



ATCIC Community Forum #62: Housing Progress Report

Austin Travis County Integral Care (ATCIC) and the Mental Health Task Force (MHTF) jointly hosted its 62nd community forum on Tues., July 20, 2010 at Austin City Hall (301 W. 2nd St.). Moderated by Dr. Susan Stone, executive coordinator of the MHTF, the forum brought family members, consumers and community agencies together to hear and discuss issues related to the progress of housing initiatives in the area. Panelists included:

Panelists:

- Betsy Spencer, Acting Director, City of Austin Neighborhood Housing & Community Development Office;
- Christy Moffett, Grant Administrator, Travis County Community Development Block Grant
- Greg Gibson, Housing Administrator, ATCIC
- Penny Rayfield, Housing Services Committee Chair, Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO)

Opening Remarks

Please find below a summary containing opening remarks, panelist remarks, audience questions and answers and concluding remarks for your reference.

Mr. David Evans, ATCIC's Executive Director, welcomed attendees to the forum, and recognized the importance of community collaboration in addressing housing needs in our community. Mr. Evans spoke about various community gatherings addressing this same topic, and how progress has been made thanks to the dedication of elected officials and community organizations. Mr. Evans introduced Dr. Stone, who led the panel discussion.

Dr. Stone thanked all attendees for their participation and introduced Austin City Councilmember Sheryl Cole, who spoke about the City of Austin's commitment to the idea of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), giving an overview of how this initiative began locally. Councilmember Cole indicated a plan to create 350 PSH units over a four year period. Ms. Cole stated her commitment to the project and her support for the work that is being done.

Panelist Remarks

Betsy Spencer, Acting Director, City of Austin Neighborhood Housing & Community Development (NHCD) Office:

- Ms. Spencer gave a brief progress report on the City's affordable housing programs, which includes an overview of NHCD's planning process, including their 5-year Consolidated Planning process and annual Action Plan process currently underway; How NHCD strategically invests federal and local dollars; Key highlights of this year's Action Plan process including a council-led initiative on permanent supportive housing
- An overview of the Action Plan was presented, which is developed under the Department of Housing & Urban Development's (HUD) guidelines and serves as the



application for four formula grant programs:

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- HOME Investment Partnership (HOME)
- Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG)
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA).
- The City of Austin includes funding sources from federal and local monies in the Action Plan.
- Ms. Spencer went over the FY2010-11 funding of \$23.8 million, and how it will be allocated: 1/3 of the funding would go towards Housing Developer Assistance Programs; the second largest piece would fund homeownership opportunities; Note: FY 10-11 proposed funding funds services across the entire Housing Continuum – from programs that serve the homeless and special needs, renter assistance, and ownership assistance.
- PSH is always difficult to achieve, but having an action plan is huge for the community.
- The City has retained a consultant to fulfill the stakeholder process, and this goes over how the creation of 350 units over four years will work.
- This is a partnership between the NHCD and the Health and Human Services Department.
- Next Steps: City Council action on final FY 2010-11 Action plan due July 29; FY 2010-11 Action Plan due to Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by August 15.
- For more information, visit www.cityofaustin.org/housing or call (512) 974-3100

Christy Moffett, Grant Administrator, Travis County Community Development Block Grant:

- Ms. Moffett discussed efforts to understand comprehensive HUD funding
- The Housing Finance Corporation works with homebuyer assistance programs including multi-family bonds
- The Health and Human Services and Veterans Services division invests in home repair, weatherization and rental assistance.
- The Travis County Community Development Block Grant provides support for affordable housing, infrastructure and redevelopment, and expansion of public services.
- Unincorporated challenges:
 - Isolated, limited access to resources
 - Areas with higher utility costs
 - substandard housing
 - insufficient or poor infrastructure
 - higher foreclosure rates
- Estimated foreclosures for Travis County include 26% who reside outside of Austin
- There is interest in looking into housing stock, providing rehab mechanisms at home
- Plans for this project include public input period in fall/winter 2010, strategic plan will be available for Commissioner's Court by January 2011, and Project Proposal is due March 31, 2011. Next plan due August 15, 2011.
- Future plans include expanding urban county, and housing development



- For more information, on Community Development Block Grant, visit co.travis.tx.us/cdbg or call 854-3460.

Greg Gibson, Housing Administrator, ATCIC

- Mr. Gibson gave an overview of ATCIC as the authority on behavioral health and developmental disabilities, serving an average of 18,500 individuals and families in Travis County each year
- ATCIC's Housing Continuum includes:
 - Homeless Services
 - Emergency Shelter Services
 - Transitional Housing
 - Residential Substance Use Treatment Facilities
 - Permanent Supportive Housing
- Mr. Gibson gave an overview of each of these service areas, as well as photos to show area locations around Travis County
- Permanent Supportive Housing opportunities are provided through New Milestones Foundation, a non-profit supporting organization that works in conjunction with ATCIC
- ATCIC operates Co-operative living opportunities as well
- Collaborations include: Housing Authority of the City of Austin-HUD Shelter Plus Care; Travis County Housing Authority-HUD Shelter Plus Care; DOMI, Inc. (Disciples Outreach to Mentally Ill) Leases for Co-Ops, Green Doors – Leases for Co-op, Front Steps – Reserved shelter beds at Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH), along with many other partners
- Future Plans: ATCIC will assist with planning and policy development for City of Austin development of boarding home facility review
- For more information, contact greg.gibson@atcic.org or call 512-440-4014

Penny Rayfield, Housing Services Committee Chair, ECHO

- Ms. Rayfield discussed the history of ECHO including their formation into 501© 3 & Housing Committee
- Recent ECHO supported reports: CSH Financial Modeling, CSH TX Re-entry, ECHO White Paper
- Discussed ECHO Housing Committee PSH Services Work Group Charge to: Respond to City of Austin HHS request regarding services for 350 units and identify the types/components of support services, based on best practices, for chronically homeless individuals, special populations, youth, and families
- ECHO is researching best practices/evidence-based practices, cost, impacts, outcomes and possible revenue sources by August 31, 2010
- Gave overview on PSH definition, and conditions for those interested in this option
- Based on recommendations from Corporation for Supportive Housing, which include:
 - 1,889 total units for PSH needed
 - 350 units to be developed over 4 years for short term production goal
 - primary target population should be chronically or long-term homeless
- Discussed results from identifying individuals through Re-entry research



- Key recommendations include development of housing units as demonstration projects targeting users of criminal justice system and other community systems
- Discussed *ECHO White Paper on Chronic Inebriates Key Findings*, which include estimated 875 homeless chronic substance users, harm reduction and housing first approaches are effective, and vulnerability scale should be used to assess housing need
- Gave the current status within the community of individuals in need
- Future plans: Community meetings to review evidence-based practices and discuss local practices and challenges for services for PSH. Focus on case management, behavioral health, income stability and physical health
- For more information, contact Penny Rayfield - prayfield@austin.rr.com or Sam Woollard - samw7@sbcglobal.net

Audience Questions and Answers

Dr. Stone asked for questions to be submitted using index cards and questions that could be answered by panelists were discussed. Others are listed below for reference, and were answered on a one-on-one basis with panelists and other representatives.

Question: Can you discuss the housing strategy for people live with HIV/AIDS?

Betsy Spencer: There are a variety of funds available, including the HOPWA (Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS) as well as options through the health department to administer funds. Any programs mentioned are available to individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

Question: How do people gain access to Emergency Services?

Greg Gibson: Through the 24/7 Psychiatric Crisis Hotline: 512-472-HELP (4357). That begins the intake process for ATCIC.

Question: To Betsy Spencer: CDBG is targeted to rural areas and 50% of funds are used for home repair and infrastructure. Could you tell me what activities or purchases are included in "infrastructure" other than buying land to expand city limits?

Betsy Spencer: Infrastructure supports are water and waste water. An example is of contaminated water in Round Rock, Texas. We were able to get them access to the City of Austin. Also, Apache Shores, in Western Travis County, we improved roads for low to moderate income families. Another is areas where children are forced to walk long distances through dangerous areas of town. Improving infrastructure becomes a matter of public safety.

Question: Can you speak to the barriers to obtaining housing created by the residency restrictions applied to those people required to register as a sex-offender and their families?

Penny Rayfield: As with anything, there is always the consideration of safety when it comes to this. We do not have the answer at this time, but realize this is an area we must also look to working on, as they are members of our community.

Question: Was 2008 the last time that investigating into these specifics and stats were studied in that degree of detail?

Betsy Spencer: While it might seem like old data, most often in statistical analysis, there is a lapse in time and therefore this is the most recent data.



Additional Questions/Comments:

1. Are there any employment opportunities currently available – specifically for licensed clinical social workers-within the system of Austin/Travis County Integral Care?

All ATCIC job opportunities are posted on www.IntegralCare.org.

2. Is there one place for people to call to find out what housing assistance opportunities are available through city and county?

All contact information for City and County have been included for your reference.

City of Austin: www.cityofaustin.org/housing or call (512) 974-3100

Travis County: www.co.travis.tx.us/cdbg or call 854-3460.

3. What definition of chronically homeless is being used?

Many community-based organizations in Austin use the federal HUD definition for a "chronically homeless" person - "In general, a chronically homeless person is an unaccompanied disabled individual who has been continuously homeless for over one year." For more information, visit <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/chronic.cfm>

4. How can I get help with no funds and I'm waiting on my disability?

It is often best to work with a case manager who can review your particular situation, medical condition and financial resources in order to discover housing options from which to choose. Community-based organizations such Front Steps and Caritas offer general case management services. ATCIC offers case management for certain qualifying individuals. You can schedule an initial assessment for ATCIC services by calling 472-HELP (4357)