

Somerville-Arlington COC Minutes
July 16, 2016, 2 PM – 3:30 PM
VOA, 2 North Street, Somerville, MA

1. Introductions and Announcements

The new co-chairs were announced: Antwan Steed of Wayside and Erin Zwirko, Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development. All those in attendance introduced themselves, including the new CoC Planning Consultants who were in attendance.

A webinar is being held concurrently with the meeting about the NOFA and it will be available after the fact for viewing. See second page of the agenda for details.

The Housing Corporation of Arlington is hosting a financial workshop at Leader Bank, 864 Mass Ave, on July 30, 2019.

2. New CoC Planning Consultant

Heidi introduced the new Planning Consultant Group, which was hired through an RFQ process completed by the City of Somerville on behalf of the CoC. Karen Byron and Kay O'Rourke, Byron Grant Consultants, received the award last week from the City of Somerville.

The first major task will be assisting the CoC through the NOFA process, which will be discussed in more detail later in the agenda.

3. Merger vote review/update

Heidi gave a brief update on the merger vote that happened last meeting. The group worked out the wording of the vote at the last meeting, and Heidi passed out the text to the group for reference. Balance of State (BoS) has also already voted to merge, and Lowell CoC, which is also planning on merging this year, voted to merge.

The next step is to work with BoS to execute a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to identify how and when the merge will occur. There has been one meeting with the BoS to discuss coordinated regional entry. There will be additional meetings with BoS to come to a consensus on an MOU that can be agreed upon and has sufficient detail. The goal is to execute the MOU in the fall. At this time, this effort will require continuing to work through the summer and Heidi encourages participation from the providers in the CoC.

There was some discussion regarding wanting a proposal from the BoS to respond to rather than listing out the wants/needs of the CoC. We have a copy of the recently executed MOU when the Newton-based CoC merged with BoS and it is reasonable that the same standards on when the grants will transfer and how ranking will be achieved would be suggested by the BoS. More discussion is likely necessary to ensure that our projects can be ranked appropriately. Heidi reports that the ball is in the CoC's court to respond to the BoS. The next step is to hold a local meeting.

4. NOFA Release

Karen provided a schedule of tasks for the CoC to consider in order to respond to the NOFA. The schedule is draft, and is open for revision.

Karen reported that the NOFA does not have dramatic changes, but some alteration in Tier 1 and Tier 2. HUD is also allowing some expansion projects, the CoC bonus, and reallocation. The YHDP is allowing renewals, and there is a DV Bonus again. The CoC Bonus is \$105,503 and the DV Bonus is \$211,006.

Karen reported on the changes that HUD has made to the topic areas. Transition projects are those that, following evaluation or evolution, are really a different type of program can apply for funding in this category. Consolidation projects can streamline projects, but if two different projects are ranked differently, the overall rank may be lowered if the programs are ranked differently.

The CoC can apply for a total of \$1,896,636.

The NOFA is due on September 30, 2019. Preference is to submit the Friday before.

Karen will let us know if there are webinars that are available related to the NOFA.

By this Friday, Karen will distribute an "RFP" for a call for applications, which will be reviewed by the Ranking and Review Committee. The call for applications will also be posted on the City of Somerville page and Karen asked that providers post as well. Concept papers will be due on July 30, 2019. Karen offered any services that may be needed in order to prepare the concept paper. Concept papers should go to Karen, with copies to Heidi, Antwan, and Erin.

The first draft of applications are due on August 16 for Karen to review in esnaps. Karen will have comments back to each provider by August 20. Karen likes to complete a line by line review of the consolidated application with the CoC. In the past, the consultant has asked for specific feedback that was then discussed during the monthly meeting. At the August 20th CoC meeting, the CoC will discuss the more difficult questions and then move onto the other items in order to use time efficiently.

All final applications are due to the CoC on August 30. The Ranking and Review Committee will meet to determine the final ranking, which will be presented via email as in the past. September will be dedicated to writing the consolidated application. Final comments on the consolidated application will be due on September 19. The final NOFA response is due on September 23.

This schedule might shift or email voting may be necessary as September 17th is a CoC meeting, which is before the date that the final consolidated application will be ready.

The CoC discussed that in the past there has been competition for the CoC bonus. Karen has recommended that the Ranking and Review Committee make the recommendations on applications to move forward rather than bring it back to the CoC. If there are more applications than funding, the Ranking and Review Committee will gather additional information as needed from the applicants in order to make a final recommendation to the entire CoC.

5. Review, rating, and ranking

Karen wants to put the CoC in the best position to join the BoS with consideration of potential future ranking of projects. She would like to provide feedback in order to put providers' projects in the best position. Karen reviewed the CoC's ranking tool from last year, but the merger in mind, she recommends using the BoS tool in order to rank projects this year.

The group reviewed the BoS tool for permanent housing to ensure that the point system makes sense for the CoC providers. A provider who also serves of the BoS's review committee noted that while the point system appears to be cut and dry, the BoS takes into consideration specific situations of each project. It will be important to describe how the CoC projects will rank in the BoS ranking through the merger MOU, but if the CoC uses the BoS ranking tool now, the CoC projects will have a general understanding of where those projects will rank in the future.

The providers discussed how some of the BoS ranking questions do not apply to the CoC. Question 5 could be altered to be average length of time homeless divided by CoC average or does the provider fully participate in the coordinated entry. The second option would show that there is usage of coordinated entry. As such, the BoS tool may not be appropriate for the CoC. In addition, the CoC may want a comparable tool for coordinated entry and transitional housing.

Heidi noted that the ranking tool used last year is quite different than the BoS tool. Last year's Ranking and Review Committee made a determination on what to include in the tool, and then made a decision on the ranking and point break down. Heidi suggests that the same process should follow this year.

Karen asked if the Ranking and Review Committee can meet during the week of July 22. Heidi noted that providers who have proposals cannot participate in the Committee.

6. Metro Regional Planning, including Coordinated Entry

The BoS consists of 79 cities and towns, with Somerville, Arlington and Lowell, it would increase to 82.

A regional approach would include administrative functions and coordinated entry. On coordinated entry, Somerville and Arlington would be in the metro area and consists of 14 communities based on a draft map created by the BoS. Funding for coordinated entry would be applied to each region and would go to a coordinated entry provider through a procurement process. Whoever is awarded the coordinated entry funding would maintain the by-name list and hold ongoing case conferencing meetings. There would likely not be a single entry point; rather multiple providers could be awarded contracts as entry points. Heidi reported that there are ongoing conversations regarding where to divide the regional areas.

Heidi will share the next meeting dates when regional coordinated entry will be discussed.

7. Balance of State Racial Disparities Analysis

The CoC deferred this agenda item to a future meeting.

8. Wrap Up

Due to the NOFA schedule, the CoC providers were asked to pay attention to email so the schedule can proceed at the accelerated pace.

The next CoC meeting is August 20, 2019, 2 PM at the VOA.