

Cuyahoga Regional HIV Prevention and Care Planning Council

Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina Counties

Naimah O'Neal – Co-Chair



Community Liaison Committee (CLC) Minutes

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

12:00 pm to 1:00 pm

Start: 12:03 pm

End: 1:03 pm

Facilitating Co-chair: N. O'Neal

Moment of Silence

Welcome and Introductions

Approval of Agenda: March 2, 2022

Addendum: Change Item A to Anti-Discrimination Legislation discussion then LTC Progress report.

Motion: C. Barnett

Seconded: C. Droster

Vote: In Favor: All

Opposed: 0 **Abstained:** 0

Approval of the Minutes: February 2, 2022

Addendum:

Motion: C. Barnett

Seconded: T. Marbury

Vote: In Favor: All

Opposed: 0 **Abstained:** 0

New/Old Business

Source of Income Anti-Discrimination Legislation - R. Sikes, N. O'Neal

R. Sikes - Several governments have recently declared racism as a public health crisis and Cleveland City Council has begun working on legislation addressing racism. In our CACE group, (Citizens-Advisory-Council-Equity), we are working to put urgency into passing this legislation and this presentation is given to provide an overview of the proposed housing and income legislation, housing and income discrimination practices, and strategies to increase legislation behind this cause. The Cleveland Health Department sees housing from its public health implications. Recently proposed legislation in Cuyahoga County, seeks to make tenants using Section 8 housing subsidy a protective class. This resolution to end housing and income discrimination came about a year and a half ago and gives protection and a little more power and stability for tenants to express discrimination practices when experienced. It has been shown that people who utilize housing vouchers tend to have limited housing opportunities, with little or no choice to decide their neighborhoods or maybe even being directed to homes in previously redline communities which may now have a large number of unsafe, dilapidated, and/or condemned properties. In addition, property owners can legally deny anyone using public subsidy to obtain housing and, in Cuyahoga County, that translates to about 16,000 vouchers. As there is a large portion of lower income families facing housing challenges, income protection would make these tenants a protective class of people and make it illegal for property owners/landlords to discriminate, on both the county and city level.

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N. O'Neal - They realize it is a huge systemic issue but maybe we can start to bring awareness as many do not understand what vouchers mean, in general. This opens an opportunity to start conversations on getting rid of systems that are not beneficial. It is a community issue and, unless and until the community is on board, we will always have these issues. HIV is not going anywhere and if people do not have a place to lay their head, they cannot worry about medication and other things that could keep them healthy. Our goal is to help them stay healthy so the community as a whole can stay healthy. With that in mind, what do you think we should do to add to these conversations?

***Question: R. Watkins** - What are the greatest barriers related to passing the legislation?

***Response: R. Sikes** – It has been passed in other cities like S. Euclid, Warrensville, and Toledo, but generally it would be property owners or realty organizations that would have push back on this.

***Comment: R. Watkins** - How about starting there gathering interest on the housing situation. It seemed there was no pushback on accepting vouchers but more on the process of obtaining and using vouchers. The main concern for landlords was their property.

***Comment: B. Jones** - There is a large misconception people on vouchers are not good tenants and it may be true sometimes, but for the most part, it is a myth. Many property owners' reason that people who spend more time inside may cause more wear and tear on their property than a person who works or spends most of their time outside the home. It is important to educate voucher users and informing them of the benefits, particularly with EDEN, as opposed to Section 8 where more is involved. Vouchers or not, many landlords need to bring their properties up to code anyway.

***Comment: N. O'Neal** - There are some people who don't do vouchers because they know landlords feel they don't have to bring their properties up to code.

***Comment: S. Harris** – Agreed, we should think of ways to educate on all sides, landlords, tenants, etc.

***Comment: B. Jones** - It could be a one-pager, easy to explain, that clients could pass on to landlords, as right now it can be difficult. Also, with landlords who have other properties, we could create a pool of landlords from people we know that accept vouchers and have nice properties.

***Comment: T. Marbury** – Education denouncing the stigma on voucher recipients is a good idea as some tenants are better than homeowners are. As landlords, we should be educated in order to offer quality housing to tenants with any type of voucher. Tenants also need a class where maybe landlords can attend as well as mayors, housing officials, and others.

***Comment: C. Barnett** – It is important to define safe and affordable housing because many tenants do not know what to do if they are in unsafe places.

***Comment: S. Harris** - This part of housing is outside of Ryan White/Planning Council's area of expertise and is in the jurisdiction of EDEN and others similar organization who provide housing technical assistance. Technical Assistance providers like EDEN in this instance, probably have annual events where consumers could attend to get this type information, or we could attend

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and participate in these discussions hosted by them. Planning Council's roles should be to raise awareness about this issue and encourage organizations like EDEN to participate in supporting this legislation as an expert on many of the issues.

***Comment: P. Scardino** – Definitely think education is important. We reached out to a number of homeless PLWHA who did not know vouchers were available and, working for Catholic Charities, was not aware of this assistance.

***Comment: N. O'Neal** - It can be hard to get a voucher. Other programs are out there but the problem is, if you do not have a key to a property, you are homeless or cannot use that address. However, if you sleep on someone's couch in one place or another, you are not considered homeless. Having been around 30 years positive, remembering when there was a designated block of vouchers specifically for PLWH, and now they do not exist anymore. Maybe we can talk about group vouchers again, although it also made people angry who had other illnesses.

***Question: R. Watkins**- Does legislation address with regard to the definition of homelessness?

***Response: R. Sikes** – There is no County legislation out publicly yet, only that they want to move some type of legislation, so we should take information to those drafting the legislation.

***Response: R. Watkins** – Yes, to make it clear what homelessness is then add the voucher part.

***Comment: L. Lovett** – With one and only voucher through V.A. then dealing with other agencies non-affiliated with VA, revealed they were unaware of voucher programs or how to go about that. Being first excited, only to find out often buildings were not up to code, with no access to the front door, broken stairs, etc., and not knowing where to turn.

***Comment: S. Harris** – We should focus is the definition of this legislation, “*source of income*” and try to get property owners who are willing to rent to voucher recipients to not discriminate against them for utilizing vouchers as a source of income to rent their properties. We should focus on points from Bryan, such as educating, protecting the resources, lending support to anti-discrimination legislation, making supporting legislation first then educating people on what this means and on taking care of rental properties.

***Response: B. Jones** – We should also push the point that with vouchers, the rent payment is guaranteed instead of often seen as a handicap and educate people to use other things that may put them in line for other resources. We have to start utilizing other services.

***Comment: N. O'Neal** – More resources are for mental health and maybe for PLWH. They do not hold apartments for groups anymore.

***Comment: B. Jones** - If you are upfront in beginning, those who may have thought not to take waivers, do so because you are forthcoming. People appreciate honesty.

N. O'Neal – For the plan, 1- Supporting legislation, maybe forming a strategy group on this and 2- Creating an educational piece maybe something explaining vouchers and the voucher process, separate from the legislation. Please let Sharron know if you are interested so we can create workgroup to begin discussing this. We would be looking to form two separate work groups one for legislation and one for creating education pieces. Our goal is to be intentional and organized so that we are all on the same page and know what we are doing.

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N. O'Neal – Thanks Roger, we enjoyed our time there, thought the group was impressive and that we did the job we were asked to do. When we get work groups, we will invite Roger to drive that and we will assist him on what to do. Again, please consider being part of the work groups. We as PLWH have the pulse of the community and we want to use them to affect change. It makes the community's life better, and it affects the larger community.

S. Harris – We can think about those in the housing expert realm that can speak to the groups, so our committees are well informed on housing process, such as EDEN representatives, so as we prepare to support legislation and are as well informed as possible.

T. Marbury – When you did the presentation you all were wonderful, and people were interested. It would be good when they have those meetings for committee members to attend.

Progress Report from the Linkage to Care Work group – N. O'Neal

The workgroup met and now have a form we are vetting. Once fully vetted, which it is, we will look at last minute items before presenting to Zach. We have made progress and when Zach gives his opinion, we will show to the larger group. Our next meeting is March 23rd and we will inform you of next steps.

Oral Health Next Steps – S. Harris

CLC agreed to educate people at supports groups about the importance of oral health such as check-ups, etc. The committee must now identify what they want to do and appoint people on when and who will do this.

***Question: N. O'Neal** - Any volunteers to talk about oral health at support groups they attend?

***Response: B. Jones** – The over 50 group and possibly the general group at Metro and Club 95.

***Response: K. Dennis** – Some of the women's groups.

***Comment: B. Jones** - Personal stories have impact, but we should end directing to resources for hard points.

***Comment: S. Harris** – We will prepare slides on this, five or six, so we have a consistent message and know who to contact. We can share this with Zach, as we want to work together.

***Comment: K. Dennis** – We can also inform the importance of oral health and on private insurance versus RW services that are available for oral health.

Create Education Session about RW Services – N. O'Neal

Discussions on Oral Health and Housing done today.

Planning Council Consumer Outreach Presentation - Tabled

S. Harris – Thought this was to be for consumers, so we will table.

N. O'Neal – We should probably do for both PC and consumers.

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S. Harris - Whatever the group decides, just let me know.

Parking Lot Items

Capacity-Building Training Ideas - Tabled

CLC Consumer-Focused Presentation - Tabled

Standing Business

Agree on CLC Committee work activity (if any) to be reported at the March 16, 2022 Executive & Planning Council meetings – We will give an overview of today's meeting.

Announcements

B. Jones - Sankofa Healing Weekend slots are still available, food, lodging, and transportation is free and there is a chance for compensation. We are looking for PLWH to be a part of everything.

T. Marbury - We Think 4 A Change is having two webinars. The info went out yesterday to all.

N. O'Neal - The Sunset webinar came out of a conversation from people before they passed away. Both are trying to get CEU's.

Adjournment- Motion: T. Marbury Seconded: C. Barnett

Attendance

	CLC Members	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June PSRA	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
1	Naimah O'Neal, Co-chair	20	20	20							
2	Tina Marbury	0	20	20							
3	Stephanice Washington	0	0	0							
4	Faith Ross	20	20	0							
5	LeAnder Lovett	20	0	20							
6	William Simpson	0	0	0							
7	Tracy Johnson	0	0	0							
	Total in Attendance	3	3	3							

PC Members: K. Dennis, C. Barnett, C. Droster, B. Gayheart, R. Watkins, B. Jones, P. Scardino

Attendees: B. Aguriano, J. Kelly

Staff: M. Halko, Z. Levar, R. Sikes, S. Harris, T. Mallory