homelessness and ten-year strategic plan to address homelessness, including specific strategies, tactics, and metrics and examining the intersection between local initiatives and federal initiatives to address homelessness.**

Presentation by Ms. Judy Mohr-Peterson, Med-QUEST Administrator.

Ms. Mohr-Peterson thanked the Council for the opportunity to share information related to the Medicaid program and housing. Housing has been identified as a social driver of health, and there has been a documented relationship between lack of housing and poor health outcomes

and, likewise, health improvements upon achieving housing stability.

Ms. Mohr-Peterson explained that any use of Medicaid for non-traditional medical services requires a waiver from CMS. In 2019, CMS approved MQD's Section 1115 waiver amendment to provide wraparound tenancy support services for homeless or at-risk households who:

- Have a mental health or substance use disorder need OR
- Have a complex physical health need

Wraparound services may include things like moving costs, utility and rental deposits, but Medicaid must be the "payor of last resort" for these services.

At the state level, MQD has executed new Managed Care Plan contracts that include all Medicaid services for almost all qualified beneficiaries. Contracts were first changed in 2019 and were changed again in July 2021. MQD has issued guidance documents and reporting requirements connected to the Section 1115 waiver.

Ms. Mohr-Peterson noted that all health plans have hired "Housing Supports Coordinator(s)" and have been participating in Continuum of Care meetings and connecting with community-based medical and case management providers. MQD monitors its contracted health plans to provide ongoing support. In the past six months, health plans have begun to increase these services, even before the execution of the newest contracts. From January through August 2021 on Oahu:

- 288 – number of cases referred to CES Case Conferencing by a health plan
- 335 – number of cases where the health plan is involved in getting the household "ready" for housing through CES (Number Next List)
- 740 – number of cases where the health plan is involved in post-referral follow-up for household who have received a housing referral through CES

Ms. Mohr-Peterson added that MQD has emphasized the importance of partnering agencies to apply to become Medicaid providers for the types of wraparound services they provide. A series of provider outreach and training sessions have been held in recent months, especially because of the linguistical, billing, and operational differences between health services and other human services. Once community providers are successfully enrolled as Medicaid providers, the individual health plans can contract with them to provide some of the tenancy support services covered by the Section 1115 waiver amendment.

MQD continues to strategize to reduce duplication of services and ensure that MQD services are filling critical gaps in the community. The Department will continue its work to support homeless service providers through the Medicaid provider enrollment process and will continue to update the guidance based on information received from CMS. An evaluation of the waiver services is required by CMS and is currently underway.

The Chair thanked Ms. Mohr-Peterson for the Department's ongoing work to implement the Section 1115 waiver amendment to support homeless and at-risk households. The Chair also thanked Partners in Care and the Oahu Coordinated Entry System team, who have been instrumental in fostering a relationship between homeless service providers and the health plans on Oahu.

Ms. Mohr-Peterson also thanked the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) for their work to document the need for more types of supportive housing related to the application for the Section 1115 waiver amendment. The Chair added that CSH has provided very helpful technical assistance to Hawaii over the years, and is currently providing a series of technical consulting centered around housing needs for criminal justice-involved households. CSH has also been working with the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation to better inform and direct philanthropic funding for supportive housing needs.

Presentation by Ms. Heather Lyons, Corporation for Supportive Housing.

Ms. Lyons introduced CSH as a national-level organization that provides both technical assistance and consulting, as well as lending services for supportive housing. CSH is currently supporting justice-related issues and philanthropic funding priorities with the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation.

CSH's Supportive Housing Needs tool was designed to document the needs for many types of supportive housing, not just those related to homelessness. Ms. Lyons shared CSH's Supportive Housing Needs maps, which have been updated in 2020:

- 3,888* supportive housing units needed statewide
 - 1,429 chronically homeless
 - 621 older adults
 - 560 leaving correctional facilities
 - 428 homeless
 - 408 foster care/CWS youth and unaccompanied TAY
 - 158 substance use disorder
 - 72** mental health

*Ms. Lyons noted that these numbers are likely an undercount because the need is based on public, point-in-time data.

**One explanation for this very likely undercount is that SAMHSA doesn't capture group homes, emergency psychiatric beds, or beds reserved for people with co-occurring disorders.

The Chair added that the CSH maps referenced in Ms. Lyons's presentation are available at https://public.tableau.com/shared/GDPRYGH3F?:display_count=y&:origin=viz_share_link&:embed=y. CSH also has information on how the information was gathered, which can be accessed at <https://www.csh.org/supportive-housing-101/data/>.

The Chair remarked that housing must be placed in different systems to prevent people from falling into homelessness, and that leveraging other funding sources is critical to ensure successful delivery of services. One recent example of this is the DHS Child Welfare Services Division's participation in the Oahu and Neighbor Island CoC groups to identify areas where CWS resources can be used to support CWS-involved youth.

Question and Answer

Ms. Tsuhako stated that the Maui County community, and perhaps other rural communities, might benefit from a capacity-building discussion, particularly around offering supportive services in a manner that is consistent with the requirements for other competitive federal funding sources. Ms. Tsuhako noted that some communities do not currently have some of the partnerships in place, but are interested in building them.

- Ms. Lyons acknowledged this need across communities and stated that the Coordinated Entry System is usually used to identify those who are more acute and the resources that can support them. In addition, communities may need to look across sectors for other supportive services and partnerships.

b. Discussion regarding the use of federal funding to address homelessness through Emergency Solutions Grant and other federal programs related to the pandemic.

Presentation by Ms. Laura Thielen, Partners in Care.

Ms. Thielen provided a brief update on the Hawaii Public Housing Authority's (HPHA) allocation of Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs) for Oahu. There are a total of 182 HPHA vouchers for Oahu, and an additional 312 vouchers will be available from the City & County of Honolulu in early 2022.

The Oahu CoC has proposed a move-on strategy for those who are stably housed in PSH programs and no longer require the high level of wraparound services available through those programs. When those households are transitioned to EHVs, their PSH vouchers will be available to new households who need intensive wraparound supportive services. Ms. Thielen thanked the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA), especially Director Ouansafi and Ms. Sarah Beamer for their leadership and partnership.

Ms. Thielen explained the service delivery model for EHVs, which has been designed to move households through the process as quickly as possible. The timeline for beginning the process has been pushed back slightly, but the first batch of referrals has been sent to HPHA and PIC has hired staff to support this program. Ms. Thielen thanked Mr. Wu with HUD for his work to ensure the availability of HQS inspection training for EHV staff.

The Chair recognized the work of Ms. Thielen and the PIC CES Team, particularly Ms. Morgan Esarey. They have worked tirelessly over the past several months to establish the EHV program for Oahu and have been working with both HPHA and the City & County of Honolulu to establish the procedures for the EHV partnership.

Presentation by Ms. Lori Tsuhako, Ms. Sharon Hirota, and Ms. Ashton Varner, Bridging the Gap.

Due to technical difficulties with Ms. Cumming's connection, the presentation was conducted by Ms. Tsuhako, Ms. Hirota, and Ms. Varner.

Ms. Hirota explained that the neighbor island counties have received 110 EHVs for Hawaii County, 76 for Maui County, and 28 for Kauai County. No new households may be added after September 30, 2022. All vouchers not being used as of September 30, 2023 will be recaptured by HUD. EHVs must be used to assist households who are homeless, at-risk of homelessness, fleeing domestic violence or trafficking, or who are recently homeless or part of a move-on strategy.

County CES Conveners will collect applications and required documents, which will be forwarded to Ka Mana O Na Helu (Collaborative Applicant and HMIS Lead), who will review the packet and approve for submission to the PHA. BTG has approved the following prioritization:

- Priority 1 – recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent homelessness or housing instability. BTG will begin with households in RRH programs and will transition to PSH programs if vouchers are still available.
- Priority 2 – homeless but do not need high level of services
- Priority 3 – fleeing domestic violence or trafficking
- Priority 4 – at-risk of homelessness

Ms. Hirota explained that all households must be referred through CES and must have their information in HMIS. Once eligibility has been determined, the CoC will track data and results in HMIS. Ms. Hirota noted that all partners are going through this process for the first time and are continuously learning.

Ms. Varner added that Kauai County has allocated 10 vouchers for “recently homeless,” which have been allocated to Family Life Center and Catholic Charities Hawaii. The remaining 18 vouchers will be for literally homeless households. EHV’s come with service fees and the County and its partners are working to determine how the potential \$3,500 per EHV will be used.

Ms. Tsuhako stated that 9 applications have been sent to KMNH for approval in Maui County so far, and all 9 will be issued a voucher. KMNH created a new HMIS program to track EHV placements. So far, there has not been a definite plan about using the administrative funds attached to the vouchers, but the County’s intent is to share the fees with the non-profit agencies who are doing the case management and housing placement work.

The Chair thanked the County Coordinators from Bridging the Gap, the local chapter leadership, and Ka Mana O Na Helu for their joint efforts to implement the EHV program.

VII. **Permitted Interaction Group.**

- a. **Report and discussion of the permitted interaction group established pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes (H.R.S.) §92-2.5 to review and recommend potential revisions to the ten-year strategic plan to end homelessness, and the Hawaii State Framework to Address Homelessness.**

The Permitted Interaction Group continues to meet on a regular basis.

VIII. **General Announcements.**

A. Chairperson and Staff Reports: July / August / September 2021

The Chair noted that a full report is available in the membership packet, and highlighted several key focus areas in the past quarter:

- **COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Resources**
<http://homelessness.hawaii.gov/covid>
 - GCH staff have worked with DOH share information about Operation: Expanded Testing, which offers free, self-administered testing to K-8 schools and to congregate living facilities (including homeless shelters).
 - The Chair has encouraged homeless service providers to consider all options available to expand ongoing COVID-19 testing and vaccinations to guests and staff.
- **Identification and Vital Documents Resources**
<http://homelessness.hawaii.gov/id-assistance/>
 - DHS HPO contracts the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii to offer free Civil Legal Services to people experiencing homelessness.
 - The Chair recognized Representative Yamane for working with DOH to get fee waivers embedded as an ongoing practice for homeless people seeking vital documents (e.g. Hawaii birth certificate or marriage certificate).
- **Eviction Prevention Resources**
<http://homelessness.hawaii.gov/eviction-moratorium-resources/>
 - GCH staff have worked with both CoCs to compile a list of resources for people who may be facing eviction, many of whom may be facing housing instability for the first time.
 - In addition, GCH staff have worked with providers such as the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii to share information about the impact of Act 57 upon the ending of the State’s eviction moratorium.

- **Landlord Engagement**

- GCH staff have been meeting with various community groups and advocates to emphasize the need for landlord engagement and partnership efforts. This is especially important as CoCs work to implement the EHV program and as households seek assistance from other sources, such as the federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP).

The Chair summarized the four performance benchmarks used to evaluate the implementation of the Hawaii State Framework to Address Homelessness for the current quarter (as of September 2021):

- **Count:** 6,458 people (2020 PIT Count), 1,398 people (2021 PIT Count – Sheltered Only)
 - There has been no change since last quarter.
 - Both CoCs have been working on 2022 PIT Count planning.
- **Bed Capacity:** 3,964 beds (2021 HIC inventory)
 - A detailed breakdown of HIC trends is available in the membership packet.
- **Housing Placements:** 50% statewide (as of July 2021)
 - Between January to July 2021, the neighbor island PH exit rate is 58%, compared to the Oahu PH exit rate of 48%.
 - The PH placement rate may be a factor of housing supply issues, particularly on Oahu, which impact providers' abilities to find suitable placements for clients.
- **Length of Stay:** 210 days (as of May 2021)
 - As of July 2021, the average length of stay in emergency shelters was:
 - 123 days on Oahu
 - 154 days on Oahu
 - 44 days on Kauai
 - 91 days on Hawaii island
 - As of July 2021, the average length of stay in transitional shelters:
 - 382 days on Oahu
 - 397 days on Maui
 - 158 days on Kauai
 - 487 days on Hawaii island
 - Length of stay may be impacted by limited housing inventory and housing resources.

The complete packet has been provided to members and will be available online at <http://homelessness.hawaii.gov>.

B. Written Reports from Council Members.

The following written updates are provided for the Council's consideration and review (the full write-ups for each representative are included in the meeting packet and meeting slide deck):

- *Department of Public Safety*
- *Department of Veteran Affairs*
- *Hawaii State Legislature*
- *Department of Hawaiian Home Lands*
- *Hawaii Public Housing Authority*
- *City & County of Honolulu*

- *County of Kauai*
- *Kauai Community Alliance*

IX. **Executive Session**

Pursuant to H.R.S. §92-7(a), the Council may, when deemed necessary, hold an Executive Session on any agenda item without the written public notice if the Executive Session was not anticipated in advance. Any such Executive Session shall be held pursuant to H.R.S. §92-4 and shall be limited to those items described in H.R.S. §92-5(a). Discussions held in Executive Session are closed to the public.

The Chair stated that an Executive Session is not necessary at this time.

X. **Topics for Upcoming Meetings**

The Chair asked members to contact his office with additional suggestions for upcoming meetings. The office can be reached at 586-0193 or by e-mail at gov.homelessness@hawaii.gov.

XI. **Meeting Schedule**

The following Council meetings are proposed for the 2021 calendar year:

- Monday, December 20, 2021, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

The Chair noted that future meetings may be held in person, in accordance with the end of the Emergency Proclamation.

XII. **Adjourn**

Chair Morishige entertained a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Ms. Tsuhako and seconded by Ms. Hirota. The Chair called for the question. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

MINUTES CERTIFICATION

Minutes prepared by:

Emma Grochowsky
Homelessness Community Development Specialist

Date

Approved by the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness at their Regular Meeting on December 20, 2021.

[] As Presented [] As Amended

Scott S. Morishige, MSW
Chair

Date