

**Continuum of Care
Homeless Provider Forum
“Addressing Barriers to Housing”
April 7, 2016
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

Location

Covenant Presbyterian Church, St. Andrew’s Hall
1855 Orange Olive Road, Orange 92865

Chairs

Matt Bates, City Net
Diane Harrison, South County Outreach
Larry Smith “Smitty”, Civic Center Roundtable

Minutes

- **Networking and Refreshments**
- **Welcome** – La Shawn Hye, Project Hope Alliance
- **Continuum of Care Updates**
 - Continuum of Care (CoC) 2016 Notice for Funding Availability (NOFA) Cycle, the Commission to End Homelessness approved the project performance measures that were presented at the CoC At Large meeting held on March 3rd.
 - CoC Ad Hoc will be reviewing the performance measures of all programs that are part of the CoC.
 - The County of Orange released the 2016 Permanent Supportive Housing NOFA on March 29, 2016. The NOFA makes available up to eight (8) million dollars in Orange County Housing Successor Agency funds and Federal HOME Investment Partnership Program funds to promote the acquisition, new construction and acquisition/rehabilitation of Permanent Supportive Housing affordable for Orange County’s extremely low-income households who are homeless. OC Community Services will also provide up to one hundred (100) Housing Choice Project Based Vouchers for extremely low-income households who are homeless. The 2016 Permanent Supportive Housing Notice of Funding Availability NOFA will be available on the OC Community Services website at <http://occommunityservices.org/hcd/housing/> and on BIDSYNC, Bid Number 1603-001.
 - Santa Ana Transit Terminal (SATT) continued to open and operate as an Emergency Shelter, during inclement weather.
- **Announcements**
 - **2-1-1 Orange County (211OC)**
 - Helpline Trends report for 2015 is now available on <http://www.211oc.org/reports/helpline-trends-report.html>
 - Free Public Resource Database Training – Join 211OC the last Friday of every month from 9-10:30am for a free, interactive training on how to get connected to Orange County’s health and human services programs. For more information contact Cassie Owen at cowens@211oc.org or visit: http://ocpartnership.net/images/website/1064/files/211oc_database_training_sessions_2446.pdf

- **James Brooks, Mercy House** – Armory is scheduled to close on April 15th, last night of shelter services provided. The SATT continued to open during inclement weather. People are welcome to bring pets and tents to the SATT. People are able to come and go as they please. There are light snacks and coffee provided. During operation, the SATT is opened 24 hours a day. The SATT was activated to open Thursday, April 7th at 8:00am and will be opened until Monday. Mercy House and County Staff will be monitoring the forecast.
- **Legal Aid Mail for the Homeless** will be presenting at next month's Homeless Provider Forum.
- **George Smith, AIDS Service Foundation** – Updated the housing resource guides AIDS Service Foundation offers. To obtain printed copied or PDF version of the resource guide contact George Smith via telephone 949-809-5784 or email gsmith@ocasf.org.
- **Pam Presnall, Mental Health Association of Orange County** – MHA will be holding the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Minds conference on June 23, 2016. To learn more about the conference and obtain registration information visit <http://www.mhaoc.org/specialevents>. For more information about the conference, contact Pam Presnall via telephone 714-547-7559 or email presnall@mhaoc.org.
- **Michael Shepherd, Grandma's House of Hope** – 2 employment opportunities
 - Grandma's House of Hope is hiring for a Site Supervisor. This is a part time position working evenings on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Interested candidates should email two documents: a cover letter and resume to applications@grandmashouseofhope.org with the subject line "Site Supervisor" for consideration. To read the full job description visit: http://ocpartnership.net/images/website/1064/files/site_supervisor_2486.pdf
 - Grandma's House of Hope is hiring for a Volunteer Coordinator. This is a full time position. Send cover letter and resume by email to applications@grandmashouseofhope.org. Required subject line: Volunteer Coordinator In your cover letter, please include what has motivated you in past volunteer opportunities. No phone calls please. To read the full job description visit: http://ocpartnership.net/images/website/1064/files/volunteer_coordinator_2487.pdf
- **Kathy Tillotson, Build Futures**
 - Build Futures is able to provide emergency shelter to any homeless 18 to 24 year old who is physically and mentally able to work. This is a very low threshold program.
 - Build Futures is hiring for an Administrative Program Person. This position is part time. For more information on the position contact Kathy Tillotson via email kathy@buildfutures.org or telephone 714-907-7358.
- **Madelynn Montoya, Families Forward**
 - 8th Annual Community Resource Fair will be April 20, 2016 at Irvine Valley College. For more information visit: <http://www.families-forward.org/events/#ffs-tabbed-19>
 - The next Tenant Education Workshop will be April 26th. This is open to anyone who wants to become a better tenant. Registration is required and space is limited. Please call 949-552-2727 to register or complete a Tenant Education Workshop Registration Form. For more information visit: <http://www.families-forward.org/services/#ffs-tabbed-16>
 - Families Forward is hiring for a Career Coach. This is a full time position. Please email a detailed cover letter outlining why you are a good fit for this position along with your resume to: Elizabeth Andrade, Director of Housing Programs and Services, eandrade@families-forward.org with Career Coach Position in the subject line. To

read the full jobs description visit: <http://www.families-forward.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Career-Coach-Families-Forward-2016.pdf>

- **Martha Tillman, One Step Ministries** – Current opening single individual in Transitional Housing located in South County Area. Program is for single parent with teen. For more information call 714-932-1611 or 949-448-4524.
 - **City of Mission Viejo** – The City of Mission Viejo will be holding an all-city training on April 22nd for all employees. The Training is aimed at educating city employees on homelessness, what it is, what it isn't, how to address it, and promote awareness of the local resources. Keynote speakers for this training includes Families Forward, South County Outreach, 211OC, and other agencies. The training will allow for questions and answers. The city has created a resource sheet and will make it available to employees.
 - **HIS House** – Two current openings for a family of 3 and a family of 4. For more information call 714-993-5774.
 - **CCS Pathways** – Provide peer mentor services for individuals with mental health issues. They currently have openings for full time and part time positions. To qualify for the employment opportunity, the individual applying must have had a mental health history or challenge. For more information contact derek.nob@pathways.com.
 - **Helen Cameron, Jamboree Housing** – The Permanent Supportive Housing Collaborative Project often called the Bonus Project has reached its milestone of housing 100 of the most chronically homeless and vulnerable individuals. This effort was led by Mercy House in collaboration with Jamboree Housing, Friendship Shelter, Colette's Children's Home, and Share Our Selves.
 - **Diane Ferrante, One Church in Orange** – Working with Orange police Department to identify and target 50 homeless families and work on getting them housing opportunities. They have completed their own homeless count in the City of Orange.
- **Coordinated Entry Statistics**

Coordinated Entry Statistics			
As of: 3/31/2016			
Assessed			408
Score of 8 or higher			326
Linked To Housing			139
	Moved in to Housing	119	
	Matched to Housing*	11	
	Housed Thru CE/Lost Housing and Returned to Prioritization List`	2	
	Housed Outside of CE	7	
Document Ready - On List to be Housed			83
Not Document Ready - On List to be Housed			102
Deceased			2
Score of 7 or lower			82
	Assessed	78	
	Document Ready	3	
	Housed	1	
	Matched	0	
TOTALS:			408

- **Spotlight Speaker** – Katie Brazer, Coordinator at Coalition for Humane Immigrant rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA)
 - The Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) was founded in 1986. CHIRLA is a regional immigrant rights organization with a mission to advance the human and civil rights of immigrants and refugees, promote harmonious multi-ethnic and multi-racial human relations, and empower immigrants and their allies to build a more just and humane society.
 - For 25 years, CHIRLA’s innovative programming in community education, community organizing, civic engagement, policy and advocacy, and leadership development for youth has served the immigrant communities of Southern California
 - CHIRLA is a registered 501 (c) 3.
 - Information HOTLINE (1-888-6-CHIRLA) – CHIRLA operates a toll-free Spanish/English hotline that provides referrals and information on immigration and public charge, access to social services, workers’ rights, and other issues of concern to the immigrant community. CHIRLA’s Information and Referral Specialist responds to 15,000 calls annually.
 - CHIRLA also endeavors to help immigrants understand their civil and human rights. Some of the things you can expect to find in the Community Education Program include free, group seminars, presentations, and workshops on Immigration Laws, Immigrant Rights, Worker's Rights, Student Options, U Visas, Human Trafficking, Coalition Building, Community/Police Relations, and Street Vendor Issue.
 - CHIRLA’s Policy and Advocacy Program is divided into three key areas: Federal, State and Local Policy and Advocacy. Policy advocacy is a key component of any effort to bring about systemic change. Pressing for federal, state and local immigration policies that promote and protect the human and civil rights of immigrants has always been a critical part of the work of the staff, members, volunteers and community partners of CHIRLA.
 - To learn more about CHIRLA and to get involved by visiting: <http://www.chirla.org/>
- **“Addressing Barrier to Housing” Speaker Panel**
 - **Elizabeth Salazar – Outreach Coordinator for Illumination Foundation**
 - Barriers to housing homeless individuals and families face:
 - Loss of hope
 - Low self-esteem
 - Distress
 - Acting in a state of crisis
 - Harassment by other homeless individuals
 - Jealousy among homeless individuals who have a housing opportunity
 - lack of understanding on how the housing process really works
 - lack of access to resources that address basic needs
 - clean water to drink and bathe
 - restrooms
 - limited income
 - pending warrants and legal issues
 - past felonies
 - current and past substance abuse
 - stigma associated with homelessness
 - **Madelynn Montoya – Families Forward**
 - Families Forward exists to help families in need achieve and maintain self-sufficiency through housing, food, counseling, education, and other support services.

- Starting with 5 rented apartments in 1984, Families Forward has expanded to work with hundreds of families to regain economic independence and find a stable home for their children.
- Families Forward serves all of Orange County
- Rapid Rehousing (RRH) has two different scopes of work
 - Housing Specialist – serves as a coach to the family and helps them identify the barriers they have to housing prior to encountering a landlord. Part of this includes a tenant screening informed by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, and in partnership with the California Apartment Association. It allows the family to know what the landlord will see during the background check and be proactive by formulation an action plan that addresses the red flags.
 - Case Manager – addresses the families’ other needs. This include improving access to food, CalFresh, and MediCal, employment development, child care, counseling, etc.
- Families Forward also provides trainings aimed at addressing tenant education and tenant rights and responsibilities.
 - Tenant Education – available to all families regardless of housing status. It provides tools to help families remain housed. It explains what affordable housing in, how long the waiting lists are, and how to be proactive. Families do not know they need affordable housing, until they truly needed it.
 - Tenant Rights and Responsibilities – It explains to the families how to be the best tenant they can be. It explains when you should give your notice of vacating the apartment, preventative maintenance, addressing other issues before it complicates.
- Running a RRH programs means that you have two clients – the family and the landlord.
- Successful RRH programs have established landlord partnerships. Creating these partnerships is an arduous tasks. All landlords are different, some are willing to overlook an eviction while others are not. The key is finding the perfect family to fit into the landlord requirements. It is important for agencies to try to preserve the landlord relationship as much as possible. Communication is key in doing this. Families Forward holds appreciation events and favors for the landlord to let them know they can count on them if anything goes wrong with the family.
- **Carol Owens – Professional Property Manager**
 - Fair Housing Review
 - Federal protected classes - race (origin), color (skin pigmentation), religion, national origin (place of birth), sex, disability (physical or mental), and familial status (persons under age 18).
 - Additional protected classes in some states, including California – source of income, marital status, sexual orientation, age, military status, and medical condition.
 - Classes not protected – Person convicted of manufacturing or selling drugs
 - Exception to FH laws – Mrs. Murphy’s Exemption – if the dwelling has 4 or less units and the owner lives in one of them, the home is exempt from the Fair Housing Act.
 - Permanent Housing Options for a spectrum of clients

- Renting a room from a private owner
- Sharing a private residence with roommates – does not include subleasing as it is not verifiable.
- Independently renting a private home
- Sharing an apartment with roommates – does not include subleasing as it is not verifiable.
- Independently renting an apartment
- HUD Housing vs. bond/affordable housing (programs through the county or state) vs. non-HUD housing (Amerige Pointe)
- Engaging a Landlord or Management Company:
 - Housing provider needs to determine what they are dealing with: Is your client new to the country? Low income? No rental history? A felony? A misdemeanor?
 - The screening criteria of the building needs to be ascertained
 - Housing providers could assist by conducting the preliminary research and/or meeting with the landlord or private owner with the client accompanying them.
- Challenges to Leasing Independently or with a roommate:
 - Qualifying independently or with roommates.
 - All parties are equally and severally responsible for rent/terms of lease meaning if one person cannot pay their portion of their rent, all of the individuals on the lease face the same consequences.
- Qualifying Criteria for leasing an apartment (multifamily housing)
 - The decision to lease to an applicant or not is multifaceted. There is no perfect applicant!
 - Screening requirements are also determined by the geographic area where the housing is located (Example: Downtown Santa Ana vs. Newport Beach) average incomes/average rent for the area are utilized
 - Criteria/standards are predetermined by management company/owner. The criteria/standards should be in writing and posted in the leasing office and online. Screening parameters will vary from company to company.
 - What are the criteria – the screening model at Amerige:
 - Criminal screening – what is the degree of criminality? No Violent Crime against person, property or pet. No felonies.
 - Income - 3 to 1 ratio. Example: if an apartment is \$1,000/month then the gross income needs to be \$3,000/month. Debt load is not a factor.
 - Credit standards – satisfactory. All 3 credit bureaus are surveyed.
 - Rental History – Any eviction on the record is an automatic denial. Minimum 6 months rental history. Temporary housing will not suffice. We look at this item more closely, because it is our business. Judgements are also denials as well as eviction filings even if they paid delinquent amount. Move outs with balance dues are also denials.
 - International Screening since 9/11. Utilization of a terrorist database in screening process.

- If the applicant is not truthful on the application. If the applicant failed to disclose, they are automatically denied.
 - Identification needs to be verifiable – driver’s license, social security, passport, or ID card.
- Criminal Screening Exceptions at Amerige Pointe
 - Misdemeanor exceptions are given to transportation related crimes, alcohol related crimes, and victimless related crimes.
 - Sex offender is currently a protected class; however, the crime may fall under our criminal guidelines, so we can deny. It depends on the offense.
- Credit Exceptions at Amerige Pointe:
 - Foreclosure forgiveness – criteria was amended in 2008 due to economic conditions. Applicants have a conditional approval which requires an additional deposit equal to one month’s rent.
 - School loan and medical debt forgiveness.
 - Repossession, tax lien, or Bankruptcy – Requires proof of discharge from at least two (2) years prior. If it has been less than 2 years the applicants have a conditional approval of additional deposit equal to one month’s rent
 - History of non-sufficient funds checks will be a conditional approval for the applicant. May also require that payments are to be made in certified form for the term of the lease (money orders or cashier checks). If the applicant has negative credit, it is an automatic denial.
 - No credit – Tenant has a conditional approval. An additional deposit equal to one month’s rent or Guarantor is required.
 - No Social Security Number – Conditional approval. Additional deposit equal to one month’s rent or Guarantor.
- What is a guarantor?
 - Must meet a higher income ratio – 4 to 1.
 - Must have a satisfactory credit.
 - Individual named on the lease as an additional responsible party in the event of default.
- Property Management Concerns:
 - Must abide by Fair Housing laws – the owner, Management Company and individual Associate can be held liable for a breach of Fair Housing.
 - Third party screening company assists with the Fair Housing responsibility to apply the same screening requirements to all applicants.
- Who is going to be more flexible in leasing?
 - The private owner – why?
 - Mrs. Murphy’s exemption
 - May not have resources to check all 3 credit bureaus
 - May not have the resources to conduct criminal screening
 - Housing provider may be able to appeal to private owner’s sense of compassion for your client
- **Questions and Answers**
 - I am not on the lease but I am the caretaker of a person. When the unit needed repairs, I made the request for them but the management did not take action? Also I built a ramp for access into the unit that was later destroyed, what can I do to help accommodate the person I care for?

- When a unit has a maintenance issue, it is best that the request for action is made by the person listed on the lease. If an individual has a handicap status, then they can request a reasonable accommodation. The reasonable accommodation allows for physically handicap individuals to append their apartment. Depending on the request the tenant or management will be responsible for the financial costs.
- What is the difference between a case manager and a housing specialist?
 - A case manager is the hub for the family linking them to the supportive services they may needed. Aimed at providing family focused services. The housing specialist serves as coach to help the family find housing, does not offer handholding, but guidance.
- What makes it attractive to management companies to work with higher organizations to house individuals and families with higher barriers?
 - Criteria followed management companies is pretty stiff. It is not determined by on-site management, but by the ownership entity. It is those at the very time that should be asked to work with your agencies.
- I have heard very often that there are many landlords who are not willing to work with Section 8, Shelter Plus Care, or other rental assistance programs. Why is that? These programs are very verifiable and stable.
 - Looking for housing is very similar to looking for a job. When looking for a job you will be judged by your appearance, demeanor, and communication skills. The same applies to individuals who have Section 8, Shelter Plus Care, or other rental assistance programs. Whether the landlord is receptive to them or not has a lot to do with how the individual behaves and presents themselves. It is best they look as polished and professional as possible. In the instance that the individual is denied, they must also have a professional attitude about it, meaning they should not get offended or upset as it ruins the opportunity for the next individual.
- How do we connect people to housing when they have low, low incomes?
 - There are not enough affordable housing units in Orange County. This means it comes down to being part of the wait list. The best you can do is provide a lot of education and advocacy for more affordable housing. There is a list of affordable housing apartments on the OCHA website. Keep in mind that the more desirable the location, the longer wait list.
- Some clients we work with have an eviction on their record, because their family was evicted when they were minors. Now as adults, they have a hard time finding housing? What can be done?
 - I have compassion for your clients. Depending on the management company there is no level of negotiation. The fact that it was filed it is automatic denial. Other companies have more leeway but most do not. This is their business. An eviction presents client as a high risk. The assumption is that if they did it once they could do it again. Private home owner is more tolerant, understanding, and willing to take a risk. Every community has different screening criteria. If you know the screening criteria ahead of time save your clients the application fee. If possible have clients take accountability by putting together a support packet containing letter of explanation. This allows for them to Explain and show the positive change they have made.
- Is there a database for privately owned property?
 - No there is not. Be creative in your searches, look at community based websites.

- As a management company, would you allow a third party to be present during the tenant screening process to advocate on their behalf?
 - Yes. Advocates are welcome to come in and help. Many times property management companies have translators in the room to ensure proper communication.
- How far back is the search for felonies?
 - I do not have a specific number, but however far back the court documents goes. Depending on the property management, funding sources, tax credits, etc. there may be guidance as to how far back these are considered.
- **Closing remarks**

The next Continuum of Care Homeless Provider Forum is scheduled for

May 5, 2016 from 9:00-11:00 am

Covenant Presbyterian Church, St. Andrew's Hall

1855 Orange Olive Road, Orange 92865

