

**Lee County Continuum of Care (CoC)  
Governing Board Meeting**

May 10, 2023, 1:00 P.M.

Lee County Human and Veteran Services  
Virtual Meeting

**Members Present:**

Alex Olivares – Catholic Charities  
Amber Hentz – Park Royal  
Barbara Short – CareerSource SWFL  
Carl Baxter – BCW Consulting  
Carolyn Johnson – Goodwill Industries SWFL  
Dr. Tom Felke - FGCU  
Jessica Cosden – City of Cape Coral  
Joseph Rea – Centerstone  
Kim Hustad – Lee County Human and Veteran Services  
Linda Hafner – United Way  
Luella Richardson – Veteran Affairs  
Mary Grubbs – Center for Progress & Excellence  
Terryn Baah-Achemfour – The Salvation Army

**Others Present:**

PJ Brooks

**Lee County Human  
And Veteran Services**

**Staff Present:**

Mark Tesoro  
Roger Mercado  
Tim Gillmore  
Juan Albino  
Bradley Sissons

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**I. Call to Order**

*Carolyn Johnson, Chair*

a. Welcome and Board Roll Call

- Mark Tesoro reviewed the list of attendees. He stated that there was enough members present for a quorum.

b. Members Absent with/without Excuse

- Arlene Goldberg (Visuality) absent without an excuse
- Daniel Kruse (Providence Family Life Center) absent without an excuse
- Erin Dalla Costa (Lee County School District) absent without an excuse
- Jennifer Nelson (City of Cape Coral) absent without an excuse
- Marcia Davis (Housing Authority of the City of Fort Myers) absent without an excuse
- Michael Overway (Lee County Homeless Coalition) absent with an excuse
- Sheryl Soukup (Residential Options of Florida ROOF) absent without an excuse
- Stefanie Ink Edwards (Community Cooperative) absent without an excuse

**Public Comment** - None

**II. Approval of Meeting Minutes\* (March)**

*Carolyn Johnson, Chair*

**ACTION:** Mary Grubbs made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from March 8, 2023. Barbara Short seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**III. Board Membership – Erin Dalla Costa, LCSD, “Project Access”/Amber Hentz, CEO Park Royal Hospital\***

*Mark Tesoro*

There are two new members joining the Lee County Continuum of Care Governing Board, Erin Dalla Costa and Amber Hentz.

Erin Dalla Costa is the Lee County School District Representative for Project Access. Project Access is the school district initiative to help students who are experiencing homelessness.

Amber Hentz is the CEO of Park Royal Hospital. Park Royal Hospital is a 126-bed inpatient acute care facility that provides care for all adults as well as seniors on a specialty inpatient unit in Fort Myers. They are a Baker Act receiving hospital, that offers Electric Convulsive Therapy (ECT) for both inpatient and outpatient on a voluntary basis, as well as partial

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hospitalization and intensive outpatient treatment in their outpatient building. They are currently working towards creating an intensive outpatient program for adolescents.

**IV. Data Committee Update -**

*Juan Albino*

The total number for the Point-in-Time count summary for the year of 2023 was 820 individuals across 666 households, which has been an increase from the past years. 109 of those individuals were children under the age of 18, 149 of those individuals were young adults from the ages of 18 – 24, and 562 of those individuals were people over the age of 24. There were 547 males and 273 females. The number of homeless males has increased significantly because they were able to include the data for homeless population who entered the Lee County Jail for less than 90 days. The total number of veterans of was 86. The chronically homeless number has increased to 197.

The Housing Inventory Chart keeps data on the number of shelter beds available, the number of individuals that have been housed by the Rapid Re-Housing Program, and the number of people who have been placed in permanent housing. This year, the emergency shelter bed count was at 366, last year the number was 254, and in 2021, the bed count was at 266. The increase in emergency shelter beds this year due to the Bob Janes Empowerment Center adding more beds, additional beds being counted at the Emergency Housing Voucher Program at St. Vincent De Paul, adding more beds to the count at the Rescue Mission, and the ACT Shelter expanding capacity. As for Rapid Re-Housing, there were 348 beds in 2021, there were 540 beds in 2022, and there are 360 beds as of this year. Rapid Re-Housing data isn't taken based off the number of beds available, per HUD, it's based off the number of people enrolled in a Rapid Re-Housing program and housed. The increase in 2022 was due to the increase in COVID-19 related funding. As for permanent housing, the numbers have averaged the same throughout the years.

The System Performance Measures is a report that HUD uses to look at the inflow and outflow of individuals throughout the system that was submitted in April, compared to the Longitude Statistical Analysis Report that was submitted in October, which looks at households. The System Performance Measure they are looking at several different measures.

The First Measure is the length of time an individual remains homeless, and it is split into two parts. The first part is how long an individual remains homeless in an emergency shelter. In 2021, there were 866 individuals served in shelters and the average length of stay was 64 days. In 2022, there were 902 individuals served in shelters and the average length of stay was 43 days. The difference was a drop of 21 days. In 2021, the median length of time homeless was 25 days, while in 2022, it was at 19 days, which is a drop in 6 days. The second part of that measure takes into consideration the clients that are in permanent housing and

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how long they were in a shelter bed and the length of time they reported that they were homeless. In 2021, the average length of time homeless was 377 bed nights and it increased in 2022 to 420, which is an increase of 43 bed nights. The median length of time was 175 bed nights and in 2022, it was 200, which is an increase of 25 bed nights.

The Second Measure pertains to the extent to which individuals who exit homelessness to permanent housing return to homelessness. The total percentage of individuals who returned to homelessness is 21%, which is an increase from last year's 15%, which is expected due to the increase in housing cost.

The Third Measure looks at the change in the Point-In-Time (PIT) Count. The count in 2021 was at 394 and the count in 2022 was at 560, which is a difference of 166. Next year's System Performance Measures will include this year's count of 820 in comparison to last year's count of 560. The number of sheltered homeless individuals who came into HMIS was 1043 in 2021, and 1052 in 2022.

The Fourth Measure covers the employment and income growth for homeless people in a CoC Program funded project. The different metrics in this measure is going to look at adult system stayers and adult system leavers. Stayers are clients who are active at the end of the reporting year and leavers are client who exited the project prior to the end of reporting year. In 2021, there were 122 leavers. 11% exited with increased earned income and that was the same percentage for the year 2022. 16% exited with non-employment cash income and that percentage increased to 19% in 2022. The total income for the year 2021 was 24% and the total income for 2022 was at 27%.

The Fifth Measure is the number of people who became homeless for the first time, this is looking at the change number of people who entered emergency sheltering with no prior enrollments in HMIS. In 2021, that number of individuals experiencing homelessness was at 1158 and 322 of those individuals had been in shelter previously, so there were 836 of those individuals who experiencing homelessness for the first time. In 2022, the number of individuals experiencing homelessness was 969, 198 of those individuals had been in a shelter previously, so there were 771 individuals experiencing homelessness for the first time.

The Seventh Measure is successful placement from street outreach and successful placement in or retention of permanent housing. In 2021, 288 individuals exited into permanent housing. In 2022, 289 individuals exited into permanent housing. The average percentage is around 85% in both years. The total number of clients in 2021 was at 1116 and of those individuals, 496 have entered permanent housing, which gave a successful exit percentage of 44%. The total number of clients in 2022 was at 1311 and of those individuals, 642 have entered permanent housing, which gave a successful exit percentage of 49%. In 2021, the percentage of retention of permanent housing was at 90%, and in 2022, was at 93%.

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**V. Recommendation of the CE Prioritization Focus Group**

*Tim Gillmore*

The Department of Housing and Urban Development requires a Coordinated Entry system to be set up that assesses and prioritizes individuals for housing services. A focus group of 40 participants meet and discussed caseloads, the prioritization of clients, and which situations they're seeing a lot of. A completed version of the report of that meeting was sent out to the members of the board, within that report, they will find the composition of the group, general data on what's been going on in Coordinated Entry, who was in attendance, overviews of topics discussed and some concerns that the group were having, and an analysis of what those changes might look like.

**VI. CE and Outreach Activities -**

*Mark Tesoro*

- Shelter Meeting –  
A shelter meeting was created for homeless outreach staff and shelter staff to ensure that they were all communicating correctly and get insight on what's going on in every agency. The meeting has been expanded to include other partners and agencies. The purpose of this meeting is so the partners can understand each other more on issues, for example, why an individual wasn't admitted into the Empowerment Center, or why there may be process challenges at the Center of Hope, staffing changes, and things along those lines. At the end of meeting there is a rumor discussion where each partner addresses rumors that may be going around about their agencies or processes within their agency.
  - Training Opportunities for June 6<sup>th</sup> – June 7<sup>th</sup>
    - Trauma Informed Care (in-person full day)
    - Cultural Humility (in-person half day)
    - Equal Access (virtual – 90 mins)
- HOT Team Activities –
  - N. Cleveland Ave. – 4/28/23 –  
There was a HOT Team activity on 04/28/23 at North Cleveland Ave. The location was known to an active issue for drug activity and animal issues. There was a team of 20 individuals from 6 different agencies that went out and canvass the area. Most of the activities and homeless camps were set up in the mangroves and some tents were set on top of the mangroves. There were boards set up on the mangroves that lead you to the homeless camps. At this event, they found 3 males and 1 female and 8 – 10 unoccupied camps.

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- San Carlos Blvd – 5/04/23  
There was a HOT Team activity on 05/04/23 on Buttonwood Drive in Fort Myers Beach. There were 18 RV's set up with different individuals in different states of repair. They went with a smaller team to ensure that they were fine and that they had a plan. There was some campsites set up in corner of individuals trying to get themselves squared away. There was seven individuals in the campsite that were located under the bridge during the previous HOT Team activity.

**VII. Lee County Homeless Coalition – General CoC Membership Update**

*Michael Overway*

- Homeless Coalition  
The Homeless Coalition still have resources available for the HOT Team such as tents, sleeping bags, hygiene kits, and they are currently working on getting the HOT Team and Fort Myers Police Department bus passes.
- Committee Updates
  - Events Committee Planning a Poverty Simulation –  
The Events Committee is planning a Bridge Out of Poverty Training on August 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. The 24<sup>th</sup> is the simulation day and the 25<sup>th</sup> is the workshop day. They are also planning for the November Hunger and Homeless Month, the Candlelight Vigil, and the PIT Count.
  - Resource Committee –  
The Resource Committee is working on adding agencies to be able to be at the table.
  - Lived Expertise Committee –  
The Lived Expertise Committee are working on adding more committee members who are or recently experienced homelessness.

**VIII. Adjourn – Next CoC Board Meeting July 12<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m.**

*Carolyn Johnson, Chair*

**ACTION:** Carolyn Johnson Adjourned the meeting.

**Item Needing Action\***

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Lee County will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in its services, programs, or activities. To request an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication or a reasonable modification to participate, contact Joan LaGuardia by phone at

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239-533-2314, [adarequests@leegov.com](mailto:adarequests@leegov.com) or through the Florida Relay Service, 711. Accommodation will be provided at no cost to the requestor. Request should be made at least five business days in advance.

For translation services or additional information, please contact: Jeannie Sutton, Lee County Human and Veteran Services at 239-533-7958.

**Meeting minutes and agenda are posted on our website:** <https://www.leegov.com/dhs/partner>