



MICHIGAN INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS AGENDA
March 15, 2021
2:00 p.m., Zoom Webinar
Registration Link: <https://michigan-host.zoom.us/j/84519418891>

Attendees: Kelly Rose, Kris Brady, Dennis Sturtevant, Ryan Hertz, Cylenthia LaToye Miller, Michelle William, Phil Cavanaugh, Paula Kaiser Van Dam, Crissa Blankenburg

Regrets: Rachel Eldridge, Mark Hoffman

Members of the public: Eric Hufnagel, Laurel Burchfield, Christina Soulard, Mercedes Brown, Jason Weller

- 1. Approval of Agenda – Cylenthia moved and Kris seconded. The motion was approved.**
- 2. Approval of November Minutes – Kris moved to approve minutes with the addition of Cylenthia as an attendee. Paula seconded. Motion was approved.**
- 3. Public Comment**
- 4. Transition in membership – Jason/Kelly**
 - a. Recognize Denny’s departure – Thank you Denny! He was one of the first members of the ICH and has been a very active and engaged member. Denny thanked everybody.**
 - b. Welcome Ryan Hertz -CEO of Lighthouse in Oakland county.**
- 5. CERA Update – Kelly – in some ways it is a continuation of the EDP from last year. First round of funding is \$622 million that is being distributed via MSHDA. Can be used for both rental assistance and utility assistance. Applicants do need to demonstrate some type of COVID related hardship to be eligible for assistance. Was signed into law last Tuesday and was kicked off today. It is projected that this program will serve 50,000 households. Legislature has only partially appropriated funds. There will be an online application portal which should launch in early April. Applicants will be able to use a smartphone or tablet to upload all the support documents. This will allow for more public facing transparency as there will be public facing dashboards highlighting dollar amounts, etc...which will also address the accountability department of Treasury has requested. Asking service providers to**

focus on eviction cases in the coming weeks. It is currently unclear if the CDC eviction moratorium will be continued. Asking service providers to focus on paying those evictions so that they are satisfied and applicants can stabilize their housing. Currently estimated that average household assistance will be \$10,000. There is no landlord forgiveness portion of this program. More information at www.Michigan.gov/CERA Cylenthia asked if there is a phone number folks can use to apply. Kelly said that folks can use the website to find their local program. Kelly said she will also share an FAQ sheet with the group. Kelly added that there will be additional marketing in May once the online portal is online.

6. American Rescue Plan Act update – Kelly – there are a number of provisions within the plan that effect our programs. Another allocation is forthcoming for rental assistance of \$500 million. Homeowner assistance program with approximately \$200-300 million. There is an allocation of emergency housing vouchers that will last until 2030. PHAs won't be able to reallocate vouchers after 2023. PHAs do have the ability to decline emergency vouchers. They are targeted for folks who are either currently homeless or at risk of homelessness. Unclear how many vouchers will be allocated to Michigan. Kris asked if local PHAs would have to create a homeless preference. Kelly said that these vouchers would have to be used for folks who either homeless or at risk of homelessness. Hope is that if a local PHA declines that HUD would allocate the vouchers to another agency serving that jurisdiction. Kris asked if there were going to be any efforts to education local PHAs about the program. Kelly said that she would check with the HUD field office to see what they have in mind. \$5 billion through the HOME program to be used for TBRA, general affordable housing, acquisition of non-congregate sheltering facilities. Working with HUD to allow for a shelter space that could be rehabbed with non-congregate spaces could be added. Tenants should either be homeless or at risk of homelessness. This should expand the number of available units. MSDHDA is going to reach out to the jurisdictions that receive these funds so that there can be a common understanding of how these dollars are going to be used. HOME funds need to be used within 4 years. This will be an opportunity to address some long term needs. Kris said that her agency traditionally uses HOME funds for rehab. She said that they have water specific funds through COVID relief and they now have a wait-list. Could some of these funds be used for that purpose. Kelly responded that these funds couldn't be used for that, however there are some general COVID relief funds coming into the state and MSHDA is advocating with the Governor's office to allocate some funding for these purposes. Paula added that MDHHS has also submitted a request for a continuation of these funds. Crissa asked if there was going to be any targeting of specific populations such as youth with the congregate housing funding? Kelly responded that there is going to be an effort to target these dollars to the populations most in need. There will be a review of the tenant selection criteria to ensure that the HOME program funds are used for the intended purpose.

7. PHA/Admin plans update – Kelly – Public comment closed Feb 26th, MSHDA will take the proposed changes to the next board meeting. One of the changes is the lookback time for drug related crime from 12 months to 3 months. Another change, is there will no longer be any consideration of arrest or charges and will only be using convictions. Historically, if there was a charge on lchat more information would be requested before proceeding. Majority of PSH cases MSHDA overturns the decision and allows the tenant to take occupancy, but this slows the process by several week. Current denial rate is about 4%. Denny asked about the changes to the lookback period and whether charges outside of 3 months. Kelly confirmed. Violent crime lookback period is still 24 months however there is still a chance to re-evaluate whether or not the person needs to be terminated from the program. Denny asked how this compares with HUDs requirements. Kelly said these are additive. HUD only precludes sex offenders. Denny also asked about owing funds to another housing authority. Kelly responded that this is also a HUD requirement however there is the possibility of getting a letter from the PHA that there is a payment plan in place. Cylenthia encouraged Kelly to use alternate sources of information/proof because lchat can be unreliable. There is the possibility of reaching out to the courts to confirm if there are charges in place. Denny, asked if there are going to any changes in marijuana? Kelly responded that it's still considered a controlled substance for federal programs.

8. 2020-2022 Action Plan Next Steps – Mercedes/Jason

a. Review CTEH restructure

i. Jason reviewed the MCTEH restructure document.

Jason ended by saying that the next steps are to have MSHDA's designer create a public oriented document about the MCTEH structure and to get the COC leadership meetings scheduled. The implementation team will begin discussing the workplan in earnest starting this Friday and will identify lead and support agencies to move the strategies in the Action Plan forward.

Cylenthia asked how the work of the Homeless Courts across the state could fit into the workplan/MCTEH structure. Denny asked how the work of the Poverty Task Force was going to intersect with the Action Plan. Kelly and Jason both said that there is definitely some overlap, and this is something can we explore as we begin to work on the workplan and identify additional partners outside of the MCTEH.

Michelle asked if there was any interaction with the Justice for All Commission? Kelly responded that Clarence Stone from MSHDA is on the commission and she and Jason would connect with him to see how the commission could connect with the Action Plan/Work Plan.

b. Update on committee/workgroup progress

i. If you are interested in joining one of these committees or workgroups please reach out to Jason (wellerj5@michigan.gov).

9. VI-SPDAT utilization – Christina

a. The VI-SPDAT is a required assessment tool under the ESP and RRH and PSH programs. In December of 2020 Orgcode announced that they were no longer supporting version 2 of the tool which is what is in use at providers across the state. Leadership at MSHDA and DHHS are drafting a joint statement to folks in the field to let them know that we are currently maintaining the status quo while an assessment is conducted about how/what folks in the field are currently doing to prioritize and identify resources for service recipients. State partners are working with the VI-SPDAT workgroup to host listening sessions as well as brainstorm other opportunities to collect information. Crissa asked if there is a new tool that's out, and if so how do folks access it? Christina responded the SDPDAT is a broader assessment tool and is still available and trainings are being supplied. With the VI-SPDAT there is a version 3 online because there were some delays with bringing it into the HMIS system. MCAH and Wellsky just announced that there are no plans utilize the version 3. Christina also shared that the state partners are also exploring supplying training opportunities. Kelly added that the workgroup has been questioning whether or not it's time to move to another tool. With the changes at HUD there is a willingness to wait to see if the new administration supplies any additional guidance. HUD/MHSHD/MDHHS has not limited communities to only using this tool for prioritization and that there is a broad encouragement to use other factors and tools to identify how folks are connected to services. Denny asked if MSHDA will be making a public statement to this end to reinforce that isn't the only tool that providers should be using. Kelly said that yes this will be part of the statement coming out in the near future because there are a handful of communities utilizing the VI-SPDAT for prioritization.

10. Budget Policy Priorities – Kelly/Mercedes/Jason

- a. Current letter to the Whitmer administration – we didn't submit the letter in time to influence the Governor's budget for this year. Kelly proposed re-working the current letter to be more policy focused and provide a budget letter at the end of the year. Kelly has been teamed with Jayshawna Hicks.
- b. Timeline for future efforts – Mercedes shared that her, Kris, and Jason are working on a timeline to ensure that there is enough time to have the policy conversations and create a joint MHPC/ICH group in August/September. That group would then identify the policies and be able to share them with the ICH in December. And then submit the letter to the EOG before the holidays or in early January. Want to tie this process to an annual timeline like the Summit or Annual Report. Kris added that there was some intentionality with starting in August so that there is enough time. Mercedes added that there could also be meta-steps to build in how the ICH and the MHPC engage in the field and that the upcoming meetings with COC leadership could be that opportunity.
- c. Review of letter to Biden administration – Jason

- i. Kelly asked if we could edit the letter to take out the language of proposals that have already passed. Cylenthia asked if we could add language in support of providing access to housing vouchers for folks with felony convictions. Phil asked if we could change the language to thank them for passing certain parts of the recommendation, but keep the language in. Kris and Kelly responded that they supported that. Kelly responded that she liked Cylenthia's suggestion and was in support. Kelly said that Jason will make the updates to the language and then circulate for an e-vote by the end of the month.

11. Roundtable – all

- a. Paula – DHHS continues to work with providers to supply testing for shelters as well as increasing access to vaccines. MDHHS recognizes that since not everybody will be vaccinated they will continue to provide testing.
- b. Ryan – at vaccine clinics locally there has been a big disparity in terms of the number of folks who have been accessing the vaccine. Kelly added that vaccine messaging campaigns over the coming months will be vitally important.
- c. Kris – tomorrow is MCAH's Advocacy Day and Kris is part of the panel that will educate policy makers about homelessness in Michigan. Kelly added that is also presenting and looking forward to the event.

12. Adjourn Cylenthia moved and Kris seconded. Motion approved.