

**2009-10 Homelessness and Hunger
Technical Advisory Group
Friday, March 19, 2010
Conference Call**

Present: Heather Wildermuth, Robert Hebert, Cliff Smith, Susan Myers, Tom Crawford, Ann Arnall, Mike Wright, Claudia Tuck

Comments Submitted in Advance: Dave Rogoff

INTRODUCTIONS & OPENING REMARKS

Meeting called to order at 10:05 by Claudia Tuck, Chair. Callers identified themselves.

REPORT FROM THE STATEWIDE COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS - Heather Wildermuth

- Several months ago Heather attended the Statewide Policy Council on Homelessness several months ago. She told those present that we are going to encourage all member counties to develop Ten-Year Plans and look at streamlining statutes to improve operational efforts. Orlando representatives presented on local efforts.
- Tom Pierce of the DCF Office on Homelessness, who staffs the Council as well as council members are unable to lobby, so they are interested in working with FAC. Dave Rogoff gave an update of the Policy Council at the FACHSA meeting in Orlando.

CURRENTLY FILED LEGISLATION - Heather Wildermuth

Issues on homelessness and budget

- HB 923/Reed SB2654/Crist - build on the Challenge and Homeless Housing Assistance grants and is funded by voluntary donations at the MV office establishing a new revenue source anticipated to be \$1.5 million in revenue annually. Bill moved out of Committee – has 2 more committees of reference. Tom asked if the funds generated stay in county; Heather will check on this.
- Other bills are crimes against homeless related.
- DCF is looking at cutting the funding for the Challenge, Homeless Housing Assistance and the Emergency Assistance Grants. Heather reported that the Challenge Grant was reinstated today. \$4.9 revenue from Doc stamps was proposed to reinstate the Homeless Housing Assistance, but it was reported that those accounts had been swept and funds are no longer available.

DEFINING PROBLEMS/NEEDS IN CURRENT FLORIDA STATUTES

ID Fee Waiver for persons identified as homelessness

- Dave Rogoff noted that the payment challenge has been with Department of Motor Vehicles, for the ID, not the Department of Health for birth certificates.

- Some counties use a not-for-profit to obtain the ID's. It seems odd that it is easier for a not-for-profit to do this than the County government.
- Members agreed that a fee waiver for persons identified as homeless would be beneficial. Even improved cooperative agreements with State agencies would help.
- Discussed how to certify a person as homeless, Claudia noted that HUD has a Certification of Homelessness form that could be used to document the homeless status. Members agreed that this document would be the best to use as it is universally accepted. Discussion ensued regarding how to put a process forth to put this procedure into effect.
Action: Ann suggested moving forward noting there are logistical issues but we should proceed; all issues don't need to be solved now. Members agreed.

Discharge protocol requirement for hospitals and correctional facilities

- Hillsborough just approved paying for intermediate / respite beds for the homeless as part of our County Health Plan for the Indigent. They are now developing protocols. Discussed statewide protocol versus local. Noted that DOC might best be statewide while hospital protocols might be better served as a local protocol. Heather will work with the Hospital Association. DCF could put a requirement in SAMH contracts, requiring that SAMH-funded agencies work with the local continuums on protocols for discharge planning.
- Dave reported that from the Policy Council on Homelessness that one of the members represents the Department of Corrections, Alan McManus. Mr. McManus reported at the last meeting that a Correctional Facility in partnership with one of the Counties. Their intent is to roll out this pilot to other locations.
 - *Action: Heather will speak to Mr. McManus to get more information.*
- There are also reentry issues for our own County jails. This is an opportunity for us to share "best-practices" and use similar protocols to hospital and department of corrections discharge issues.

Homeless Contact Program

- The State has a program that provides cell phones to individuals on 'welfare'. Hillsborough County has been working with the DCF Office of Homelessness regarding a concern with the program. Currently, there can only be one phone per address, a problem for multi-resident shelters. Tom Pierce has brought this issue up to the Public Services Commission. He is checking on the status at the PSC.
- Mike Wright described a phone message service available through providers utilizing an access code. Many noted that this is available in other communities. Seeking expansion of the program to allow multiple people at the same address to receive a cell phone was recommended.

Homeless Sexual Predators

- Following discussion, members questioned whether this issue requires a separate task force. It crosses the issue of homelessness but it is not just homelessness. It is a big issue that is very controversial.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO TASK FORCE

1. An ID fee waiver for persons identified as homeless.
There are logistical issues with implementation that will need to be addressed.
2. Discharge protocol requirement for hospitals and correctional facilities
Heather will work with the Hospital Association and contact DOC for me or detailed information.
3. Expand the State program that provides cell phones to individuals on 'welfare'.
4. Consider whether this issue of homeless sexual predators requires a separate task force.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS/ ISSUES/COMMENTS

Heather advised that there will be a two hour time slot for at the annual conference for the Homeless Task Force. Suggested topics:

- Meshing programs for homeless veterans link VA programs for homelessness to maximize funding to communities – Tom Crawford agreed to present
- DOC presentation on the pilot project - Alan McManus or someone that he recommends

Meeting adjourned at 11AM.