

GNCOC Executive Committee Meeting

June 21, 2023 10 am – 11:30 am

Wendy LeBlanc, *Chair*, Harbor Care
Heather Nelson, Harbor Care
Mike Apfelberg, United Way of Greater Nashua
Hannah Stohler, *Clerk*, Marguerite's Place
Bob Mack, Nashua City Welfare Officer
Pam Wellman, Family Promise of Southern New Hampshire
Scott Wellman, *Vice Chair*, Greater Nashua Mental Health,
Maryse Wirbal, Front Door Agency
Ashley Jackson, GNCOC Coordinator
Dawn Reams, Bridges
Robyn Malchanoff, ICA
Vanessa Talasazan, Harbor Care
Katie Peterson, HUD Technical Assistance Provider
Heather Duchscherer, HUD Technical Assistance Provider
Max Burns, HUD Technical Assistance Provider

1. Introductions

- a. Wendy began the meeting at 10 am and led the group in a round of introductions.

2. GNCOC NOFO Scoring Review and Quality Improvement Recommendations

- a. Harbor Care has submitted an appeal for the bonus project scoring of last year, believing we were mis-scored by 7 points.
- b. Kyle and Vanessa have identified some immediate things we can do right now to improve:
 - i. Feedback loop for clients who have received services through the CoC. Wendy and Ashley created a survey. Heather to use it with some of their clients internally. If it works well, they will post it on their website and send it out to everyone.
 1. Bob Mack question – is this survey for CoC funded services? Wendy – it asks about how client connected with program initially, what kind of services are you receiving now (permanent housing, transitional, etc.), could be any agency that is part of the CoC. Going to pilot with Permanent Housing projects.
 2. Maryse shared that State funded rapid rehousing programs are going to be required to deploy a similar survey.
 3. This CoC survey would be voluntary.
 - ii. Other improvements – add 20% rapid rehousing beds – this is 2 beds.
 - iii. Ask community to review this and come up with ideas/feedback for how to integrate.
 - iv. Mike Apfelberg asked about #2 “Motivate Nashua Housing Authority to adopt a homelessness preference?” Heather Nelson explained the question. Maryse shared that NHA’s current preference is disability. Mike asked what are the unintended consequences switched preference from homelessness to disability

would be. Maryse explained that if someone does not check off that they have a disability, they are at the bottom of the list. Disability immediately moves individual up the list. Heather stated that NH Housing Authority has preference to homelessness. Mike stated that if we changed priorities, someone gets bumped up then someone else gets bumped down. Mike not sure if buy into “Motivating NHA to adopt a homelessness preference” without more information. Conversation was tabled.

3. Merger presentation and discussion led by HUD TA Providers Katie, Max, and Heather

- a. Katie has supported multiple states in creating Balance of State CoCs. She is here to help us determine whether a merger would be in our best interest in NH, with the ultimate goal of any merger to be strengthening services for those we serve. Coming out of the pandemic, more communities are considering mergers based on stricter HUD regulations and the challenges of supporting homeless families during the pandemic.
- b. What is a merger?
 - i. A voluntary process by which two or more CoCs voluntarily merge the entire geographic areas and projects into one larger CoC
 - ii. The merging CoCs negotiate a revised governance charter update the Coordinated Entry system to include the new geography and integrated data from HMIS
- c. Why might CoCs consider merging?
 - i. HUD incentivizes mergers in the NOFO competition with bonus points
 - ii. There may be a natural flow of homeless households across CoC borders, merging may increase efficiencies for delivery of homeless services
 - iii. Enhanced regional planning and/or advocacy
 - iv. Loss of funding year after year due to low scores in the NOFO competition (and chance to fund bonus projects)
 - v. As year-round admin and oversight responsibilities increase, smaller risk falling out of compliance with HUD requirements
 - vi. Staff capacity is often insufficient to cover admin/oversight needs
 - vii. Expanded capacity for monitoring and/or training for poor performing projects can increase the CoC’s overall performance and competitiveness for funding
 - viii. No succession plan in place if staff change positions or retire
- d. Merger process?
 - i. Idea
 1. Interested COCs begin to have merger conversation with other CoCs
 2. HUD assigns a TA provider to support the merger process
 3. Set up a regular merger meeting
 - ii. Analysis
 1. Determine what information is needed to help the CoCs make the decision to merge or not
 2. Determine if any agreements need to be established to help the CoCs make the decision to merge
 - iii. Vote
 1. CoCs take a formal vote to merge based on governance charter
 2. CoCs send documentation of the approval to COCmerger@hud.gov
 3. HUD will acknowledge the merger, then provide an updated CoC name and number

- iv. Data
 1. Determine where data will be stored for prior years' pre-merger data
 2. Map out process to incorporate data from former CoCs
 3. Submit SPM and LSA data by deadline
- v. Documents
 1. Create governance documents, CE policies and procedures, rating and ranking tool, HMIS governance, etc.
 2. Designate a new CoC Board and identify committees
- vi. Admin
 1. Ensure all existing planning grants reflect the new Collaborative applicant
 2. Determine who needs access to what HUD system (LOCCS, etc.)
 3. Ensure all systems and grants get updated
- e. Common merger concerns
 - i. Who gets bonus points out of merging in NOFO? It would be the merged CoC that gets the points. Max amount of bonus points given for merging is 20 points, varies per year. There can be conversation between merging COCs about what to do with bonus points being applied for pre-merger; can be written into the rank-and-review tool.
 - ii. Loss of local control – work in Nashua doesn't go away; have to have regional bodies that get together to do PIT count, Coordinated Entry, other local work. What other mergers have found is that it actually helps them to have more time to do the work of housing people on the ground/relationship building between organizations rather than spending time on all the HUD requirements. Katie provided anecdote from Maryland CoC that depicted this phenomenon.
 - iii. Funding decisions – It's not the collaborative applicant that makes the funding decisions, it is a rank-and-review team. The Rank-and-review team would include participants from both CoCs in merger, tool approved by board. Lots of guardrails we could put up to protect local interest. Anecdote from Maryland – they held all projects for two years post-merger and wrote this into their rank-and-review to protect projects throughout the transition. Katie stressed the flexibility within the HUD framework.
 - iv. Major changes to the CoC – We already use shared forms and data platforms with rest of state, so our changes would primarily be governance.
 - v. Projects contracting directly with HUD – Melissa does not have time to write more projects, so we could have some sort of provision that Nashua continues to contract directly with HUD.
- f. Discussion:
 - i. Question about how often governance charters should be updated? Annually.
 - ii. A merger would add Nashua representatives to the Balance of State Executive Committee. Suggested that we could do that for every committee across the CoC; there is no creative limits in terms of governance.
 - iii. Bob – for projects contracting directly with HUD, would this mean the money would go directly to recipient from HUD rather than through the state? Katie – yes, via the ELOCKS system. The State writes the project application and puts them all in ESNAPs. State does grant agreement with HUD when the project is funded, and then subrecipients invoice the state. We would continue to write the

project application for the NOFO and then would contract with HUD directly to do the grant agreement, and then would have an ELOCKS account – when we had expenses we would draw down from the ELOCKS account. It wouldn't change for the way projects are done currently. Harbor Care did have one project that used to be subrecipient through state, which added an additional layer of reporting.

- iv. Maryse – who is ultimately responsible for a HUD audit? Balance of State as collaborative applicant would do monitoring, as well as the HUD local field office. Heather – Balance of State reporting/auditing creates an administrative burden on the subrecipient, based on anecdotal experience shared from Harbor Care. Katie (TA) – HUD would do monitoring as needed, and State would do annual monitoring of projects. As members of the Balance of State, we could advocate for revising the monitoring process.
- v. Planning grant funds would go to the state (no longer to Nashua).
- vi. What would the funding analysis look like? HUD TA to send PowerPoint this link to tool
- vii. Vanessa – Increased administrative balance on the State, but increased responsibility on subrecipients with compliance and delay in funding timing.
 1. Max – the only way that your projects would be absorbed by the state is if all the communities in the BOS merged and become a unified funding agency (UFA). The State would have to apply for all of our projects to absorb them, so if that is a concern, we could put an agreement in place signed by Harbor Care and the Balance of State as an addendum to the governance charter that says any Nashua projects will be contracting with HUD and applying directly through ESNAPS.
 2. Vanessa wants to make we understand that there would be administrative work that would have to happen locally without the local planning funds which pay for Ashley's position. HUD TA says not necessarily; the monitoring of CoC projects should be happening by the Collaborative Applicant (who is the grantee, Harbor Care). The burden of doing this monitoring that would then move to the state → compliance response on behalf of subrecipients.
- viii. Wendy – everything you just shared as benefits are things we already get from them. For everyone else in the room, the monitoring isn't a big deal, but Harbor Care has experience with the administrative differences in HUD monitoring vs. State monitoring. Anecdotal experience with HUD monitoring vs. State monitoring was shared by Harbor Care.
 1. Katie – CoC monitoring does not go to HUD; the point is that if there are findings is to work with the project to get the findings corrected, really to make the program better.
- ix. Bob – The Balance of State tends to get money with plans to develop programs, which we cannot access these funds. If we joined their CoC we could access certain funds. There has been more money coming to BOS rather than Nashua COC (primarily youth money). They got a lot more bonus money - \$642k in bonus projects, compared to \$95k that we received (just rental increases).

- x. Mike Apfelberg – with the Youth Homeless Demonstration Project, he would argue that we didn't get the funding because our programming wasn't ready to receive it, not because we were not part of the BOS.
 - xi. Katie – part of this is capacity; part of the argument for merging IS capacity – be able to prep for YHDP, be able to set up youth action board, have enough youth work and things going on in our continuum so we have a chance to apply.
 - xii. Maryse – have you seen in a governance charter where a certain percentage of planning grant funds were designated for a community (i.e. for 3 years can we have planning grant funds to cover our coordinator salary)? Yes – this is possible.
- g. Questions for discussion:
- i. Over the past three years, have CoC planning grant funds failed to cover all costs for staff and any consultants involved in NOFO preparation for year-round collaborative applicant responsibilities?
 - ii. Are there opportunities to improve the effectiveness of your CoC's homeless response that you have missed out on because you lacked staff or funds? (ex: unsheltered NOFO, HOME-ARP, local/regional funds, etc.)
 - iii. Is the CoC out of compliance with HUD regulations and/or lacking required documents?
 - iv. Is your CoC lacking diverse representation and/or active participation in CoC activities (board, committees, etc.)?
 - v. Does your CoC have the capacity to analyze program performance and equity? Do you have the capacity to act on what your data shows?
- h. Timing and next steps for a merger
- i. Official merger happens during the annual CoC registration period. The next available time is January 2024.
 - ii. Recommended first step: create a workgroup with representatives from interested CoCs to talk through options.
 - iii. HUD TA is here to help with all these steps.
4. **Approval of the Minutes from May 17, 2023**
- a. Bob Mack makes a motion to approve the minutes. Mike Apfelberg seconded. All voted in favor. The motion carried.
5. **Charter Renewal**
- a. Charter updates will be reviewed at November Exec Committee, presented for voting to full General COC December meeting.
6. **No July General Committee Meeting**
- a. We will still have an Executive Committee Meeting
7. **Room Set up at last General Committee Meeting.**
- a. Classroom style didn't work last time. Go back to the old set up.
8. **Reinvigorating and Restructuring Subcommittees**
- a. We have a lot of subcommittees and aren't required to have all of the ones we have. There is a disconnect between subcommittees and executive committee. Scott, Ashley, and Wendy mad a recommendation that Executive Committee members also participate in the subcommittees.
 - b. Wendy always thought that, based on HEARTH Act, we needed a representative from each sub-population at the Executive Level. This is not accurate; they only need to participate in some way, in committee or in general committee. Our Executive Committee

is too big, with some who don't come regularly. We have 5-6 people who we don't see/don't participate.

- c. Pam, Ashley, Hannah, and Wendy have been doing the HUD TA DEI Workgroup. What we have found is there are few discrepancies in our data/outcomes based on DEI.
- d. Committees – we need to better educate the larger group on what are the committees, what do they do, and how CoC members get involved.
- e. Recommendation – let's use the July 19th Executive Committee meeting to talk about our committees, restructuring, and our representation on it.

9. CAR/CE

- a. Follow up conversation was had on the transition from Crisis Assessment and Referral line, Coordinated Entry, and 211.

10. Financial Assistance Training

- a. Overwhelming response from Nashua providers to BOS. Sent presenter's contact information to host our own training.

11. Legislative Advocacy Training at General Committee Meeting

- a. Julie Smiley from the Front Door Agency asking if she could do a presentation on bipartisan legislative information at COC. Suggestion that this could be a presentation at December meeting.

12. Upcoming Fair Housing Training

- a. Wendy to share information about Fair Housing Training. Very important topic and important that all attend.

13. Recommendation to start using website as resource hub.

14. Adjourned 10:40 am.