

Interagency Council on Homelessness

September 16, 2009

9:00 a.m. – 11:15 p.m.

Olympia, Washington

Present:

Will Graham, Assistant Director for Housing, Commerce – Chair

Alfie Alvarado-Ramos, Deputy Director, DVA

Peter Antolin, Senior Budget Analyst, OFM

Melinda Dyer, State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth,
OSPI

Steve Johnson, Field Administrator for Work Release, for Anne Fiala, DOC

Lisa Hodgson, Executive Manager, Facilities and Services Licensing, DOH

Bonnie Ross, Manager, Offender Employment Services Program, for Ken Kelnhofer,
ESD

ICH Member Staff:

Toni Johnson, Program Coordinator – Homelessness/Housing and Services, DSHS

Commerce Staff:

Annie Conant

Tedd Kelleher

Bruce Yasutake

State Advisory Council on Homelessness recommendations to DOC

In mid-July, the State Advisory Council on Homelessness (SACH) Chair, Chris Lowell sent a letter to Eldon Vail related to the recently passed SB 5525 that enables DOC to provide up to 3 month rental vouchers. SACH recommended that DOC:

- Document voucher recipients outcomes and the factors affecting the outcomes, and
- Consider partnering with homeless service centers and coordinated entry systems in local communities to access housing search, placement and case management services.

DOC will hire staff to (among other duties) track released offenders who are provided rental vouchers, including after the voucher period has ended. A program manager will be hired to supervise the voucher program and address issues of offender homelessness on a statewide level, including working with SACH and the Washington State Coalition for the Homeless to reach out to homeless programs throughout the state.

Washington State Coalition for the Homeless legislative proposal – State institution discharge practices – data and planning

Mia Navarro Wells, Executive Director of the Washington State Coalition for the Homeless, asked for ICH input on draft legislation that the Coalition plans on proposing this upcoming session. (The Coalition proposed it last session as well.):

Realize cost savings and significantly reduce recidivism and homelessness by laying the foundation for effective discharge practices from state institutions. Excerpt from the WSCH proposal:

This legislation accomplishes two things:

- One, it requires the Department of Corrections and the Department of Social and Health Services to track the housing status of people being released from their care or custody who receive ongoing supervision or care. We know this is a problem in Washington, but we don't know exact numbers. This legislation would give us that data.
- And two, it requires the state to identify the strategies and resources necessary to ensure that people exiting state institutions are not discharged into homelessness, but rather, are given the opportunity to succeed in stable housing that is identified and secured prior to release. The plan would also identify a timeline for future implementation.

How much will it cost?

The cost for this legislation is minimal. Current data collections systems can be easily and inexpensively modified to include a tracking mechanism for housing status; and the expense of the planning requirement is also minimal. This legislation would also allow pre-existing housing plans to meet the planning requirement, as long as the existing plans are updated with implementation strategies.

Existing/new homeless data efforts* and the current/upcoming budget challenges were discussed. DOC and DSHS ICH members will provide Commerce staff with information on the data and planning recommendations, as well as the cost implications. Commerce staff will then draft an ICH response to the Coalition's legislative proposal.

- * Commerce – data sharing agreements with DOC/DSHS, DOC – SB 5525 related
DSHS – tracking client status through DSHS systems - costs not “minimal”.
ESD – not very effective tracking systems.

Commerce Homeless Program Restructuring

HB 2331 – Document Recording Surcharge – Increased document recording fees from \$18 to \$38 and moved major homeless programs from the state general fund to the home security fund, including the following programs: Emergency Shelter; Transitional

Housing, Operating and Rent; Independent Youth Housing and Overnight Youth Shelters. Forty percent of the increase will fund those programs, the Homeless Grant Assistance Program and Homeless Management Information System efforts. Sixty percent of the fee increase will go to local counties.

Over the next two years, Commerce will work towards consolidating the above programs into a single grant that will go to county governments. A County will be able to pass funds through to local nonprofit organizations, housing authorities, etc. to provide housing and services. Commerce will require certain components such as coordinated assessment and common tools as well as an updated local homeless plan every 5 years. Funding will consist of a base allocation formula. No county would see a decline in funding, most would see an increase. In addition, if prerequisites are met, bonus funding would be available. Every dollar granted by Commerce would need to be matched by \$1 of local government cash, including the cash equivalent of Housing Choice Vouchers dedicated to homeless activities.

A Washington State Outcomes Benchmarking Group will be established so that programs can compare their program outcomes against other “like” programs and evaluate their performance. Benchmarking groups will meet periodically to learn from one another supporting quality care. Other community, program and process measures will be defined based on legislative and federal requirements.

Commerce Update

Will summarized where things are to date. Highlights of a presentation made by Rogers Weed, Commerce Director follow:

Charge from 2009 Legislature--EHB 2242:

- Adopt concise core mission
- Align with the state’s economic development plan
- Be accountable and transparent
- Partner and leverage private & federal dollars
- Stay focused and flexible
- Increase local capacity
- Propose organization aligned with core mission

Commerce Mission - Grow and improve jobs in Washington

Options for Organizing:

Focused Commerce

- Retains programs most closely aligned with mission
- Adds part/all of Office of Regulatory Assistance

Minimal Disruption Commerce

- Moves only programs with significant
- Disconnect with mission or strong desire to leave
- Adds part or all of Office of Regulatory Assistance
- Minimizes the disruption of change

Mission-Aligned Commerce

- Retains programs most closely aligned with mission
- Adds part or all of Office of Regulatory Assistance
- Adds and consolidates infrastructure programs
- Adds and consolidates energy policy and programs

Next Steps:

September 21: Review withom agency

September -October: Discussions with legislators & stakeholders

November 1: Report to Legislature including

- Mission/Vision
- Priorities
- Options for Organization

More detail can be found at:

<http://www.commerce.wa.gov/site/1268/default.aspx>

Ten-Year Homeless Plan: 2009 Annual Report

Request for updates has been emailed to ICH members. The following timeline was emailed out by Commerce staff on September 21:

Specific timeline for the Ten-Year Homeless Plan

September

14 Commerce emails ICH members requesting:

- Status of 2008 "New Specific Actions", to become "2009 Accomplishments"
- "New Specific Actions for 2009-2010"
- Changes to the 2008 "Ongoing Initiatives", for 2009-2010

October

5 Above requested information due to Commerce + Forecast Information referenced in # 2 below.

12 (week of) Commerce emails first draft of the Ten-Year Homeless Plan: 2009 Annual Report to ICH members for final input

Commerce staff will compile “Recommendations for State Legislature and Policy Changes Needed to Address Homelessness” from the 2008 County Annual Reports for ICH member review prior to the October 21st meeting.

21 ICH meeting

November- mid-December

Commerce-OFM review/approvals and submission of final to the Legislature

December

21 ICH meeting

31 Homeless plan annual report due to the Legislature

Forecast Information - Factors related to homelessness - Please submit with plan updates, by October 5

- Changes in service needs/demands
- Budget cuts
- ARRA funds

3) Prevention Efforts - This was not discussed in the group, but Alfie asked that if you have any notable prevention efforts not addressed in the current plan, to please report them.

ICH Member Updates

DOC – See SACH Recommendations to DOC above.

DVA – Updates will be addressed in the Ten-Year Homeless Plan: 2009 Annual Report.

DOH – No direct homeless activities. Emphasis on the H1N1 (swine flu) now.

OFM – Next revenue forecast will be out on September 17, with revenues to be less than projected last quarter. Much at stake with the 2010 Census effort – more federal funds and another possible House representative.

DSHS – The Housing Work Group is now a Secretary level Task Force. Will Graham, Toni Johnson and others met with Secretary Dreyfus last month to talk about housing issues.

ESD – New initiative to train staff to work with offenders. One half an FTE will work with the twelve WorkSource offices and one half an FTE will work with the institutions.

OSPI – In the process of collecting homeless children data from the schools. Will be reporting the numbers to the Department of Education in mid-November.

Commerce – See above.

Remaining 2009 Meetings

- October 21 – Homeless Plan
- December 16 – Legislative and Budget Updates