HRS Leadership Council's All Stakeholders Minutes

Duration:	TIME: 12 pm - 2 pm	Date: 12/1/2025
		Meeting Place: VIRTUAL MEETINGS Meeting ID: ZOOM INFO

		Leadership Council Members					
P	Dr. Larry Wallace	P	Linda Jackson	P	Monique Coleman		
P	Coni Stogner	P	Candace McGary	P	Ebonie Trice		
P	Liz Baker	P	Sheila Joseph	P	Ashley Jones		
P	Dylan Shubitz	P	Amanda Jasso	P	Tim Mercer		
P	Jacob Emerson	P	David Gray				
		Committee Chairs					
		Guest Attendees					
Guest Attendance is Recorded							
P	Ashlyn Riley	P	Pamela Bryant	P	Preston Petty		
P	Stephanie Lowe	P	Claudia Tompson				
		ECHO Staff Presenting (Collaborative Applicant)					
P	Shan Robertson	P	Perla Carranza	P	Anthony Curtis	P	Lyric Wardlow
P	Helen Eisert	P	Joseph Montano	P	LaShandraia Dwyer	P	Jason Phillips
P	Kate Moore	P	Dominique Peevy	P	Kyle Walker	P	Whitney Bright
P	Kawther Alrubaye	P	Sharon Kao	P	Bill Wallace		
P	Megan Biscamp	P	Angel Romero	P	Tania Hughes		

P = Present
A = Absent

AGENDA	PRESENTER	DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEMS
Welcome	Shan	**Welcome and Agenda Overview** Shan opened the meeting by extending a warm welcome to Leadership Council members and attendees. Overview of the agenda items for the Dec 1st, 2025, public meeting. **Leadership Council Updates** • Open seat on Leadership Council: Education or Workforce Development • https://www.austinecho.org/leadership-council/ • Stay informed about CoC News including opportunities to serve on Leadership Council, please sign up for ECHO's CoC News Updates. https://www.austinecho.org/getinvolved/ • Open seat on Leadership Council: Education or Workforce Development • https://www.austinecho.org/leadership-council/ • Stay informed about CoC News including opportunities to serve on Leadership Council, please sign up for ECHO's CoC News Updates. • https://www.austinecho.org/getinvolved/	N/A

| Quick Business | Shan | **Reflection on HRS Shared Values:**

● Members were asked to HRS shared values and brief reflection on the core values guiding.

Liz commented on "Struggling Together"

Approval of Meeting Minutes: The minutes from November 3rd, 2025, public meeting were reviewed and approved with no edits. **Motion:** Approve November 3, 2025, minutes as presented. **Outcome:** Motion passed with no objections. | **Approval of 11/3/2025 Public Meeting Minutes with no edits - Approved by all LC members present.** |
| PSH Written Standards | Stephanie Lowe | **Committee & Workgroup Updates**

Permanent Housing Committee Update – Stephanie Lowe

Stephanie Lowe provided an update on the Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Written Standards.
Key points included:
Overview of updates made to strengthen clarity around eligibility, prioritization, and service expectations. Noted areas under revision for alignment with HUD guidance and improving system flow. Next steps include incorporating committee feedback prior to LC review/approval. | **NA** |

| RRH to PSH Transfers | Preston Petty/ Ashlyn Riley | **Rapid Rehousing to PSH Workgroup Update**

• **Preston provided a brief overview of the core issue the workgroup is addressing and next steps.**

• The workgroup is responding to challenges faced by clients in Rapid Rehousing (RRH) who are struggling to achieve permanent housing stability within the program.

• In some cases, client service needs exceed what the RRH service package can reasonably support.

• In other cases, the issue is not the service package itself, but that clients require more time than RRH program limitations allow.

Workgroup Charge and Findings

• The workgroup was tasked with:

    o Identifying situations where RRH may not be the appropriate long-term solution, and

    o Clearly articulating the underlying client needs contributing to housing instability.

• The intent is to better match clients to solutions that address the root cause of their housing challenges.

• The group noted that some clients have needs driven by chronic low income and would be better served through subsidized housing opportunities. | NA |

		• The group also identified clients whose challenges would persist even in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), such as those with:
		
		    o End-of-life care needs
		
		    o Representative payee requirements
		
		    o In-home healthcare or similar intensive service needs
		
		• While PSH may offer more support in some cases, the primary goal is to:
		
		    o Identify potential PSH need earlier, and
		
		    o Begin solution-oriented planning within the RRH conversation itself.
		
		Development of the Rapid-to-PSH Acuity Tool
		
		• Based on feedback and research, the workgroup has begun developing the Rapid-to-PSH Acuity Tool.
		
		• The tool is intended to function as a supplemental guide used by case managers and clients during the RRH service process.
		
		• Its purpose is to:
		
		    o Identify emerging challenges in real time,
		
		    o Flag when housing goals are taking longer than anticipated or becoming incompatible with RRH time limits, and
		
		    o Support informed decision-making about next steps.
		
		• The tool may help connect clients to:	

		o A full PSH service package, or	
		o Targeted resources or supportive services that increase the likelihood of achieving permanent housing within the RRH timeline.

Next Steps

- The workgroup believes the tool is conceptually solid.

- A key priority is ensuring the tool does not feel like a separate or duplicative process, but instead integrates organically into existing case manager–client conversations.

- The next major focus will be implementation, including how the tool is used in practice.

- The workgroup has also requested guidance from ECHO on:

  o The appropriate balance between RRH-to-PSH transfers, PSH transfers overall, and clients entering PSH directly from the By-Name List.

- A final critical step will be gathering feedback directly from clients currently enrolled in RRH programs to ensure their perspectives inform the final design and use of the tool.

- Helen informed the group that the acuity tool will remain within the workgroup and will not be shared publicly or externally until development is complete.

- In response to a question regarding if the workgroup is identifying specific housing needs that not currently exist? Preston stated that the workgroup is identifying housing needs and housing opportunities where there is currently nowhere | |

		near sufficient supply to meet the level of demand the group anticipates will be identified.
Housing Protections Workgroup (VAWA)	Claudia Thompson/Pamela Bryant	**Equity Committee / VAWA Policy Update – Claudia Thompson/Pamela Bryant** Claudia and Pamela provided an update on Written Standards / CoC Policies for VAWA (Violence Against Women Act). Highlights included: • Progress on drafting new standards supporting trauma-informed and survivor-centered practices. • Identification of data collection needs related to VAWA Emergency Transfers. • Planned collaboration with housing providers to ensure consistent implementation across the CoC. • Updates completed on the previous ECHO VAWA CoC Policy and currently reviewing the tools for VAWA Transfer, emergency transfer policy and Reviewing the Equity Review Tool. • New documents have been created to accompany those policies and FAQ a series of questions that will help the advocate, the managers go through the policies and documents to better identify how client situations would be used in those circumstances. • Currently the workgroup is finishing up completing the ERT. After which, the group will have something to present to leadership council.

Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Update	Dylan Shubitz, HACA	**EHV Program Update**	
		• Dylan informed the group that the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program was created using ARPA funds during the last administration. • The program partnered with several Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) service providers and created approximately 100 new beds. • About half of the vouchers in the community were dedicated to PSH, with the remaining vouchers used for Rapid Rehousing (RRH) move-ons. • The voucher program was originally intended to be funded through at least 2030. • Under the new administration, the program ended earlier than anticipated, requiring funding support beginning in 2025. • The remaining funds represent the last available resources for rental assistance and will need to be stretched as far as possible. • Initial projections estimated that funds would run out in May 2026. • Since then, approximately 50 of the 200 households have transitioned to other rental assistance programs. • As a result, there is now sufficient funding to continue assistance through the end of 2026. • Transitioning households off EHV has created additional time to identify solutions for the remaining participants. • Funding is now projected to run low by December 2026. • Dylan noted that the use of some CoC funds to support these transitions has created complications under the new CoC NOFO. • There are currently approximately 150 households still enrolled in the EHV program. • Staff continue to explore additional programs and options to transition remaining households.	

		Questions and Discussion	
		• Kate asked whether all transitioned clients had been PSH households or whether some were RRH move-ons. • Kate also asked whether PSH households were being prioritized first, followed by RRH households. • Dylan responded yes, confirming that PSH households were prioritized because they were pledged by HACA to receive an indefinite housing intervention. • Dylan also noted that one RRH move-on client who was VASH-eligible has successfully transitioned into the VASH program. • Kate asked when more information would be available regarding funding for the regular Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. • Dylan responded that the next meeting with the HUD Shortfall Prevention Team is scheduled for February 2026, at which point clearer guidance is expected.	

NOFO Update	Helen Eisert	**FY 2025 Continuum of Care (CoC) NOFO Update**
		 • Helen provided an overview and update on the FY 2025 Continuum of Care (CoC) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).
		 Discussion Highlights
		 • Helen informed the group that the FY 2025 NOFO has been released, with the application timeline compressed from 80 days to 60 days.
		 • She explained that the CoC competition has three key components:
		     ○ HUD
		     ○ The Leadership Council (Local CoC Board)
		     ○ ECHO
		 • Helen noted that this is not a typical grant process.	

	- HUD releases the NOFO annually and sets national priorities for the competition. - Each community submits one consolidated application, which is scored by HUD and includes ranked projects. - ECHO serves as the Collaborative Applicant and the HMIS Lead Agency and is responsible for submitting the application, including required narratives and data elements. **Policy Changes and Risk Factors** - Helen discussed new provisions allowing HUD to reduce or reject a project application, regardless of whether it is ranked in Tier 1 or Tier 2, if there is: - Evidence that a project has previously or currently engaged in activities that subsidize or facilitate racial preferences or other forms of illegal discrimination, or uses a definition of sex other than binary in humans. - Evidence that a project operates drug injection sites or safe consumption sites, knowingly distributes drug paraphernalia, permits the use or distribution of illicit drugs, or conducts these activities under the pretext of harm reduction. - Helen noted that HUD may review the historical operations of projects, and if such activities are identified, HUD could potentially remove a project from funding consideration. **Federal Priorities and Executive Orders** - New FY 2025 federal policy priorities were reviewed, including: - Ending the crisis of homelessness on the streets - Prioritizing treatment and recovery - Advancing public safety - Promoting self-sufficiency - Improving outcomes - Minimizing trauma - Helen referenced key executive orders related to homelessness issued in January and July.	

		- She also noted shifts in federal language, including references to safety for women. **Current Funding Composition** - Helen shared that current CoC funding is distributed approximately as follows: 86% Permanent Housing - A portion allocated to Rapid Rehousing - Approximately 5% Transitional Housing **Funding Availability** - Estimated funding amounts were shared, including: - Annual Renewal Demand (ARD): $13,427,791 - CoC Planning Grant: $671,385 - CoC Bonus Amount: $2,685,540 - Domestic Violence (DV) Bonus Amount: $1,219,961 - Tier 1: $4,028,310 - Tier 2 (ARD + CoC Bonus and DV Bonus minus Tier 1): $13,304,892 **New Requirements and Funding Opportunities** - Helen discussed shifts in federal priorities impacting FY 2025 funding. - New funding opportunities include: - Approximately $2.7 million in CoC Bonus funds - Approximately $1.2 million in new DV Bonus funds - HUD is encouraging communities to expand: - Transitional Housing - Supportive Services Only (SSO), including: - Street Outreach - Coordinated Entry - SSO Stand-Alone projects **Leadership Council Role** - Helen clarified that the Leadership Council makes funding-related decisions. - Only non-conflicted members (those not applying for CoC funding) participate in these decisions.	

		- This group voted on:
		  - Funding priorities
		  - Policies
		  - Project rankings
		  - Other items requiring approval by the CoC Board
		
		Current Efforts
		
		- Helen shared that ECHO staff are actively educating and providing technical assistance to potential applicants to support alignment with FY 2025 NOFO guidelines.
		- ECHO is coordinating with the City and other system partners to strategically plan submissions that maximize funding opportunities while minimizing potential system and programmatic harm.
		
		Next Steps
		- After January 14, review current PSH projects using the new HUD definition.
		- Coordinate with system partners to determine pathways for individuals who may no longer be eligible to remain in PSH.
		- Develop a plan for new Transitional Housing programs.
		- Determine a community-wide referral process for Transitional Housing.
		- Anticipated May 2026: HUD releases CoC award decisions.
		- Following award announcements, work with the Leadership Council, funders, and policymakers to:
		  - Support individuals currently enrolled in programs who may be impacted by funding or eligibility changes.
		  - Support agencies in shifting or modifying program models as needed to align with new federal requirements.	

Public Comment		**Public Comments** • Questions were raised regarding why the acuity tool is not being shared at this time and the importance of avoiding siloed work across the system. ~Sonja • A commenter asked whether ECHO has provided updates through local news outlets. • The commenter shared concerns about how homelessness is discussed in the media and noted that public perception is heavily influenced by what community members see on the streets and hear from news sources. • It was noted that media narratives can shape community conversations and debates and may contribute to misunderstanding, limited awareness, and reduced community activation. ~Kayla	
Next Public Meeting: Monday January 5, 2025 **12pm-2pm**			

Actions taken by Leadership Council during the meeting on 12/1/2025 Public Meeting
1) Approval of the November/3/2025 Public Meeting Minutes