

**Arkansas Balance of State  
Continuum of Care General Meeting  
May 11, 2023**

<b>Coalition/Organization</b>	<b>Attendees: Voting Members</b>	<b>Attendee: Non-Voting Members</b>
ARVHAN		
BBMN	William Tollett	Cassie Johnson, Nicole Brakebill, Jessica Minton
Collaborative Applicant		Casey Kidd
Delta Hills	Shannon Haward, Myracle White	Rose Dawson, Alex Lynch
DHS		Lorie Williams, Sandra Johnson, Lurenda Duren
EAR	Josephine Flowers	
HMIS		Whitney Force
HUD		
Mississippi	Lisa Willard	LW Davis
NEA	Shane Fore, Jana Burnett	Shalinda Woolbright
Phillips	Rosie Burton	
RHC		Stephanie Gee, Capt. Juan Gomez
SSVF-St. Francis House		Desiree Willmuth
SWAP	Sarah Fowler	George Biggs, Adam Rogers
Toadsuck	Melissa Allen, Melissa Dyson (proxy for Aimee Prince)	Matthew DeSalvo, Laura King, Nerissa Passmore
Cloudburst TAs		Katie Peterson and Rori Knight-Durham
ADFA		Alisa Green and Kim Edmonson

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order via virtual platform at 11:03 am by the Chair, Melissa Allen.

**Roll Call**

A welcome was given and roll of attendees was recorded.

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Shane Fore to approve the minutes for both March and April, Shannon Haward seconded. Roll was called for voting members to vote, and the minutes from approved for both March and April.

**Federal and State Reports**

**HUD:**

No one present

**DHS:**

Lorie reminded the group that the ESG funding application for 2023-2024 was released on May 1<sup>st</sup> and is due on May 31<sup>st</sup>. She urged organizations to not wait until the deadline to submit due to technical issues that occur. She asked that invoices are sent timely, and that you work on getting those up to date. If you are a ESG-CV recipient and are having issues spending the funds, please reach out to them as soon as possible. The agency does not want to give any funds back to HUD, so reach out at your earliest convenience if you are struggling to use the funds. If you have questions or concerns about the use of funds, please let them know. The new year grant is a little over \$2,000,000. Be sure when you complete your application, that you show the need due to limited funds. Your past spending history will also be reviewed. She also reminded agencies that you must receive a letter of good standing from the CoC. Hoping to have applications scored in June and notify agencies by July. There were no questions for Lorie and her team. Melissa added that she has sent out letters for every request that she has received.

**HMIS:**

Whitney informed the group of the change implemented by HUD on future reports which includes upload from HMIS and not manual entry. We are not sure yet as to how this will impact changes to the data. Whitney further reminded of the importance of ensuring data is entered correctly and timely. Staff are reminded to frequently run the data quality framework report to determine what errors might exist and to correct those timely. The HMIS team is also running this report and will send out an update to the staff at an agency regarding this, how to run the report, and how to make the changes. She also reminded the group that the HMIS team is happy to assist however they can through this process.

**St. Francis House:**

Desiree explained how the SSVF program for Veterans can assist Veterans and their Families with specific services throughout the full state. They have their main office in LR and satellite offices in Jonesboro and Fayetteville. The income limits have increased to 80% Annual Median Income (AMI) from 50% which is a great opportunity for individuals and households needing assistance. They also have funding for landlord incentives to help individuals and households who might struggle with their history in finding housing. You can refer Veterans to them that might be facing eviction or need housing.

**Old Business:**

Casey reminded the group that the PIT count was completed on January 26<sup>th</sup> with the PIT count report along with the Housing Inventory Count being due to HUD on 4/28. Both reports were completed and submitted around a week before the deadline. For the Balance of State, we accounted for 871 individuals identifying as homeless on the day of the PIT count with 389 being sheltered meaning they were in emergency shelter or transitional housing and 482 being unsheltered meaning they were living in a place not meant for human habitation. Casey indicated that in most areas, we have seen an increase in homelessness since the previous count. We did have an increase in volunteers which played a role in that, but due to the pandemic and economic distress, we have seen an overall increase in the Balance of State area along with the state and nation. Casey does believe that we have submitted a cleaner report to HUD including ensuring that all projects were correctly accounted for on the housing inventory count. Each LHC should have reported a spreadsheet showing each breakdown from the report and a graphic report for both the LHC and CoC to help

“tell the story” to local officials and for grant purposes. Melissa Allen added the amount of work that goes into the clean-up and how that will be beneficial to everyone going forward.

### **New Business**

**MOU between Collaborative Applicant (OCYFS) and the Balance of State Board:** Melissa Allen indicated that she is a voting member and that Casey will call roll for the vote. There were no questions about the document, and Casey just reminded the group that this MOU states what the Collaborative Applicant’s role is (her position through OCYFS for the CoC) along with the Board’s role. The MOU was approved by the board, and this will now be sent to the Executive Director of OCYFS, Ashley Thompson, for signature.

**Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Debrief:** Casey sent the debrief document for the regular CoC funding prior to the meeting so that agencies could review. She indicated that a special funding debrief has occurred, but we are still waiting to receive that document. The special debrief was for the supplemental one time funding that was released last year and due the month after the regular CoC funding application. She stated that our CoC renewal projects were renewed this year except for coordinated entry because it will not come up for renewal until this year’s funding application. We also were awarded a new project for rapid rehousing for victims of domestic violence through Margie’s Haven House. Casey went through the debrief document and highlighted areas where the CoC excelled as well as areas that the CoC needs future improvement. She did indicate that workgroups will be developed for certain areas in which the CoC is lacking such as development of policies and procedures on ensuring we are racially equitable, determining strategies to reduce first time homelessness, and policies and procedures on reducing individuals going back into homelessness. She asked that if you are interested in joining one of the workgroups, to please let her know. She reminded the group that we are not made aware of this application’s release date until the day it is released. The grants inventory worksheet which is typically the last step before the NOFO drops has not been released yet, so we anticipate maybe another month. Casey asked for feedback and suggestions from the CoC as this application is representative of the group. Laura King asked if being in the position for a full year now might help with us scoring higher this year. Casey stated that it really depends because we are still lacking on things that were scored on last year, and that we are not sure what HUD will be weighting for scores this year but definitely hopes so! Katie Peterson, TA, added that there are some things that LHCs can be doing such as working with the local housing authorities and building those partnerships. Casey can put a list together of items that could be helpful for LHCs to see what might be happening there, and then that can go into the applications. Casey did state that she is working to meet with the director of all the PHAs in the HUD field office in Little Rock and to also obtain a list of the contacts for each PHA.

**Workgroups:** These are connected to the debrief in areas in which we can improve for development of strategies and policies/procedures for the CoC. If you are interested in joining one or would like more information, please contact Casey.

**Governance Charter Review:** Melissa reminded the group that we have recently done a lot of work on the charter, but that we have to continuously review that for changes. She stated that everyone should have a copy, but Casey will send it out so that everyone can review. Please send any suggestions to changes to Casey by 5/31. Casey added that once she receives the suggestions, she will add to the document, send out for review and further suggestions and vote on it at the June board meeting.

ESG Funding Application: Melissa stated that Lorie and her team had addressed the ESG funding application, but that if anyone had any questions to please ask. No one had questions at this time.

Rank and Review Committee: If you would like to participate in the rank and review committee for the upcoming CoC NOFO, please let Casey know. You can participate as long as your agency is not applying for funding. Casey thanked the past year's committee for their work and introduced those that would be serving, so far, on this year's committee.

### **Committee Reports:**

Coordinated Entry: Casey introduced Josephine, chair of CE committee, and asked for an update. Josephine stated that she hopes each LHC has reviewed the data sharing agreements that have been sent out-one from California and one from Alaska. Each LHC could review to see what could be added or changed to be specific for Balance of State. At the general meeting, our group talked about the most vulnerable populations being served. The top 3 most vulnerable populations were serious mental health illness, substance use disorder/addictions, and domestic violence. We are asking each LHC to discuss whether those 3 are identified there as most vulnerable, and if not, to discuss what populations are and provide feedback to the committee. Melissa asked if anyone had questions and added that Josephine is doing a great job with the committee and excited to see the forward progress being made.

### **Coalition Reports**

**ARVHAN:** Absent

**BBMN:** Chonda was out, but William added that they would be meeting again on 5/19.

**Delta Hills:** Delta Hills had their meeting with the general meeting. The May meeting is cancelled because Shannon will be out of the office, and their next meeting is July 18<sup>th</sup> through zoom. They are also working currently on deciding how the LHC should be broken down since it is so large in size. Surveys have been completed by agencies in Delta Hills to gain feedback on that. Casey, Shannon, and the TAs will review those and meet to talk about next steps.

**Eastern Arkansas:** The group did not meet on 5/9 as scheduled due to individuals being out of the office. It is postponed at this time.

**Mississippi:** Lisa stated they had a great meeting with Casey also being in attendance. She indicated they had 10 people who truly are passionate about the community at the meeting and felt it was truly productive. Next meeting is scheduled for July.

**Northeast Arkansas:** Shane reported their coalition met in April and was a great meeting with good participation. He said it seems the coalition has new people there each time they meet. Organization updates were provided as well as networking amongst providers.

**Phillips County:** Rosie reported they met on 4/25 at Hope Church in West Helena. She indicated they had a new person to join the coalition. They are working to network with people in Phillips county to have a better understanding of homelessness in Phillips County. She felt they received very good input on how to better help the homeless, and their next meeting will be the 4<sup>th</sup> weekend in May.

**RHC:** Stephanie Gee stated that they have scheduled a meeting for June 9<sup>th</sup> and really working to get things up and running.

**SWAP:** No report.

**Toadsuck:** Laura King stated their next meeting is May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Most conversations have revolved around summer programming and homeless population including collecting more data to hopefully help with moving the needle forward. She has made contact with the rep from the Arkansas Department of Education and has been able to receive permission to go into their education co-op to talk with the liaisons regarding services available for those students and their families. Agencies within toadsuck will join the meeting to talk about their resources.

**Next meeting: June 8<sup>th</sup> through zoom**

With no other discussion, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.

*Minutes recorded by Casey Kidd via recording of meeting.*