

Southern Local Planning Group | MINUTES

Meeting Date; Time: 5/11/17; 9:05-10:10am **Meeting Location:** Lucy Simms Center

Type of Meeting	Regular Meeting
Note taker	Amber Joiner-Hill (NSVRC)
Attendees	
Candy Phillips (<i>First Step</i>)	Emily McCarty (<i>HRHA</i>)
Dathan Young (<i>BRLS</i>)	Laura Black (<i>HRHA</i>)
Laura Toni-Holsinger (<i>United Way</i>)	Paloma Saucedo (<i>VAN</i>)
Michael Klein (<i>Homeless Representative</i>)	Seli Perry (<i>Mercy House</i>)
Shannon Porter (<i>Mercy House</i>)	Rachel Howdyshell (<i>Open Doors</i>)
Michael Wong (<i>HRHA</i>)	Heather Rupe (<i>Harrisonburg CSB</i>)

3/9/17 minutes approved

Agenda Topic: *Discharge Planning Recap*

Presenter: *Candy Phillips*

Discussion

- Rockingham Memorial Hospital (RMH) indicated it would start sending representatives to Southern LPG meetings on a regular basis and will meet with Valley Health staff to discuss discharge planning
- RMH staff have been invited to visit local shelters and get an idea of the services available
- One of the identified issues is that sometimes patients are discharged directly into a shelter that they'll have to leave the very next day—this doesn't allow a proper way to recover—there is an overall desire for homeless service providers and RMH discharge staff to learn more about each other's services
- Valley AIDS Network set up a process to assess housing needs of patients while they're still in the hospital—this is a practice that would be beneficial to mirror with all service providers because it's easier for Centralized Housing Intake to start working with people before they are literally homeless (being rolled out of the hospital with nowhere to go, i.e.)
- Suitcase Clinic will start hosting nursing students at the Salvation Army to treat guests

Agenda Topic: *Blue Ridge Legal Services*

Presenter: *Dathan Young*

Discussion

- Dathan presented information on tenant screening, credit reporting, and how Fair Housing laws address applicants with a criminal history

- Tenant Screening
 - The process to apply for a rental unit is far more detailed and thorough than it used to be and sometimes landlords hire a company that uses a computer program to recommend whether or not the applicant should be accepted as a tenant.
 - The applicant criteria used by screening computer programs can be ill-informed or irrelevant and screen out otherwise strong rental applicants.
 - Credit Reporting
 - A low credit score can result in a denied rental application, but it's been discovered that a fair share of credit reports have an error
 - Individuals can dispute their credit report, but the process can be lengthy and still might not result in an accurate report.
 - www.annualcreditreport.com is the only credit reporting agency supported by the government
 - Criminal History
 - Blanket bans on applicants with a criminal record are inappropriate, as the nature of the crime isn't always relevant to housing and since people of color are disproportionately involved in the criminal justice system, the ban could equate to racial discriminate.
 - Rental applicants can challenge a denial based on criminal records with the assistance of an attorney.
 - What are the laws regarding charging a higher security deposit or rent because of a poor credit score or income? Landlords can charge up to two times the security deposit for tenants; this seems like a sense of discrimination because generally, communities of color are going to have lower income, but it can be difficult to prove that the higher deposit charge is because of the applicant's race
 - What obligation do landlords have to provide documentation indicating why an applicant was denied? They are required to give a letter stating why, and the name of any third party company that was used.
 - For more information on these topics, contact Dathan Young at dyoung@brls.org or (540) 433-1830
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Agenda Topic: *Announcements*

Discussion

- Candy Phillips: First Step participated in United Way Day of Caring and volunteers repainted the interior of their building; there is interest in learning about street outreach strategies implemented in other communities and the CoC will look into meeting with A-SPAN from Arlington
- Shannon Porter: Mercy House hired a new housing case manager
- Mike Klein: noticed an increase of homeless individuals come into the area from TN and WV

- Laura Black: System Performance Measurement reports will be submitted at the end of the month