Iowa Council on Homelessness and CoC Peer to Peer Meeting
Wednesday June 10, 2020
Minutes
Topic- What processes will continue after shutting down?

Attendance:

Mitch Finn, Malia Dunn, Michael Toliver, Rebecca Backhus, Dennis Lauterbach, Hollie Ohnesorge, Joyce Brown, Kayla McKinney, Mary Ingham, Paula Morgan, Allison Hannah, Kim Motl, Tim Wilson, Cody Crawford, Grace Fee, Dawn DeMaio, Alison Justice, Alicia Faust, Jan Zeleke, Patti Robinson, Rob Aiken, Linda Munden, Nancy Buckles, Hope Metheny, Jamey Whitney, Amber Lewis, Debbie Peck, Cathy Jordan, Jeannette Archer-Simons, Karin Ford, Elizabeth Boyer, Kelsey Wenger, Angie Arthur, Karlee Kearns, Mariliegh Fisher, Ron Lund, Krista Kodjo, Stephanie Fluckey, Amanda Hohmann, Jennifer Morris, Jane Howard, Alesha Packer, Cecelia Aguilera, Lindsay Landrum, Tess Cody, Jane Howard.

*ICA Staff:* Gary Wickering, Julie Eberbach

*CoC Staff:* Courtney Guntly, Jess Bleile

Documents for the Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care (IA BoS CoC) Interim Board of Directors are available on the Iowa Finance Authority website at: <https://www.iowafinance.com/resource-archive/?program=Iowa+Balance+of+State+Continuum+of+Care&page-id=4822>

Once the IA BoS CoC website is up and running, documents will be transferred to the new site and information will be shared with the group.

The Interim Board is currently looking to fill some open Board seats. If you are interested please make sure to email the [application](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CCourtneyGuntly%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CPackages%5CMicrosoft.Office.Desktop_8wekyb3d8bbwe%5CAC%5CINetCache%5CCoC%20Board%20Application%205-20-2020.docx) to Courtney.guntly@icalliances.org by 5pm today (Wednesday, June 10, 2020).

* **What processes have you put into place since the pandemic?**

Some projects have been fully closed since pandemic started, but they have been changing the structure of program. They have been providing video conferencing for clients that have phones, purchased phones to loan to clients that did not have access to a phone. Started using adobe for remote signing, which has minimized the time to get items. They have focused on how they can reduce exposure and risk.

Cece- Family Resources- They have ramped up mobile advocacy. One barrier they have been seeing is clients having access to internet and resources.

Michael and Malia- Salvation Army- Have included a drop box in front of their building to get necessary documents from clients. They have also been utilizing an intercom system to communicate document drop off.

Julie- ICA Funding purchase of cell phones is an allowed expense via HUD for COVID-19 disease prevention and control. Limitation is phone and contract belong to the agency. Information on purchase of the cell phones and guidelines can be found at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/faqs/3709/may-recipients-and-subrecipients-of-coc-program-funds-purchase-cell-phones/>

* **How are you meshing the new “normal: with everyday services/tasks/responsibilities?**

Jenn- YESS- Reported they are getting more things done in shelter because have less workers coming in. This allows them to work and get notes done now with the ability to give more 1-1 attention.

Grace Fee- Salvation Army - Waterloo: Reported they are also getting MORE done right now; they can work on schedule since building is still closed to the public.  They have been able to focus on those items that typically get pushed to the back of the priority list.  They have taken advantage of the time to invest in a lot of staff training.

Cecelia- Family Resources- Says each day is all about balance. Some days have been packed busy, and other days have allowed the opportunity to work on the everyday responsibilities and tasks.

There has been conversation about the long haul, and they have been incorporating in the everyday tasks, but changed the way framed bringing back in activities. Reframing has been a lot of work.

* **How are you staffing your program?**

Jan- Home Inc- Reported that volume hasn’t decreased too much due to being on the phone. They anticipate volume increasing when eviction moratorium ends. They have been doing training on the fly as time allows.

Cece- Family Resources- Reported in beginning they had to reduce some staff to one staff per shift and operating crisis line and sending others home. They have shifted some positions to meet mobile advocacy needs. As they open back up, they will be bringing people back into shelter, and some positions will come back while others will stay remote.

Alicia- Willis Dady- Reported shelter never closed and has been running 24/7 since March 16. They have increased capacity of case load to get more clients in shelter and they oversee a winter shelter that has remained open to get clients out of shelter and into communal living. They have looked at changing policies to be 24/7, due to success of clients.

Grace Fee- Salvation Army - Waterloo: They have cross-trained many of their employees to keep shelters fully staffed, to provide case management over the phone, etc.  This primarily impacted their Youth Center staff since that program closed completely.  They are reopening the Youth Center next week, so duties are shifting around again as those employees refocus on the Youth Center.

Carrie- VA has been providing services but some of their services had to close. They are open for veterans by appointment only to do shower, laundry, or computer use.

Debbie- Shelter House- They have remained open the whole time and reduced numbers to allow social distancing. They did have to eliminate some daytime services and reduced donations being accepted. They have been unable to provide community services (showers, laundry) but are looking at opening later in June/early July. They are also looking at taking donations again. Drop-in services to pick up donated hygiene items will be like a curbside service.

* **How are you providing services to your clients?**

The shelters in Fort Dodge have remained open but have cut numbers in those that they will take in.

Grace Fee- Salvation Army - Waterloo: Their shelters have been open 24/7, which was a change for one of their shelters, which pre-pandemic closed during the day.  They reduced capacity to one individual/family per room.  They have been RRH residents and taking new residents, with extensive screening questions. They stopped donations at the shelters and limited donations at the main building.

CeCe, Family Resources- They have not stopped providing services, but are doing mobile advocacy and putting PPE and social distancing in place. They have been utilizing virtual opportunities, and some of those things will continue because going very well.

Allison Hannah- Iowa City VA- Have provided access to their food pantry every day from 9a-12p. Clients can call ahead of time and do pick up curbside. They have also done quite a lot of delivering of food boxes.

Jenn- YESS- They have stayed open the entire time and have a unit designated for respite or short term to keep distance from rest of clients and provide testing. Moving forward they do not have to have multiple people transporting all over the place. Zoom meetings, have 20 kids that all have therapy, BHIS, etc. and easy to set up and get information done in notes. They plan to keep doing this, unless services state they must see youth in person. Follow through has been great with providers and with youth, example youth not having anxiety with family therapy. They have been seeing some better outcomes with the new process.

* **What advantages are you seeing having people schedule to use their services and what partnerships have you created?**

Debbie- Shelter House- less frustration from all parties because they have scheduled time. In past it was walk in and expect people to be here and there was frustration because there were so many people asking for services. In Iowa City, they have been lucky in that the City dropped charging bus fares for the past two months, so transportation has been easier for clients' had a good community response as far as food resources, allowed to provide lunch meal that they were not able to do in the past. Also used hotels to spread people out from shelter and use those meals and resources to provide food to people in hotels as well.

Cece- Family Resources- When they emptied out shelter and moved off site, they partnered with Salvation Army and they provided meals for people receiving services. Reported they utilized 5 different hotels, had model partnership before but due to COVID had to make more partnerships. Hotels were able to give a great rate, and staff had communicated with hotels by staff calling every shift and going every day to check on hotel staff and survivors working with.

Debbie- Shelter House- County set up with motels there as response to people testing positive with COVID as interim place to go. Continued to use to spread out shelter population and started moving those who were not showing symptoms. Another hotel is providing suites for families with kitchens.

Grace Fee- Salvation Army- Black Hawk County set aside funding for hoteling homeless individuals with symptoms who were awaiting COVID results, and those who tested positive.  If they had a homeless individual who needed to be put in hotel, they contacted County Social Services to arrange it.  The local PD helped transport individuals if needed, and county services and our organization provided food.

* **What processes will you keep in place after the pandemic?**

Jenn- YESS- Reported a lot of decisions they cannot make until providers make decision on what they want. CFI will continue zoom or go to meeting, as they have put into place that no youth will have in person court hearings unless they absolutely must. They are waiting to see so they can figure out how they will put everything else together, which will start next week. DHS will start going into homes and shelter next week. Biggest concern is transportation, had 0 transports unless to hospital. If going to reopen then will have to figure out plan, especially because you cannot transport multiple people at a time.

Grace Fee- Salvation Army- The online assistance applications will stay in use.  They can check eligibility for services in advance, arrange service provision on a schedule that works for them and the client, and they can pace the allocation of resources better, so they last longer through the month.

Debbie- Shelter House-They will maintain the higher level of sanitation throughout the building and in vehicles used for transporting clients.  They are installing sneeze guards around front desk that will remain in place.  They have added hand sanitizer stations in entry ways that will remain in place.  They have always offered PPE to staff, but she has learned that she will need to keep more on hand as supplies can become limited very quickly.

* **What can we do to provide support?**

Julie- ICA- Discussed making a playbook if we have another spike in cases, focusing on a library of policies and examples. For example- Cleaning protocols, staffing policies for shelters. If you have these documents in place, please share with jessica.bleile@icalliances.org if you are comfortable with that. This playbook/examples can be listed on the Iowa Finance Authority site until the Iowa Balance of State CoC site is up and running.

Linda Munden- ERP- Julie's idea is great and she would be happy to contribute to such a library. She wished for such a resource for years.  Thanks for suggesting that!

Anything specific that ICA or CoC can do for any of the providers or officials on the call, this is a desire for us to help and support however we can.

**Next meeting- June 24, 2020 9-10 am
Topic- Maintaining staff, hiring staff, staff mental health**