

ARBOS Minutes

October 11,2024

William Tollett, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order in the absence of Chonda Tapley, our chair.

Statement from Arkansas Balance of State Continuum of Care Executive Committee:

We appreciate the feedback that everyone has sent to us regarding the current state of the Balance of State Continuum of Care in addition to the feedback regarding the time that it takes to make true change and that it is always not visible during that process.

During the 2022 NOFO process, the Balance of State Continuum of Care was awarded a total of \$472,813.00. The Continuum received a total of \$684,146.00 in 2023. That is an increase of 45%* in funding. The CoC NOFO process is not a typical grant process and increasing funding only occurs if the grant application proves the collective body is making progress and working toward achieving goals and objectives in preventing and ending homelessness while increasing housing stability and even more so, doing that for the most vulnerable. In 2023, applications presented to HUD for the NOFO process totaled \$669,866.00, so we received \$14,280.00 more than we even expected. This means that projects were either fully funded at the original request submitted by the CoC to HUD, or they were funded above that amount. This is not a common occurrence. The CoC collaborative application along with the project applications submitted proved the work being done along with the work that plans to be done since the 2023 grant fiscal year began on 10/1/2024.

We understand that there have been setbacks and lack of participation, but what agency does not experience this at times? The executive committee along with other members of the CoC are working tirelessly behind the scenes to lay the groundwork through coordinated entry, discharge planning, and ensuring an equitable and inclusive approach toward ending homelessness in our 46 county service area. However, that work cannot be done quickly nor can it be done by a few people. We also understand that each board member is acting in a volunteer role in addition to your service oriented full-time positions. We can't thank you enough for your dedication to the agency, but we also need to stress that work cannot be done without the quorum representation of our board. We have not been able to vote on items for several months due to lack of participation. It is the responsibility of the local homeless coalition to ensure that you have 2 representatives that are attending the Balance of State Continuum of Care meetings on your behalf and voicing their vote for those that you serve. The Board and LHCs can work together to discuss what this looks like moving forward not only so that each LHCs voice is represented and heard but also to keep work progressing forward for those that we serve. Committees cannot meet and do any productive activities if there is not participation. The Continuum also cannot force any community partners such as HUD, DHS, or ADFA to be in attendance. They are extended an invitation, but it is ultimately their decision to attend.

The Balance of State continues to keep moving forward and working toward providing a better tomorrow for the most vulnerable that we serve. However, the "Balance of State" is not just the executive committee or the voting board members. The Balance of State, seeing as they are not a 501(c)3, is a collective body of representatives made up of the Board, Collaborative Applicant, and LHC members. The Balance of State has zero funding itself (the continuum does NOT receive any of the CoC dollars directly), but rather is comprised of agencies that do receive various funding toward eradicating homelessness. The work must be done by everyone working together. We are committed to continuing this work, and we ask that if you are committed to step forward with us. However, if anyone does not feel like this is the appropriate group for them to be a member of, then we completely understand and will accept any resignation.

Action Items

- [] Reach out to local Homeless Coalition
- [] Send a calendar invite to the Balance of State CoC for the LHC's 2025 kickoff meeting.
- [] Follow up on the RFP extension and share the submitted applications with the Board.
- [] Decide on next steps regarding organizations that are not participating in the Balance of State CoC.

Funding Updates and NOFO Process

William Tollett provided an update on the NOFO process, noting a 45% increase in funding from 2022 to 2023.

The NOFO process is explained as performance-based, with funding increases based on progress towards goals.

In 2023, the total HUD allocation was \$669,866, with the continuum receiving \$14,280 more than expected.

Projects were either fully funded or received more than requested, indicating HUD's recognition of progress.

Challenges and Participation Issues

William acknowledges setbacks and lack of participation but emphasizes the need for continuous effort.

The Executive Committee and COC members have been working behind the scenes to ensure progress.

The importance of volunteer board members and their dual responsibilities is highlighted.

The need for participation in meetings to maintain productivity and avoid issues is stressed.

Coordinated Entry and Training

Coordinated Entry had a slow start but is now in a trial period to become operational.

William invites questions and expresses readiness to address them.

Rashad Woodsman, expresses concerns about the organization's direction and the need for clear plans.

Concerns and Suggestions for Improvement

Rashad emphasizes the need for a structured plan to resurface and reface the organization.

The importance of having a clear understanding of the organization's goals and plans is highlighted.

He offers to help and support the organization, stressing the need for hands-on involvement.

The need for better communication and representation at meetings is discussed.

Collaborative Applicant and Program Director Challenges

William discusses the challenges with the collaborative applicant and program director positions.

The lack of communication and engagement from the program director is noted.

The interdependence of the collaborative applicant in the process is emphasized.

William Tollett as income ARBoS Chair offers to attend local LHC meetings to provide updates and information.

Historical Context and Reflections

Josephine Flowers shares her reflections on the organization's progress and challenges.

The importance of appreciating past efforts and recognizing the organization's growth is highlighted.

The need for each participant to contribute to the organization's success is emphasized.

The challenges of balancing responsibilities and participation are acknowledged.

Coordinated Entry and Training Continued

William Tollett acknowledges the slow process of Coordinated Entry and the efforts of Josephine and Autumn.

The need for continued training and engagement from volunteers is stressed.

The importance of maintaining communication and engagement with participants is emphasized.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Speaker 1 requests approval of the minutes from previous meetings.

Josephine Flowers moves to accept the minutes, and a second is provided.

One member is noted as not in favor, but the motion passes.

The need for a representative from HUD or DHS to attend meetings is discussed.

ESG Grant and Resource Constraints

William discusses the challenges with the ESG grant and the lack of resources for shelter operations.

The need for timely communication and application processes from AFA and ADFA is emphasized.

Tollett expresses frustration with the lack of resources and the impact on shelter operations.

The importance of maintaining communication and support for small shelters is highlighted.

Final Remarks and Next Steps

William Tollett emphasizes the need for continued collaboration and support from all participants.

The importance of filling the secretary position and other vacancies is noted.

The need for clear communication and engagement from all stakeholders is stressed.

The meeting concludes with a focus on moving forward and addressing the challenges faced.